

The FEMM Foundation has developed knowledge-based health programs for women, inspired by their right to be informed participants in their own healthcare and to make voluntary decisions based on options, information, and understanding. FEMM is dedicated to health education, medical research, and to improving reproductive health programs to advance women's health.

Sustainable development requires health care that addresses the under-served reproductive health needs of women and girls. How are they being underserved right now?

- Only about 3% of women and girls understand how to identify the time of their ovulation, an essential sign of their health. Few can detect abnormalities in their menstrual cycles. Why don't girls learn this essential knowledge at school? How many doctors are being trained to track healthy ovulation patterns in annual health check-ups?
- Women have become resigned to the fact that irregular bleeding, period cramps, migraines, depression, mood swings, acne, and weight gain are the normal "struggles" of a woman. They have not been told that these can be signs of underlying hormonal imbalances which can affect their long-term overall health, sometimes irreversibly.
- Even when women do seek medical care for hormonal imbalances, most health care providers struggle to diagnose them and only treat their symptoms.

This reality does not need to be the norm. Why are we waiting to create truly sustainable healthcare systems that are modeled for women and meet their real needs?

FEMM researchers are at the forefront of re-examining women's health systems. They have developed better diagnostic criteria so that medical conditions that are currently treated at the symptomatic level can be treated at the root. They are discovering that coronary heart disease and Type 2 diabetes in women have links to abnormal ovulation followed by irregular cycles. FEMM's Medical Management program is training doctors to diagnose and treat reproductive health problems with a holistic view of a woman's body. FEMM has even developed a free app to allow women to track their observations and symptoms each month to better understand their bodies and health. The app provides insights into women's unique menstrual cycles, can flag potential health concerns, and can connect women with medical professionals. Additionally, the information in the app is a tool women can use to make decisions about naturally achieving or avoiding pregnancy.

So many period-related problems are not being addressed within national healthcare systems and have real consequences on women and girls' ability to complete their education, to work, to plan their families, and to participate in daily life activities.

FEMM urges this Commission and Member States to adopt programs that educate women about their bodies and empower them to take charge of their health. FEMM is prepared to address the needs of women through educational programs and improved medical support. FEMM is eager to assist the Commission and Member States in meeting this goal.