



The

Menopause

Memorandum

Menopause: It's a Movement!



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Who Are We?

The 15-member Michigan Women's Commission was created by statute in 1968. Commission duties include reviewing the status of women in Michigan, directing attention to critical problems confronting women, and recognizing women's accomplishments and contributions to Michigan. Commissioners are appointed by the governor and serve three-year terms.



[**Click the photo above to learn more about us!**](#)

What is the Menopause Movement?

Executive Summary

Menopause: It's a Movement! is a data-informed education and advocacy initiative designed to ensure Michigan women thrive through menopause—at work, within the healthcare system, at home, and beyond.

This effort builds on a clear and growing demand for information, support, and systemic change. In May 2023, the Michigan Women's Commission (MWC), in partnership with the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, hosted a webinar on menopause in the workplace that generated significant engagement and revealed substantial knowledge gaps. In response, the MWC launched the Menopause in the Workplace Survey in 2024, which found that 60% of respondents had little to no knowledge of perimenopause or menopause, and reported that their healthcare providers had not discussed it with them.

To deepen engagement and elevate the issue statewide, the MWC convened a series of 13 community conversations beginning in March 2025, alongside Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Halle Berry. These conversations amplified women's lived experiences and informed a statewide call to action. Gov. Whitmer subsequently charged the MWC with positioning Michigan as a national leader in midlife women's health and menopause policy.

Since then, the initiative has engaged more than 2,500 women across Michigan, informed the introduction of seven menopause-related bills in the Michigan Legislature, and generated over 600 survey responses—creating one of the most robust state-level datasets on menopause and work in the country.

“Just having it be a normal part of our lives, celebrating that we made it this far in our lives, that it’s a privilege to age, it’s a privilege to have the grey hair, it’s a privilege to have the wrinkles, it’s a privilege to go through this process of life and to have that support and be normalized.”

- Tina, Midland

Three Key Takeaways

“My menopause journey has recently started within the last year. I had no idea of what to expect, how long it would last - ANYTHING. This is something that needs to be normalized and talked about.”

- Anonymous survey respondent



Menopause training for physicians



Menopause and midlife women's health education for public awareness



De-stigmatize and normalize the conversation around menopause



The Recommendations

The information that MWC learned from the Menopause in the Workplace Survey and from the conversations held with women across the state led to the following recommendations for employers and lawmakers on how to help women thrive in midlife and therefore help our communities, families, and economy thrive.



Employer Recommendations

Each recommendation is supported by a statistic pulled from our Menopause in the Workplace Survey.



Educate employees, not just women, about perimenopause and menopause



79% of respondents agree that a menopause-supportive workplace is important to them



77% of respondents agree that they would like to learn more about workplace menopause protocols



Provide trusted information and resources



Only 8% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the menopause-related resources currently available at their workplace



35% expressed dissatisfaction with the resources offered



Update policies with a midlife women’s health lens, create low-cost workplace accommodations, and review and expand benefits



Respondents were asked “If your workplace were to develop a protocol, what would you like it to include?”

The top five responses were:

1. Work from home or remote work arrangements
2. Improved ventilation, humidity, and air conditioning
3. Easy access to cold drinking water
4. Easy access to washrooms or toilet facilities
5. Resource packet



52% of respondents indicated their workplace culture did not foster an environment where employees would be comfortable taking time off due to menopause related symptoms



Fewer than 1 in 5 women chose to disclose their menopause status at work



44% of respondents were not satisfied with their current workplace culture surrounding menopause



30% said they were not comfortable speaking about their menopause symptoms at work for fear of being judged by coworkers



26% reported they would feel embarrassed to make comments about their menopause symptoms around coworkers



Provide basic menopause awareness training for supervisors and HR staff



57% reported they did not know where to go for resources to help manage their menopause symptoms during the workday



42% agreed that their symptoms negatively impacted their ability to enjoy work



Only 12% of respondents were confident they knew who to ask for help when their or others menopause symptoms present workplace challenges



1 in 3 women:

- Did not feel prepared to deal with their menopause symptoms during the workday
- Expressed dissatisfaction with their manager's willingness to accommodate their menopause symptoms and the physical accommodations their workplace provided related to menopause



Click on the blue briefcase icon to read an in depth explanation of the recommendations.

Lawmaker Recommendations

Each recommendation is supported by a House or Senate bill in Michigan or Rhode Island. Click on the underlined text to read them.



