



AN ACT establishing a public awareness campaign on menstrual disorders and maternal health, supplementing Title 26 of the Revised Statutes, and making an appropriation.

**BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

a. Menstrual disorders such as endometriosis and polycystic ovarian syndrome affect many women and can have a negative effect on fertility and overall maternal health;

b. According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health, endometriosis may affect more than 11 percent of American women between the ages of 15 and 44, which is approximately 6.5 million women in the United States alone;

c. According to the Mayo Clinic, endometriosis is an often painful disorder in which tissue similar to the tissue that normally lines the inside of a woman's uterus, called the endometrium, grows outside the uterus;

d. In patients who have endometriosis, the endometrial-like tissue thickens, breaks down, and bleeds with each menstrual cycle. However, since this tissue has no way to exit the body, it becomes trapped;

e. When endometriosis impacts the ovaries, cysts called endometriomas may form. Surrounding tissue can become irritated, eventually developing scar tissue and adhesions that can cause pelvic tissues and organs to stick to each other;

f. The primary symptom of endometriosis is pelvic pain. While many women experience cramping during their menstrual periods, those with endometriosis typically describe menstrual pain that is much worse than typical and which may increase over time;

g. Symptoms of endometriosis include: painful periods (called dysmenorrhea); pain with intercourse; pain with bowel movements or urination; excessive bleeding; infertility; fatigue; diarrhea; constipation; bloating; and nausea;

h. Ovarian cancer occurs at higher than expected rates in those who have endometriosis;

i. Although rare, another type of cancer called endometriosis-associated adenocarcinoma can develop later in life in those who have had endometriosis;

j. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is one of the most common causes of female infertility, affecting as many as five million, or six to 12 percent, of women of reproductive age in the United States;

k. This life-long health condition continues far beyond child-bearing years and involves other serious health complications;

l. Women with PCOS are often insulin resistant, which means that their bodies can make insulin but are unable to use it effectively, increasing their risk for Type 2 diabetes;

m. Women with PCOS also have higher levels of androgens, hormones which can stop eggs from being released and cause irregular periods, acne, thinning scalp hair, and excess hair growth on the face and body;

n. More than half of women with PCOS develop type 2 diabetes by age 40. Women with PCOS can also develop gestational diabetes when pregnant, which puts the pregnancy and baby at risk and can lead to type 2 diabetes later in life for both mother and child;

o. Women with PCOS are at higher risk of heart disease, and this risk increases with age;

p. Women with PCOS can also experience: (1) high blood pressure, which can damage the heart, brain, and kidneys; (2) high LDL (bad) cholesterol and low HDL (good) cholesterol, which increases the risk for heart disease; (3) sleep apnea, a disorder that causes breathing to stop during sleep and raises the risk for heart disease and type 2 diabetes; and (4) stroke;

q. PCOS is also linked to depression and anxiety; and

r. Given all of the increased health risks associated with menstrual disorders, such as endometriosis and PCOS, and the number of women impacted by these disorders, it is imperative that the Department of Health establish a public awareness campaign about the effects of menstrual disorders on fertility and overall maternal health.

2. a. The Department of Health shall establish a public awareness campaign to promote awareness among State residents about how menstrual disorders affect fertility and overall maternal health. The campaign may provide for the development of print and electronic media in languages including, but not limited to, English and Spanish.

b. The public awareness campaign shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) a comprehensive description of common menstrual disorders, such as endometriosis and PCOS, including discussion of causes, symptoms, and treatment options;

(2) information about educational resources available to women concerning menstrual disorders; and

(3) materials encouraging women to schedule routine gynecological examinations and consult with their physicians about menstrual disorders.

c. The department shall make available to the public, electronically on its website, information about common menstrual disorders, such as endometriosis and PCOS, and their effects on maternal health.

3. There is appropriated from the General Fund \$500,000 to the Department of Health to establish the public awareness campaign pursuant to section 2 of this act.

4. The Department of Health shall, in accordance with the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), adopt any rules and regulations as the department deems necessary to implement the provisions of this act.

5. This act shall take effect on the 30th day following enactment, except that the Commissioner of Health may take such anticipatory action in advance as shall be necessary for its implementation.

#### STATEMENT

This act requires the Department of Health to establish a public awareness campaign on menstrual disorders and maternal health, supplements Title 26 of the Revised Statutes, and makes an appropriation.

Menstrual disorders affect many women and can negatively impact fertility and overall maternal health. Endometriosis may affect more than 11 percent of American women between the ages of 15 and 44, which is approximately 6.5 million women in the United States alone. Symptoms include severe pelvic and menstrual pain, infertility, painful bowel movements, pain with intercourse, excessive bleeding, and nausea.

PCOS is one of the most common causes of female infertility, affecting as many as five million, or six to 12 percent, of women of reproductive age in the United States. This life-long health condition continues far beyond child-bearing years and involves other serious health complications, including insulin resistance, gestational diabetes, and heart disease.

Given all of the increased health risks associated with menstrual disorders, such as endometriosis and PCOS, and the number of women impacted by these disorders, the bill requires the Department of Health to establish a public awareness campaign about the negative effects of menstrual disorders and to make information about menstrual disorders available on its website.

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Establishes menstrual health public awareness campaign.