

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 370

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for expanding, intensifying, and coordinating activities with respect to research on autoimmune diseases in women.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 27, 2003

Mr. LYNCH (for himself, Ms. LEE, Ms. NORTON, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. FROST, Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD, Mr. SERRANO, and Mrs. CAPPS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for expanding, intensifying, and coordinating activities with respect to research on autoimmune diseases in women.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Women’s Autoimmune
5 Diseases Research and Prevention Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds as follows:

1 (1) The term “autoimmune disease” refers to a
2 varied group of more than 80 serious, chronic ill-
3 nesses that involve the human organ system, the
4 nervous, gastrointestinal and endocrine systems, the
5 skin and other connective tissues, eyes, and blood
6 and blood vessels.

7 (2) These diseases include, but are not limited
8 to, Epstein-Barr virus, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis,
9 scleroderma, multiple sclerosis, Guillain-Barre syn-
10 drome, Hashimoto’s thyroiditis, Graves’ disease, and
11 vasculitis syndromes.

12 (3) 50 million Americans are afflicted with
13 some form of autoimmune disease.

14 (4) 75 percent of autoimmune diseases occur in
15 women, most frequently during but not limited to
16 the childbearing years.

17 (5) Taken together, autoimmune diseases rep-
18 resent the fourth largest cause of disability among
19 women in the United States.

20 (6) Female-to-male ratios in autoimmune dis-
21 eases are dramatically skewed toward women, in
22 some cases by ratios as high as 50 to 1.

23 (7) Autoimmune diseases remain among the
24 most poorly understood and poorly recognized of any
25 category of illnesses; while science suggest they may

1 have a genetic component, they can cluster in fami-
2 lies as different illnesses.

3 (8) To help women live longer, healthier lives,
4 more research is needed to shed light on genetic as
5 well as hormonal and environmental risk factors that
6 contribute to the causes of these diseases, as well as
7 providing early diagnosis and treatment.

8 **SEC. 3. EXPANSION AND INTENSIFICATION OF ACTIVITIES**
9 **REGARDING AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES ON**
10 **WOMEN.**

11 Section 409E of the Public Health Service Act (42
12 U.S.C. 284i) is amended—

13 (1) by redesignating subsections (d) and (e) as
14 subsections (e) and (f), respectively; and

15 (2) by inserting after subsection (c) the fol-
16 lowing subsection:

17 “(d) CERTAIN ACTIVITIES REGARDING WOMEN.—

18 With respect to the plan under paragraph (1) of sub-
19 section (c), the Coordinating Committee shall ensure that
20 provisions of the plan developed under paragraph (2) of
21 such subsection include provisions for the following:

22 “(1)(A) Basic research, epidemiological re-
23 search, and other appropriate research concerning
24 the etiology and causes of autoimmune diseases in

1 all women, including genetic, hormonal, and environ-
2 mental factors.

3 “(B)(i) Giving priority under subparagraph (A)
4 to research regarding environmental factors.

5 “(ii) The coordination of (to the extent prac-
6 ticable and appropriate), and providing additional
7 support for, research described in clause (i) that is
8 conducted by public or nonprofit private entities.

9 “(2)(A) The development of information and
10 education programs for patients, health care pro-
11 viders, and others as appropriate on genetic, hor-
12 monal, and environmental risk factors associated
13 with autoimmune diseases in women, and on the im-
14 portance of the prevention or control of such risk
15 factors and timely referral with appropriate diag-
16 nosis and treatment.

17 “(B) The inclusion in programs under subpara-
18 graph (A) of information and education on the prev-
19 alence and nature of autoimmune diseases, on risk
20 factors in women, and on health-related behaviors
21 that can improve health status.

22 “(3) Outreach programs for purposes of para-
23 graphs (1) and (2) that—

24 “(A) are directed toward historically un-
25 derserved populations of women, such as lower-

1 income and minority women, and toward
2 women who are at-risk for autoimmune dis-
3 eases; and

4 “(B) are carried out through community
5 health centers or other health centers under
6 section 330, through State or local health de-
7 partments, or through primary care physi-
8 cians.”.

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