Create and fund public education and awareness campaigns



[Michigan HB 4791 – Introduced August 21, 2025](#)



[Michigan SB 765 – Introduced January 14, 2026](#)



Improve access to women’s midlife and menopause health care



[Michigan HB 4814 – Introduced August 26, 2025](#)



[Michigan HB 4815 – Introduced August 26, 2025](#)



Create policies for menopause physician education



Michigan HB 4790 – Introduced August 21, 2025



Create policies to support midlife women in the workplace



Rhode Island first state to enact workplace protections for women experiencing menopause – released July 1, 2025



11 respondents reported they left their job due to menopause symptoms, assuming this survey is representative of all midlife working Michigan women experiencing menopause symptoms, this represents a loss of 16,500 women from the workforce yearly due to menopause symptoms



The Voices of Michigan Women

In addition to survey data, the MWC heard directly from women across the state through our Menopause: It's a Movement! conversations. The following excerpts reflect recurring themes shared by participants from diverse regions, professions, and backgrounds as well as anonymous survey respondents.

These statements illustrate how menopause and midlife health intersect with employment, healthcare access, and economic security-- reinforcing the need for thoughtful policy responses and employer initiatives.

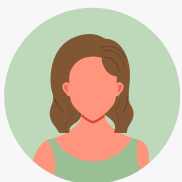


What Michigan Women Need from Employers



"I am the CEO of our organization and also a leader who is perimenopausal herself. Throughout prior positions I've held, menopause and menopause protocols were not discussed nor supports explicitly made available to staff members experiencing perimenopause and menopause symptoms. I am very interested in creating a welcoming environment for staff at all stages of their life, including at menopause, and would welcome learning about best practices in menopause protocols to support our team. I also believe it's important as a leader to be engaged in supporting changes to workforce protocols like this to ensure that we're supporting our team effectively."

- Anonymous survey respondent

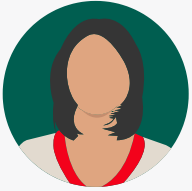


"I think it would be helpful to acknowledge that many workplaces may be unfamiliar with workplace menopause-supportive resources and where to find them to create menopause-supportive workplaces."

- Anonymous survey respondent



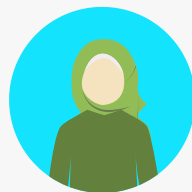
“Education to employees AND leaders, especially if they will never experience menopause symptoms is a critical first step!”
- **Anonymous survey respondent**



“Not having adequate bathroom breaks was a huge stressor for me. The unwanted comments that occurred during hot-flashes and memory [lapses were] horrible and isolating.”
- **Anonymous survey respondent**



“I would in no way discuss any menopause issues with anyone from work.” - **Anonymous survey respondent**



“Tiredness due to hormone changes has been shared with my boss, but she has told me that I need to figure out how to manage my energy because I report to the C-Suite and I need to keep up with them.”
- **Anonymous survey respondent**



“Women in the manufacturing work force are outnumbered however we are needed. Human Resource Employees are not always a trusted confidence. Identifying a-menopause lead for an organization would be ideal in this type of industry. Having to share with you make supervisors that I’m having menopausal symptoms and can’t perform causes even more anxiety. Thank you for this movement so others do not have to go through what I did.” - **Anonymous survey respondent**

What Michigan Women Need from Lawmakers



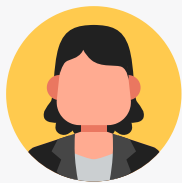
"Very taboo. No one talks about it. It's an embarrassing time for a lot of women. A lot of shame around it. Myths include 'it's just hot flashes', you're supposed to know how to go through it or know how to get through it by yourself. It's a sad and difficult change and no one wants to go through it they're scared to go through it. Feels like they're less than a woman or used up or no longer wanted by society."

- Anonymous survey respondent



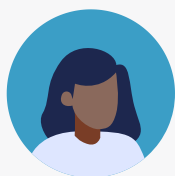
"I think it would be helpful to acknowledge that many workplaces may be unfamiliar with workplace menopause-supportive resources and where to find them to create menopause-supportive workplaces."

- Anonymous survey respondent



"I am not aware of any resources at all, and I am uncertain if my employer must support me or if that is their choice, since it is not a protected work category. I am not certain what I could even ask for, i.e. accommodation, etc."

- Anonymous survey respondent



"What is menopause?" Young girls should know about menopause with the period talk." - **Annie Mae, Detroit**



"I had to jump through hoops in order for somebody to believe me and for somebody to take me seriously."
- **Linda, Grand Rapids**



*"I did [reach out to my doctor] and I was prescribed a low dosage of anti-depressants, no tests were ran...and that was it and I was like 'wow this is really disappointing.'" - **Naiya, Ann Arbor***



"It needs to be addressed in the workplace, every other thing is, pregnancy, new moms, veterans, there's every other club and network there, there absolutely should be a menopausal club and be supported by the organization." - **Pamela, Grand Rapids**



*"Like a lot of women do, I called my girlfriend, and I said, 'what is going on, I'm cussing out my husband who has done nothing wrong, I'm having these hot flashes, not sleeping, what do I do?' and she said 'call you doctor and he'll probably write you a prescription for a little white pill, anti-depressants.'" - **Renee, Detroit***



"I left my thriving corporate career 2 years ago because I thought I was burnout out and still postpartum (five years later). Had I had the education on perimenopause to know that I at 41 was not too young I may have made a different choice. Additionally, my company was super progressive in the DEI space, and I NEVER heard them talk about menopause or have any education for team members."

