



**U.S. National Library of Medicine**  
*National Network of Libraries of Medicine*

# **National Health Observances Toolkit:** **March is Women's History Month!**



[nnlm.gov/all-of-us](https://nnlm.gov/all-of-us)

**All of Us**  
RESEARCH PROGRAM

The  
Future of  
Health Begins  
With You

# Activate!

## Program Summary

Though women have long taken on the responsibility for the family's health care whether caring for a sick child or an aging parent, women have often been at the mercy of the healthcare system, faced discrimination professionally, and dismissed as patients. The month of March is recognized as **Women's History Month** and libraries have the opportunity to highlight the history of women, including the contributions women have made to health, medicine, and health care awareness.

### National Library of Medicine Resources

[Medlineplus.gov](https://medlineplus.gov) is a rich source of health information on a variety of health conditions, drug information, and health tools. MedlinePlus provides a health topic page specifically focusing on **Women's Health** <https://medlineplus.gov/womenshealth.html> which includes links to a variety of tools and information regarding this topic. Additionally, a whole demographic category on women <https://medlineplus.gov/women.html> focuses on a list of health and medical topics regarding women's health.

### Additional Health Resources

[Womenshealth.gov](https://www.womenshealth.gov) The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office on **Women's Health (OWH)** was established in 1991 to improve the health of U.S. women by advancing and coordinating a comprehensive women's health agenda. Womenshealth.gov provides women with information about specific health conditions, reproductive health, and even information about health insurance and how the workplace can support nursing mothers.

[Girlshealth.gov](https://www.girlshealth.gov) This colorful and fun resource, from the **Office of Women's Health**, offers girls reliable, useful information on health and well-being. Hundreds of topics, from puberty to stopping bullies, and from getting fit to preventing sexually transmitted infections are covered. Girlshealth.gov makes sure to answer key questions girls ask and is committed to empowering girls to create strong, positive relationships and happy, healthy futures.

### Additional Resources

- **The Henrietta Lacks Timeline: Her Life and Immortal HeLa Cells**  
<https://unlockinglifescode.org/education-resource-profile/henrietta-lacks-timeline-her-life-and-immortal-hela-cells>
- **30 Achievements in Women's Health in 30 Years (1984 – 2014)**  
<https://www.womenshealth.gov/30-achievements>
- **Women, Power, and Reproductive Healthcare (OHSU)**  
<https://www.ohsu.edu/historical-collections-archives/women-power-and-reproductive-healthcare>
- **The Women's Health Movement**  
<https://www.womenshealthspecialists.org/about/the-womens-movement/>
- **The FDA's Critical Focus on Women's Health**  
<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/fda-voices-perspectives-fda-leadership-and-experts/fdas-critical-focus-womens-health>

- **Woman; Women's Health Care: A History (1975 video)**  
[https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip\\_81-48sbchx0](https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip_81-48sbchx0)
- **National Women's Health Network**  
<https://www.nwhn.org/>
- **Behind the Sheet (Broadway play)**  
<http://nystagereview.com/2019/01/17/behind-the-sheet-charly-evon-simpson-smart-on-womens-problems/>

## Collaborate!

### Possible Partnerships

This program could take on many community partnerships and extension activities. Some examples include:

- Contact a local historical society to ask about history of women from the community or region or state.
- Contact a local educational institution such as universities, community colleges, specifically their library or historical department who may be available to provide resources or tools to offer or displays or exhibits to view.
- Does your community have a hospital or clinic that focuses on women's health? Perhaps a partnership to bring topics about women's health through the lifespan starting with children. For help connecting with potential partners in your community, contact your NNLM Regional Medical Library, <https://nnlm.gov/regions>.

## Educate!

### Relevant NNLM Exhibits

The National Library of Medicine (NLM) has a wonderful program of traveling exhibits that focus on history, literature, health issues and professions. They consist of banners which allow for programming and collaborating with organizations in your community such as a school, a health clinic, an academic institution, or community organization. In addition, the exhibits have an online presence with unique information from the NLM's History of Medicine division and educational resources which encourage viewers to learn more about our nation's social and cultural history of science and medicine. Selected exhibits related to Women's History Month include:

- **Rise, Serve, Lead: America's Women Physicians**  
<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/riseservelead/index.html>
- **Changing the Face of Medicine: Celebrating America's Women Physicians**  
<https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/>
- **Confronting Violence: Improving Women's Lives**  
<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/confrontingviolence/index.html>

- **Pictures of Nursing: The Zwerdling Postcard Collection**  
<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/picturesofnursing/index.html>
- **The Literature of Prescription: Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the “Yellow Wall-Paper”**  
<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/theliteratureofprescription/index.html>
- **Frankenstein: Penetrating the Secrets of Nature**  
<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/frankenstein/index.html>

## Program Plan

# Living History Performance of Historical Women Who Contributed to Health

## Resources

- **Theatre Puget Sound**  
<https://theatrepugetsound.org/>
- **American Historical Association**  
<https://www.historians.org/>
- **Bringing Art to Life**  
<https://livinghistoryperformances.com/>

## Audience

All ages

## Planning

Consider the cost and timing of the program. How often? Which location (if a library system with multiple locations)? Will the actor consider a Q & A time?

Invite a theater or historical reenactor to provide a short or a series of short solo acts portraying historical women who contributed their knowledge to health, medicine, biomedical research such as Roslyn Franklin, Susan La Flesche Picotte, Florence Nightingale, Joycelyn Elders.

