Pelvic Health Matters
A Webinar Series for Women with Mobility Impairments

We will begin promptly at 1 p.m. Central Time
Welcome!

Our presenters today are:

- Margaret A. Nosek, PhD
- Sophie G. Fletcher, MD
The Pelvic Health Initiative for Women with Physical Disabilities

Margaret A. Nosek, Ph.D.

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Disclosures

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Medical Advisers

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- **Ellen Fremion, M.D.**, pediatrics and internal medicine, Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital, Houston, Texas
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Community Advisers

- Leanne Beers; Missoula, Montana
- Leslie Carcamo; Houston, Texas
- Vanessa Cizmar; Houston, Texas
- Michelle Colvard, MPH; Houston, Texas
- Deidre Davis Butler, JD; Bentonville, Arkansas
- Tahani Hamdan, MPH; Houston, Texas
- Rosemary Hughes, Ph.D.; Missoula, Montana
- Meena Outlaw; Houston, Texas
- Maria Soria; Houston, Texas
- Heather Taylor, Ph.D.; Houston, Texas
- Chitra Viswanathan, M.D.; Houston, Texas
- Wendy Wilkinson, J.D.; Houston, Texas
For as long as I can remember, my social life was governed by my bladder, bowel, and uterus.
Do any of these words apply to you?

Excessive planning
Embarrassment
Fear
Hopelessly alone
Dependence
Pain
Resentment
Denial
Anger
Or these?

- Courage
- Patience
- Security
- Friendship
- Confidence
- Self-love
- Social support
- Skill
- Relief
- Acceptance
Why are we doing this webinar series?

I’d been hearing this term a lot in the media and I wondered how it might relate to us...
So...

Being a highly trained academic researcher with 30 years experience, I began this study by going right to...
5,190,000 results
Most had to do with incontinence and physical therapy...for women suffering from pelvic disorders and sexual dysfunction.
...so I did some more digging

Women aged 50-79 with a uterus

Pelvic Organ Prolapse

41%

59%

No pelvic problems

Women aged 20 or older

One or more Pelvic Floor Disorder

No pelvic problems

25%

75%

No such statistics are available for women with SCI or any other disabling condition.

After reviewing more than 4000 articles, we only found a few studies of individual women with disabilities or small groups that mention pelvic floor dysfunction.
WHY?

Let’s look at the risk factors for pelvic floor disorders...

- Higher body mass index
- Greater parity
- Hysterectomy
- Vaginal delivery
- Age

- sensation of a lump or vaginal heaviness
- recurrent irritating bladder symptoms
- voiding difficulty, incontinence or difficulty defecating
- low back or pelvic pain

Maybe we do have these problems but we don't know it or we are not talking about it
I decided we needed to redefine the term so that it focuses on Pelvic HEALTH and includes US!

So we started the Pelvic Health Initiative for Women with Disabilities
Our medical and consumer advisors came up with this definition:

- Pelvic Health is the best possible functioning and management of the bladder, bowel, and reproductive organs.
- It is not merely the absence of disease or weakness in these organs.
- Pelvic health plays an important role in complete physical, mental, social, and sexual well-being.
You can find more about the conceptual model of pelvic health on our website.

https://www.bcm.edu/research/centers/research-on-women-with-disabilities/topics/sexuality-and-reproductive-health/pelvic-health/phi-concept
Through this webinar series and the supporting materials on our website, we hope to:

- Provide solid information about pelvic health and women with disabilities
- Offer information and strategies that will improve the quality of pelvic health care for women with disabilities
- Help women with disabilities develop the confidence and skills they need to achieve better pelvic health and quality of life