

Cornell University
University Assembly

U.A. Resolution # 2
Requesting that the University Provide Funds for an MD
Gynecologist at Cornell Health

10/25/2022

1 **Sponsored by: Michelle Heeney, Voting Member - Graduate & Professional Student**
2 **Representative; Kate Carter-Cram, Voting Member - Graduate & Professional Student**
3 **Representative; Valeria Valencia, President – Student Assembly; Duncan Cady, Chair -**
4 **University Assembly;**

5
6 **On Behalf Of:**

7 Arielle Johnson, Treasurer, Pelvic Pain Association at Cornell; Jane Bowman Brady, Vice-
8 President, Pelvic Pain Association; Pelvic Pain Association at Cornell; Planned Parenthood
9 Generation Action at Cornell; PERIOD@Cornell; The Advocacy Project from Cornell
10 University; Law - Women of Color Collective; Cornell Law School - Women's Law Coalition;
11 Disability+; Multicultural Academic Council; Cornell University Women's Health Initiative; I-
12 An "Amy" Su, President, Cornell's Graduate & Professional Women's Network (GPWomen)

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15 **Abstract: The student health service at Cornell's Ithaca campus, Cornell Health, does not**
16 **currently have an MD gynecologist on staff, which impedes many students from receiving**
17 **necessary gynecological care. This resolution requests that the university provide funding**
18 **for Cornell Health to employ an MD gynecologist who is able to diagnose and treat the**
19 **most common gynecological issues in the student population, including chronic**
20 **vulvovaginal conditions and pelvic pain conditions.**

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22 **Whereas,** the mission of Cornell Health is "to foster lifelong learning and well-being through
23 innovative services and strategies that promote the physical, emotional, and social health of
24 individuals and our diverse campus community" and

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26 **Whereas,** pelvic pain conditions, including endometriosis, vulvodynia, and polycystic ovary
27 syndrome (PCOS), affect up to 16% of cisgender women of reproductive age¹²³⁴, and

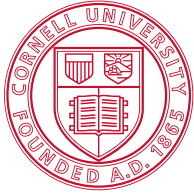
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¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/endometriosis>

² https://www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1412644/PCOS_Evidence-Based-Guidelines_20181009.pdf

³ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14681994.2013.842969>

⁴ <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/roughly-one-quarter-us-women-affected-pelvic-floor-disorders>



Cornell University University Assembly

29 **Whereas**, untreated pelvic pain can cause short and long-term health consequences, including
30 anxiety, depression, poorer quality of life, anemia and infertility, as well as causing absenteeism
31 and productivity declines⁵, and

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33 **Whereas**, we commend Cornell Health for providing quality gynecological treatment to many
34 students despite limited resources, while affirming that an MD gynecologist could provide
35 services that are currently unavailable, and

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37 **Whereas**, other peer institutions including Harvard and Yale have MD gynecologists available
38 through their student health services, and

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40 **Whereas**, Cornell students do not have access to convenient and accessible off-campus
41 gynecological care because the majority of MD gynecologists in the Ithaca area specialize in
42 childbirth services, which does not cover the full scope of gynecological care that Cornell
43 students need; this forces many students to travel to Rochester or New Haven to receive quality
44 care for common conditions, and

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46 **Whereas**, on December 2, 2021, 136 students published an editorial in the Cornell Daily Sun to
47 “urge Cornell to provide funding for Cornell Health to hire an MD gynecologist. Specifically, we
48 need a gynecologist with experience diagnosing and treating chronic vulvovaginal and pelvic
49 pain conditions such as vulvodynia, endometriosis, PCOS, and pelvic floor dysfunction”⁶, and

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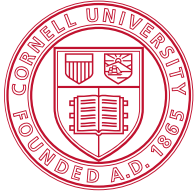
51 **Whereas**, on June 24th, 2022 following the U.S. Supreme Court decision overturning Roe v.
52 Wade, Dean Augustine M.K. Choi sent an email to the entire Cornell community stating that
53 “Cornell clinicians, across all our campuses, will continue to provide quality health care services
54 to women, as is legal in the state of New York, and will continue to serve the health care needs
55 of all our patients, faculty, staff and students”, despite the fact that students needing
56 gynecological care do not have access to an MD gynecologist on Ithaca’s campus, and

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58 **Whereas**, considering that historically marginalized groups, including racial and ethnic minority
59 groups and LGBTQ+ persons, often have disproportionately low access to comprehensive

⁵ [https://www.fertstert.org/article/S0015-0282\(19\)32292-7/fulltext](https://www.fertstert.org/article/S0015-0282(19)32292-7/fulltext)

⁶ <https://cornellsun.com/2021/12/02/letter-to-the-editor-cornell-health-needs-a-gynecologist/>



Cornell University University Assembly

60 gynecological care, Cornell Health could reduce access disparities in the student population by
61 providing inclusive care from an MD gynecologist⁷⁸⁹, and

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63 **Whereas**, we believe that providing quality gynecological care to students on the Ithaca campus
64 is an urgent issue, and such care could greatly improve the wellbeing of many students.

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66 **Be it therefore resolved**, that the University secure funding and develop a projected timeline for
67 hiring an MD gynecologist who can treat the most common gynecological issues faced by the
68 Cornell student population, and

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70 **Be it further resolved**, that the University provide regular updates on the hiring process to the
71 UA, and

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73 **Be it finally resolved**, that the University adequately communicate gynecological services,
74 including those by the MD gynecologist, that are available at Cornell Health to the student body.

⁷ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26595584/>

⁸ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12712135>

⁹ <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2012/05/health-care-for-lesbians-and-bisexual-women>