

SEPTEMBER 17, 2002

**SCHAKOWSKY APPLAUDS PASSAGE OF
THE WOMEN'S HEALTH OFFICE ACT**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- I applaud the passage of H.R. 1784, the Women's Health Office Act. By establishing Offices of Women's Health throughout different agencies in the Department of Health and Human Services, this legislation recognizes the ongoing need to focus attention on various health issues particularly related to women. Women make up over half the adult population of this country and it is critical that we make women's health a top priority.

For years, almost all medical research was conducted from a male perspective, while women's medical needs were ignored. Today there is a need for more research on breast, cervical, and ovarian cancer, hormone replacement therapy, and how various ailments such as osteoporosis and heart disease specifically affect women. It is important that we conduct this research, not as an afterthought, but as primary research important to everyone's well-being.

There is also a need to ensure that all women in the U.S. have access to health care coverage, including comprehensive reproductive health care, prenatal care, preventative care, and coverage throughout menopause and old age. Too many poor and low-income women in this country have little or no access to health care. This is particularly harmful and unacceptable for pregnant women and women suffering from ongoing ailments.

I also expect the new Offices of Women's Health within the various agencies to focus on domestic violence and sexual assault as serious threats to both women's health and public health in general. Violence against women is the leading cause of injury to women in American between the ages of 15 and 54. Not only does this violence leave victims with visible injuries, but it can lead to other physical problems and emotional distress. It is critical that we look at violence against women from a medical perspective, as well as examine its social consequences, in order to recognize it, address it, and work to end it.