

BOBBY L. RUSH

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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

July 16, 2020

The Honorable Francis S. Collins
Director
National Institutes of Health
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Building One, Room 244
Center Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892-0001

Dear Director Collins:

I am writing to you to ask that you create a program entitled the “Black Women’s Healthy Heart Program” at the National Institutes of Health.

While “The Heart Truth” program has done remarkable work for over a decade to raise awareness about women’s risk of heart disease, there remains persistent and significant gaps in information and barriers to implementing strategies to improve the outcomes for the nearly 48 million women at risk for or living with heart disease.

This is particularly true for Black women, who face a much higher risk of heart disease than other demographics. More than 60 percent of Black women are not aware that heart disease is their number one health threat, killing 50,000 annually. Consequently, it is important that we acknowledge and address how cardiovascular disease disproportionately affects Black women.

That is why I am asking that you use your existing authorities to create the “Black Women’s Healthy Heart Program,” which would focus directly on increasing awareness of both the risks to and prevention tools available for Black women. I urge you to act expeditiously. My Legislative Assistant for Health Policy, Lauren Citron, will follow up for further discussion. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bobby L. Rush".

Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

CC:

Gary H. Gibbons, M.D.
Director, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Eliseo J. Pérez-Stable, M.D.
Director, National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities