

Welcoming Remarks

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Mr. Norris was the Deputy Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration, Rockville, MD. These remarks are based on his presentation at the FDA Special Topic Conference on Osteoporosis, held at Bethesda, MD, October 30, 1987.

ON BEHALF of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), I would like to welcome you to the FDA Special Topic Conference on Osteoporosis. I have the honor of serving as the conference moderator.

This National Conference is the first in a series of major events to follow up the June 1986 National Conference on Women's Health. The June conference was a milestone occasion that focused national attention on the diverse and priority health concerns confronting women today. The proceedings of that conference have been published in *Public Health Reports* (Supplement to July-August 1987 issue).

According to statistics compiled by the National Osteoporosis Foundation, approximately 24 million Americans—many of them older women—are affected by this debilitating condition. While the cost of osteoporosis in terms of quality of life and human suffering is immeasurable, the cost in terms of health care and lost productivity ranges from \$7 to \$10 billion annually. For this reason, FDA decided to examine osteoporosis more comprehensively by sponsoring a national conference.

The FDA Special Topic Conference on Osteoporosis is founded on the common bonds that exist between us. Through this national forum, we hope to create the opportunity for you to exchange information with other attendees and the experts who have come together to assist us in bridging the gaps between science, health care, and education.

A number of key ingredients must come together to make a conference successful in achieving its goals. First and foremost, the conference must be based on a solid foundation of good planning, public health need, and supporting organizations. I would like to recognize the leadership of the FDA Advisory Group on Women's Health Issues—Alexander Grant and Dr. Mary Ann Danello, Co-Chairs of the Advisory Group, and Patricia M. Kuntze, Executive Director of the Advisory Group—in sponsoring this

event. In particular, I would like to recognize the prime movers behind this conference—the Osteoporosis Working Group whose members planned this conference, and who will serve as our resource experts:

- Dr. Suzanne Fitzpatrick of the FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine;
- Patricia M. Kuntze of the FDA Office of Consumer Affairs;
- Dr. Gloria Troendle of the FDA Center for Drug Evaluation and Research;
- Dr. John Vanderveen of the FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition; and
- Donald Hamilton, Charles Showalter, and Donna Beth Howe of the FDA Center for Devices and Radiological Health.

Another ingredient essential to the success of a conference is a base of prestigious and active co-sponsoring organizations. The co-sponsors of this conference certainly meet that criterion. Representing the women's health community, we have the PHS Coordinating Committee on Women's Health Issues, the FDA Advisory Group on Women's Health Issues, and the NIH Advisory Committee on Women's Health Issues. For preventive health interventions and health education for older Americans, we have the PHS Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. From the research community, we have the National Institute on Aging, the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Representing the voluntary health sector, we have the National Osteoporosis Foundation.

A successful conference must also have achievable goals and themes that will foster fruitful outcomes. Through the FDA Special Topic Conference on Osteoporosis, we hope to forge a collaboration with you in bringing messages to those individuals who can best benefit from taking active and informed steps to prevent osteoporosis. The exchanges occurring during the conference will deepen our understanding of the impact of osteoporosis on women's health, and the health of older Americans.

Success is related to a sound and timely agenda, coupled with renowned experts to discuss issues of key concern. The conference agenda is designed to address the major aspects of osteoporosis prevention

and treatment, with a particular focus on the practical information needs and concerns of health care providers and public health educators. The conference program vividly demonstrates the high caliber, and outstanding credentials, of the many expert speakers who will be discussing the topics on the agenda.

Finally, a successful conference is based on an audience that is actively involved in advancing our knowledge and ability to prevent and treat osteoporosis. That we have succeeded in this regard

is both obvious and undeniable. Among you are represented the many professions and organizations that will be key to our struggle to deal with the public health problem of osteoporosis. Medical and research organizations, academic and medical institutions, consumer and voluntary health organizations, industries, and all levels of government are represented at this conference. In addition, we welcome attendees from other countries, and we recognize the interest in countries such as Israel, England, and France, who could not be represented.

Opening Session:

Osteoporosis: a priority women's health concern

RUTH L. KIRSCHSTEIN, MD

Dr. Kirschstein is Director, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD, and Chair of the Public Health Service Coordinating Committee on Women's Health Issues. These remarks are based on her presentation at the FDA Special Topic Conference on Osteoporosis, held at Bethesda, MD, October 30, 1987.

I WOULD LIKE to join in congratulating the members of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Advisory Group on Women's Health Issues, and its Osteoporosis Working Group, for planning such an important event to bring us practical messages and guidance for preventing osteoporosis. The research community has made notable strides in advancing our understanding of this condition: it is particularly essential for us as educators and consumers to draw the key prevention messages from this ever-expanding knowledge base.

It is fitting that the FDA Special Topic Conference on Osteoporosis is visibly recognized as a part of the Federal Government's major initiative to improve women's health in the United States. In 1983, the then Assistant Secretary for Health, Dr. Edward N. Brandt, asked me to lead a nationwide task force to study the status of women's health within the context of the many dynamic changes that have occurred in our society over the past 30 years. Following an in-depth review of the primary factors and conditions impacting on women's health, and discussions with women across the country about their priority health

concerns, the Public Health Service (PHS) Task Force on Women's Health Issues developed a comprehensive report on the health of American women. This report recommended specific measures that should be undertaken by both the public and private sectors to improve women's health.

These recommendations are the course of action for directing our collaborative efforts to meet the public health challenges confronting women in today's society. The Task Force recommendations recognize that one of our national health goals is to continue to fortify the essential foundation of knowledge that will enable women to take charge of their health more fully and, more importantly, for women to participate more fully in the preventive services and educational activities within our health care system.

All of us recognize that osteoporosis is a serious public health problem, afflicting approximately 24 million Americans, and costing the nation an estimated \$7 billion in health care and lost productivity. Through the Task Force study, we are also very much aware that this condition is a critical health issue for older women, and presents particular implications for them, especially the following:

- Because women have less bone mass than men, they are at greater risk for osteoporosis.
- The accelerated bone loss that some women experience after menopause is related to a decrease in estrogen levels.
- Osteoporosis increases an older woman's chances of debilitating injury, particularly hip fractures.
- Not only do hip fractures increase the older woman's chances of being institutionalized, but there is also a high mortality rate associated with these fractures.

As a public health community, we clearly recognize that the status of our health in the later years is,