

COPD & Women:

The State Legislator's Role



THEN

COPD was thought of as a “man’s disease.”

The truth is:

- Women have increased susceptibility to developing COPD.
- Women have been overlooked in treatment guidelines.
- Women experience delayed diagnosis more frequently, leading to delayed treatment.
- Women may experience greater disease severity at lower levels of tobacco smoke exposure than men.

NOW

Women account for a majority of COPD burden and deaths.

Increased awareness of the disease led to more women being diagnosed.

But there is still work to be done.

Recognizing the Differences

Common comorbidities in women include:



Shortness of breath

Often more severe at equivalent lung function levels



Anxiety and depression

Frequently underdiagnosed alongside COPD



More frequent exacerbations

Episodes of sudden worsening that increase hospitalizations



Osteoporosis

A comorbidity that can be exacerbated by COPD steroid treatments

Research and policy should reflect these differences. Women's lived experiences must be recognized and included in studies, guidelines and policy.

State Legislators Can Help Women In Their State



Ensure access to evidence-based treatment and care.

Including spirometry testing for accurate, timely diagnosis.



Include women's lived experiences in studies and guidelines.



Raise awareness of COPD's impact on women.