Cross-Sector Report Reveals Systemic Bottlenecks in Women's Health Infrastructure Delaying Care and Stalling Innovation

Despite a surge in awareness and investment surrounding women's health, a new cross-sector report reveals where industry frictions lie...

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, September 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Despite a surge in awareness and investment surrounding women's health, a new cross-sector report reveals that fragmented clinical pathways, underdeveloped foundational biology, and rigid payer frameworks are creating massive bottlenecks. All of whcih are delaying patient care by years and stalling the commercialization of novel therapeutics.

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> *Fiona Marshall, President of Biomedical Research at Novartis*

Today, Women's HealthX released The Women's Health Infrastructure Report 2026, drawing on a cross-sector pulse of operational decision-makers across health plans, health systems, biopharma, and employers. The report features proprietary data and exclusive, original commentary from clinical, pharmaceutical and enterprise leaders detailing exactly where the system is breaking down.

Key Findings on the U.S. Healthcare Delivery Gap:

The Diagnostic Delay: Systemic knowledge gaps and fragmented care models contribute to years-long diagnostic delays for chronic inflammatory diseases. Frontline diagnostic tools frequently leave clinicians in an ambiguous gray zone, driving unnecessary interventions while delaying access to specialist care.

The Therapeutic Wall: 54% of biopharma and life sciences leaders now cite payer reimbursement—not regulatory compliance or clinical efficacy—as their greatest hurdle in launching new, sex-specific therapeutics.

The Innovation Gap: Current standard-of-care options for pervasive conditions remain heavily reliant on legacy treatments, highlighting an urgent need for clinical breakthroughs that target

root biological causes rather than just managing symptoms.

The report highlights that the barriers to scaling women's health exist at both the very beginning of the R&D pipeline and the final mile of care delivery.

Addressing the upstream challenges in therapeutic development, Fiona Marshall, President of Biomedical Research at Novartis, noted:



The Women's Health Infrastructure Report 2026

"The path from target identification to clinical proof of concept in many women's health indications remains underdeveloped. Too often we lack validated biomarkers, predictive preclinical models, and clear regulatory pathways. As a result, many conditions that disproportionately affect women remain biologically under-characterized and under-invested, limiting our ability to advance new therapeutic approaches."

Even when these therapies reach the market, severe administrative gating prevents them from reaching patients. Dr. Sarah Cigna, Director of the Sexual Health and Gender Affirmation Center at George Washington University, highlighted the severe clinical friction introduced by payer utilization management:

"Prior authorizations are one of the most disruptive processes introduced by insurance companies in my day to day practice... Insurance companies must trust clinicians to know what is best for their individual patients. Prior authorizations should be completely removed from the process as they result in insurance companies stepping between the patient and their clinician in decision making, which borders on practicing medicine without a license."

These downstream and upstream hurdles are compounded by a lack of appropriate, non-hormonal interventions for chronic reproductive-age diseases. Outlining this specific gap, Jacob Marx, CEO of Foravisét, Lead Research Partner for the report, stated:

"The first bottleneck is diagnostic: endometriosis is still too often treated as episodic pain rather than recognized early as chronic disease... The second is a drug-development gap: the field still depends heavily on hormonal suppression, which may control symptoms but does so by interfering with normal endocrine and reproductive function... What is missing is a safe, effective

non-hormonal therapy that can address the disease without requiring women to accept those compromises."

Bridging the Gap at Women's HealthX

The healthcare ecosystem will convene to dismantle these infrastructure barriers and advance clinical implementation at Women's HealthX, taking place December 3-4, 2026, at the Encore Boston Harbor.

To download the full data set and access The Women's Health Infrastructure Report 2026, click here.

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