

Wingwomen Founder, Adonica Shaw, Makes Historic Patent Attempt on the Vaginal Speculum

Wingwomen will open its first brick-and-mortar location in Boston in 2023.

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Wingwomen Founder Adonica Shaw is making a historic attempt to patent a new line of vaginal speculums. The Vaginal Speculum, a device created in the 1800's, is used to widen the vaginal walls so a physician or healthcare provider can examine the vagina and cervix. Physicians most commonly use it during pelvic exams and Pap smears to take samples that are later tested for HPV or Cervical Cancer.

Unlike early inventors of the device, which have been male physicians, Shaw is an African American student-midwife, doula, and the Founder and CEO of the women's reproductive health start-up Wingwomen. She is one of the youngest women to reimagine the device, and she may be the first African American woman globally to make an attempt to patent the Vaginal Speculum.



"My intention with the application is to develop and protect additional medical devices that will consider factors like the parity, age, BMI, reproductive health history, race and anatomy of the patients that the speculums are being used on," said Adonica Shaw, Wingwomen Founder & CEO. "I researched pretty extensively, and I designed several that addressed gaps in technology, design, and functionality that I observed in other in-market solutions."

Beyond differences in the historical design of the device, Shaw hopes to reimagine the device by removing its painful history. There have been long-standing conversations around the controversial figures who developed and ideated the original vaginal speculums. Most notable is James Marion Sims, known as the "Father of Gynecology," who was a 19th-century surgeon

lauded for his revolutionary approach to treating the diseases of women. For decades many ignored the fact that some of his experimental operations occurred on black female slaves without anesthesia until enough momentum led to calls for the removal of his statue from Central Park in 2018.

"We have so much more information available to us than was available when Vaginal Speculums were originally created in the 1800s," Shaw continued. "We also have regulations around device development that should prevent significant harm from being done to women and their bodies while the devices are in development. If we reimagined the device would look like with the information and feedback we have today instead of simply using the older designs, we could transform the experience for all women and remove harm created in the past."

Wingwomen is opening its first brick-and-mortar location in Boston this fall, and the company hopes to use the speculums in their locations one day. Many women report pain with vaginal speculums, and others have been outspoken about the poor experience of having the device used on them while they lay on a hard exam table in a cold room with a paper gown and research shows the poor overall experience of pelvic exams may have contributed to negative feelings from patients about the use of the device overall. Shaw and Wingwomen hope they can transform the pelvic exam experience by providing options to patients that may be better suited for their bodies without the negative history of the device.

"Our mission is to provide inclusive care that allows women to be agents in their reproductive healthcare," Shaw concluded. "The speculums are patent-pending, and I hope to one day provide women with a choice of the device they use. I know it's ambitious, but all change starts somewhere."

About Adonica Shaw

Adonica Shaw is a 4x TEDx speaker, doula, student-midwife, and Integrative health coach. She is also the founder and CEO of Wingwomen. She built the women's health platform after experiencing a catastrophic health event. The experience was the catalyst for her journey from the hospital bed to the boardroom, where she now advocates for a number of women's health issues as a patient advocate with the Preeclampsia Foundation, Stanford Medicine, and the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative.

About Wingwomen

Wingwomen's value-based approach to reproductive health care and fertility education uniquely addresses knowledge and care gaps for women in the patient populations it serves. The Massachusetts-based Femhealth company is on a mission to improve reproductive health outcomes and reduce the time to diagnosis for conditions like Endometriosis and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome.

For more information, visit www.mywingwomen.com.

To book an interview with Adonica Shaw, founder of Wingwomen, email
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