Create a brochure featuring resources highlighting women’s health and women’s history resources online, in the library collection, and in the community.

## Marketing

Highlight the program in the library’s newsletter, website, and social media a month or two before the event as well as highlighting Women’s History Month.

Suggested hashtags: #womenshistorymonth #womeninhistory #womenshealth #womenshealthhistory #womenshistoryreads #womenshistoryeveryday #womenhistories #historyofwomen #historyofwomenhealers #womeninmedicine

Contact community organizations such as places of worship, museums, schools, historical societies, social services, senior services, clinics, coffee shops and other local businesses.



## Implementation

Create a welcoming environment that is inclusive for a diverse group, e.g. room for a wheelchair to maneuver.

Work with speaker to provide the set-up they need for their presentation.

If the actor is willing, allow time for questions and a microphone to be passed around so everyone can hear OR make sure the speaker repeats the questions.

Allow time for the librarian to talk briefly about MedlinePlus, WomensHealth.gov, GirlsHealth.gov as resources to find health information. Provide the brochure featuring women's health and women's history resources.

Provide MedlinePlus Magazines for attendees.

## Program Plan Book / Movie Display

### Resources

Books:

- **Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology**  
<https://ugapress.org/book/9780820354750/medical-bondage/>
- **The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks**  
[https://www.amazon.com/Immortal-Life-Henrietta-Lacks/dp/1400052181/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=1GNF2K396L821&keywords=immortal+life+of+henrietta+lacks&qid=1574715974&s=books&srefix=immor%2Cstripbooks%2C201&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.com/Immortal-Life-Henrietta-Lacks/dp/1400052181/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1GNF2K396L821&keywords=immortal+life+of+henrietta+lacks&qid=1574715974&s=books&srefix=immor%2Cstripbooks%2C201&sr=1-1)
- **Birthing a Slave: Motherhood and Medicine in the Antebellum South**  
<https://www.amazon.com/Birthing-Slave-Motherhood-Medicine-Antebellum/dp/0674034929>
- **Radium Girls: The Dark Story of America's Shining Women**  
<http://theradiumgirls.com/>
- **Call the Midwife**  
<https://www.amazon.com/Midwife-Trilogy-Shadows-Workhouse-Farewell/dp/0297859641>
- **Medicine Women: The Story of the First Native American Nursing School**  
<https://www.amazon.com/Medicine-Women-Native-American-Nursing/dp/082636067X>
- **'A Warrior of the People': First American Indian Doctor Was a Woman**  
[https://www.amazon.com/Warrior-People-Overcame-Inequality-Americas/dp/1250181313/ref=pd\\_sbs\\_14\\_1/142-2530857-0172857?encoding=UTF8&pd\\_rd\\_i=1250181313&pd\\_rd\\_r=42a4be58-d869-4701-96d4-f84053f88b91&pd\\_rd\\_w=hEetd&pd\\_rd\\_wg=7bQuQ&pf\\_rd\\_p=5873ae95-9063-4a23-9b7e-eafa738c2269&pf\\_rd\\_r=D1T5MMPQNE76Y4JWY9MT&psc=1&refRID=D1T5MMPQNE76Y4JWY9MT](https://www.amazon.com/Warrior-People-Overcame-Inequality-Americas/dp/1250181313/ref=pd_sbs_14_1/142-2530857-0172857?encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=1250181313&pd_rd_r=42a4be58-d869-4701-96d4-f84053f88b91&pd_rd_w=hEetd&pd_rd_wg=7bQuQ&pf_rd_p=5873ae95-9063-4a23-9b7e-eafa738c2269&pf_rd_r=D1T5MMPQNE76Y4JWY9MT&psc=1&refRID=D1T5MMPQNE76Y4JWY9MT)

- **Doing Harm: The Truth About How Bad Medicine and Lazy Science Leave Women Dismissed, Misdiagnosed, and Sick**  
<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/03/27/597159133/how-bad-medicine-dismisses-and-misdiagnoses-womens-symptoms>
- **More Than Medicine: A History of the Feminist Women's Health Movement**  
<https://www.amazon.com/More-Than-Medicine-Feminist-Movement/dp/0814770665>

Movies:

- **Black Women in Medicine**  
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2656788>
- **Medicine Woman (about a Native American doctor, Susan La Flesche Picotte)**  
<https://www.visionmakermedia.org/films/medicine-woman>
- **Call the Midwife**  
<http://www.pbs.org/call-the-midwife/home/>
- **The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks**  
<https://www.hbo.com/movies/the-immortal-life-of-henrietta-lacks>
- **Period: The End of Sentence**  
<https://www.netflix.com/title/81074663>

## Audience

Adults of all ages

## Planning

Select books and films from the list to display and decide which books and films to order if not already in the library's collection.

## Marketing

Highlight the books/movies/and other resources in the library's newsletter, website, social media during the month of March.

Suggested hashtags: #womenshistorymonth #womeninhistory #womenshealth #womenshealthhistory #womenshistoryreads #womenshistoryeveryday #womenhistories #historyofwomen #historyofwomenhealers #womeninmedicine

## Implementation

Display books, movies, and other materials in a prominent area of the library with attractive signage or banner highlighting Women's History Month. Items that are not focused on health but are related to Women's History Month can also be included.

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