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November 29, 2023

Dr. Carolyn M. Mazure
Chair
White House Initiative on Women's Health Research
Office of the First Lady
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Ms. Jennifer L. Klein
Assistant to the President
Co-Chair and Executive Director
White House Gender Policy Council
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

RE: White House Initiative on Women's Health Research – Information and Meeting Request

Dear Dr. Mazure and Ms. Klein,

On behalf of the American Urogynecologic Society (AUGS), I write to commend President Biden, First Lady Dr. Jill Biden, and the White House Gender Policy Council for the launch of the new White House Initiative on Women's Health Research and request a meeting with you for the leadership of the AUGS Scientific Committee to discuss the research needs for Pelvic Floor Disorders. AUGS recently completed the attached National Urogynecology Research Agenda for Advancing the Treatment and Management of Pelvic Floor Disorders. This agenda is also supported by several other national societies with an interest in women's health and Pelvic Floor Disorders.

AUGS is a national medical society whose mission is to promote the highest quality of care in female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery through excellence in education, research, and advocacy. AUGS represents more than 2,000 members, including practicing physicians, nurse practitioners, physical therapists, nurses and health care professionals, and researchers from many disciplines.

AUGS recognizes the importance of understanding and evaluating the conditions that women face throughout their lives, including conditions that become more prevalent in the post-reproductive years. The urogynecology community also recognizes that women's health research is woefully underfunded, and that most of the limited funding goes to research involving reproductive-aged women. AUGS believes women's health care should encompass the full life span of women, including conditions affecting post-reproductive and geriatric women, the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population. The CDC reports that over 50% of women aged sixty-five and older suffer from incontinence. Incontinence associated with overactive bladder, stress urinary incontinence and voiding dysfunction takes an economic and emotional toll on individuals and has a significant fiscal impact on society.

To acknowledge the need for increased research funding directed towards women's health, beyond maternity and reproductive care, AUGS has established the National Urogynecology Research Agenda that identifies knowledge gaps and research priorities across six topic areas:

Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms/Urinary Incontinence
Pelvic Organ Prolapse
Fecal Incontinence
Recurrent Urinary Tract Infections
Sexual Health in Women with Pelvic Floor Disorders
Bladder Pain Syndrome/Interstitial Cystitis and Myofascial Pelvic Pain

The research agenda also incorporates important cross-cutting themes related to health disparities, multidisciplinary research, and training future scientists.

AUGS representatives would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you or your designated representatives to discuss this research agenda and how we can work together to fill the knowledge gaps and pursue promising research opportunities to address the health issues that impact millions of women in this country in their post-reproductive years. We will follow up to further discuss setting up and meeting and providing additional information and answering your questions.

Thank you for your work on the White House Initiative on Women's Health Research and please consider AUGS as a partner to collaborate with on this important endeavor to advance women's health research. Please add me, at 301-273-0570, ext. 116 or email Stacey@aug.org. and Jill Rathbun, AUGS Washington Representative, at 703-271-7224 or jill_rathbun@galileogrp.com to all lists, etc. for your work on this initiative.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Stacey Barnes
AUGS Chief Executive Officer

Attachments: AUGS National Urogynecology Research Agenda
AUGS Fact Sheet on Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms
AUGS Fact Sheet on Pelvic Organ Prolapse