



News from
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CARNAHAN AUTHORS BILL TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR AND AWARENESS OF UTERINE FIBROIDS

UTERINE FIBROIDS THE #1 REASON WOMEN IN U.S. UNDERGO HYSTERECTOMIES

WASHINGTON, DC – United States Senator Jean Carnahan introduced legislation today to increase funding for research into, and awareness of, uterine fibroids, a reproductive health problem facing millions of women in the United States and the number one reason women undergo hysterectomies.

“Millions of women in this country suffer from uterine fibroids, particularly African American women,” said Carnahan. “My legislation will invest heavily in research, and set in place an aggressive public education initiative to make sure women who could be affected by this are provided all the information they need.”

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), 20 to 30 percent of women in the United States of reproductive age suffer from uterine fibroids, a benign tumor that affects the reproductive health of women, particularly minority women. Undetected or untreated, uterine fibroids can result in, among other things, complications at childbirth and infertility. The Society of Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiology predicts the percentage of African American women affected rises to 50 percent among those 35 years and older.

Carnahan’s legislation would authorize \$10 million through the NIH for research into uterine fibroids for each of four consecutive years. In addition, it would direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to carry out a public awareness campaign to educate women on the incidence, prevalence, and precautionary steps they should take regarding uterine fibroids. It will include information on the increased risks minority women face.

Currently, the NIH only spends approximately \$500,000 per year on uterine fibroids research.

In 2001, over 200,000 hysterectomies were performed as a result of uterine fibroids, remaining the number one reason for hysterectomy operations in the United States. There are a number of less drastic alternatives to this condition that are widely available, but the lack of awareness and information often leaves these options unused, resulting in women undergoing hysterectomies that correct the condition, but leave them permanently unable to have children, noted Carnahan.

“This country must work to see that women don’t undergo medical procedures with irreversible consequences because they’re simply unaware of less severe procedures that accomplish the same thing,” said Carnahan.