

The Connecticut General Assembly

House Democrats



REP. GILCHREST: ENDOMETRIOSIS DATA AND BIOREPOSITORY PROGRAM PLAN SUBMITTED TO PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

State Representative Jillian Gilchrest, House Chair of the Human Services Committee (D-West Hartford), is pleased to announce that, as part of legislation passed last session, an Endometriosis Data and Biorepository Program Plan has been submitted to the Public Health Committee for consideration.

"As chair of the Connecticut General Assembly's Endometriosis Working Group, I have spent the last year learning from advocates, those impacted by the disease, and specialists working to address, and one day even possibly prevent, endometriosis. UConn Health and Jackson Laboratory recognize the significant impact of endometriosis and the need to learn more and provide people with relief," said Rep. Gilchrest. "The plan for an Endometriosis Data and Biorepository Program far exceeds my expectations and I look forward to working with them to see it become a reality in our state."

"The plan submittal marks an important step forward in helping the millions of individuals living with endometriosis," said Elise Courtois, Ph.D., director of Single Cell Biology at The Jackson Laboratory. "This disease is so misunderstood and it is all around us, affecting 1 in 10 women in Connecticut. With this plan, we will be able to advance discovery for this highly invasive, under-diagnosed disease. Pairing this with efforts to raise awareness and better educate medical professionals, we will be able to improve health outcomes for those impacted by this disease, both today and in the future."

"We need a cure for endometriosis," stresses Luciano who cares for endometriosis surgery patients at UConn Health. "It causes pelvic pain, infertility, and has no reliable diagnostic test. This endometriosis biorepository's research will find answers about this disease, biomarkers to diagnose it earlier, and hopefully a targeted cure. Also, it would raise greater awareness about endometriosis through educational resources so more patients may seek treatment sooner."

"Our team is grateful to Representative Gilchrest and the Connecticut Endometriosis Workgroup for their incredible efforts in spearheading this initiative," said Courtois. "I would also like to thank the Connecticut General Assembly for its foresight in advancing the initial proposal for this pioneering, state-driven initiative to improve the lives of all people physically affected by this common and devastating disease, their families, and the people of Connecticut who are otherwise affected by the undue societal burden of endometriosis."

For those with endometriosis, endometrial-like tissue grows outside the uterus. Nearby reproductive organs are often affected but the disease has been found in every major organ system. Tissue can grow on or around a person's ovaries, fallopian tubes, and beyond. Tissue growth can also spread to other

organs, even if they're not related to reproduction. Some people have endometriosis on or around their bowels, rectum, bladder and, in some cases, tissue may spread as far as the chest cavity.

Beyond the physical pain that over 194 million individuals with the endometriosis experience, those suffering from the disease are often misdiagnosed, told the pain is normal, or accused of making up their symptoms. The plan presented to the Public Health Committee seeks to expand the awareness, knowledge, and treatment of endometriosis.

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Rep. Gilchrest represents the 18th Assembly District in West Hartford. In addition to Chair of the Human Services Committee, she serves on the Appropriations, Public Health and Judiciary Committees. She also co-chairs the Legislature's Reproductive Rights Caucus.

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