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House Resolution

A resolution recognizing March 24, 2004, as the 2004 Florida Women's Health Awareness Day.

WHEREAS, Florida is a diversely populated state which is home to many culturally diverse women of every age group and a large elder population, and

WHEREAS, health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, and women's health involves their physical, emotional, and social well-being and is determined by the social, political, and economic context of their lives, as well as by biology, and

WHEREAS, mortality is not the only significant health indicator when considering differences between women and men, and, despite women's life expectancy of nearly 81 years, their later life is often characterized by isolation, disability, and health problems, and

WHEREAS, heart disease has only recently been recognized not only as the most common cause of death in women, as well as in men, but also as a health problem that may have different signs and symptoms, outcomes, and responses to interventions in women than in men, and

WHEREAS, major depression and dysthymia affect approximately twice as many women as men, and other mental disorders, such as anxiety disorders, anorexia nervosa, and bulimia nervosa, are more common in women; and, although the prevalence of schizophrenia and bipolar disorders is no

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29 | different for women than men, there are gender differences in
30 | age of onset, pattern of symptoms, and treatment response, and

31 | WHEREAS, across the country women are more likely than men
32 | to be uninsured, and in Florida only one-third of women are
33 | covered with health insurance through their employers, compared
34 | with 53 percent of men, only 27 percent have dependent coverage,
35 | compared with 13 percent of men, and many face obstacles in
36 | securing health coverage, which negatively affects their access
37 | to health care and may in turn have important implications as to
38 | the state of their health, and

39 | WHEREAS, studies have shown that organs donated by women
40 | are more likely to be rejected than those of men and that female
41 | transplant patients may have a poorer rate of survival compared
42 | with their male counterparts; yet, despite this evidence,
43 | surgeons still do not take sex into consideration when selecting
44 | organ donors and transplant recipients, and

45 | WHEREAS, inasmuch as clinical trials have historically
46 | excluded women, pharmaceutical therapies are not designed to
47 | address women's needs; and, although there has been progress in
48 | identifying and understanding the role of various metabolic
49 | enzymes in causing sex differences in pharmacodynamics, some
50 | cardiovascular drug findings typify the need for more research
51 | and a better understanding of the need for sex-based analyses of
52 | responses to drugs, with closer clinical attention to detecting
53 | sex-based adverse effects, and

54 | WHEREAS, according to a telephone survey conducted in 2000
55 | by the University of South Florida Birth Defects Center and the
56 | University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research,
57 | only 15 percent of the state's women knew folic acid prevented

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58 birth defects; and a March of Dimes survey determined that 53
59 percent of women between 18 and 45 years of age who do not
60 currently take a multivitamin on a daily basis say they would
61 very likely do so on the advice of their physician or health
62 care provider, and

63 WHEREAS, medical education is limited in nutritional
64 therapies, which affects a physician's ability to provide
65 proactive health regimens to patients, an unfortunate
66 circumstance compounded by even less emphasis being placed on
67 women's unique nutritional needs, and

68 WHEREAS, mortality rates among African-American women are
69 higher than in any other racial or ethnic group for nearly every
70 major cause of death, including heart disease, lung cancer,
71 cerebrovascular disease, breast cancer, and chronic obstructive
72 pulmonary diseases, and

73 WHEREAS, Hispanic women suffer from the second-highest rate
74 of cervical cancer, with a mortality rate of 3.3 per 100,000
75 compared to 2.6 per 100,000 for Caucasian women, and breast
76 cancer diagnoses are increasing among Hispanic women, with
77 Hispanic women having a lower survival rate than non-Hispanic
78 white women, most often due to a later diagnosis, and

79 WHEREAS, data which suggest that a patient's sex plays an
80 inappropriate role in medical decision making raise the question
81 of possible gender bias in clinical decision making, a bias not
82 necessarily evidencing itself in overt discrimination based on
83 sex; rather, social attitudes, including stereotypes,
84 prejudices, and other evaluations based on gender, may manifest
85 themselves in a variety of subtle ways, as in a seemingly

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86 | widespread perception that women's maladies are the result of
87 | emotionality, and

88 | WHEREAS, the 2004 Florida Women's Health Awareness Day is a
89 | celebration of women taking responsibility for their own health
90 | through greater knowledge and understanding, and

91 | WHEREAS, the 2004 Florida Women's Health Awareness Day
92 | celebrates the efforts of national and state organizations
93 | working with partners and women's health researchers to improve
94 | awareness of key women's health issues, NOW, THEREFORE,

95 |

96 | Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
97 | Florida:

98 |

99 | That the House of Representatives recognizes the health
100 | disparities unique to women and designates March 24, 2004, as
101 | the 2004 Florida Women's Health Awareness Day.

102 | BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be spread upon
103 | the Journal of the House of Representatives as a tangible
104 | recognition of the unique health needs of women.