- Anonymous survey respondent



"My daughter is 41 and experiencing the same, sometimes debilitating symptoms I've had. The doctor didn't believe her, so she had to go to a root cause doctor that isn't carried by her insurance...She feels better than she did a year ago but not having anyone on our side with knowledge is very disconcerting. Menopause is more than hot flashes and fatigue. Until the medical professionals understand more about Menopause, then how can the workplace understand?"

- Anonymous survey respondent



"How about how menopause affects the rest of my, and other women's lives, and how we don't feel supported, educated, or cared for [by] our physicians because they're not educated and because insurance companies don't cover things that might help us during this time, and how about the fact that there's not enough research done on women's health [when] it comes to menstruation, hormones, and our bodies."

- Anonymous survey respondent

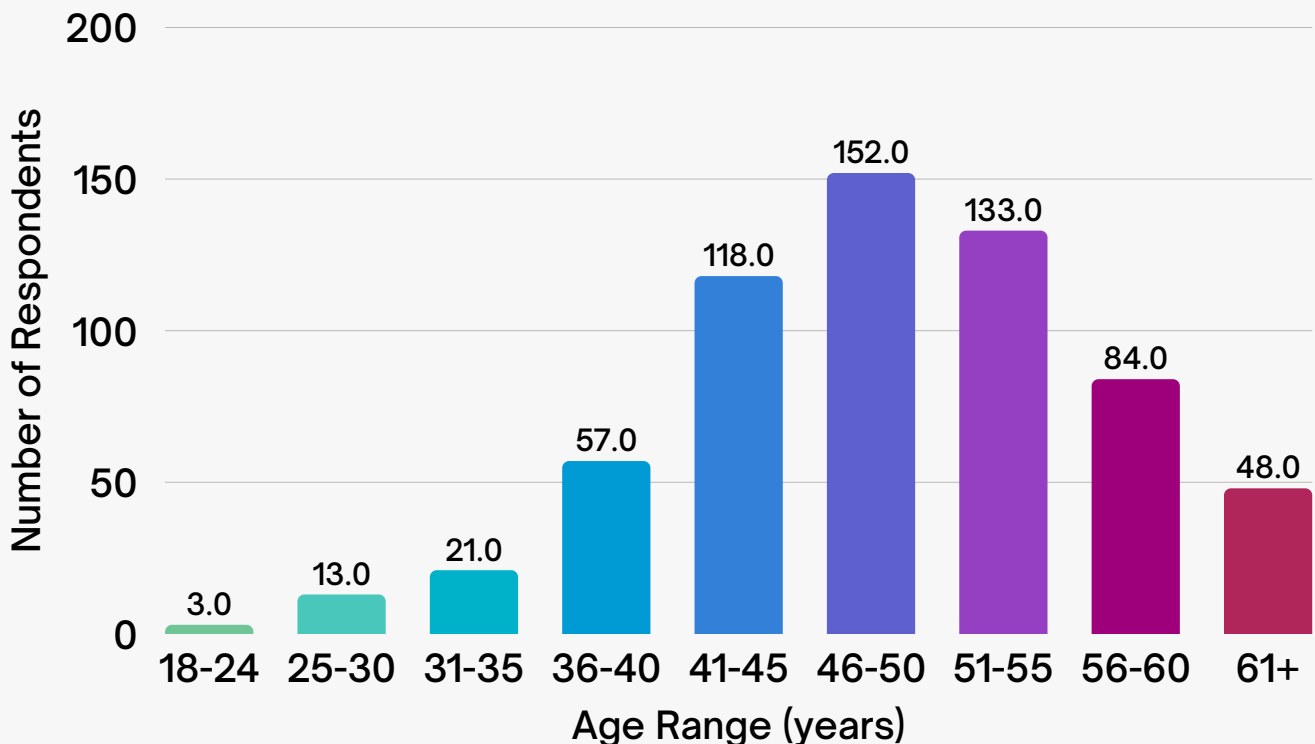
Menopause in the Workplace Survey Key Findings

The survey was open from December 2024 - December 31, 2025. As of January 2026, 652 people completed it.

[Click to view the full breakdown of the report and the Institutional review board determination.](#)

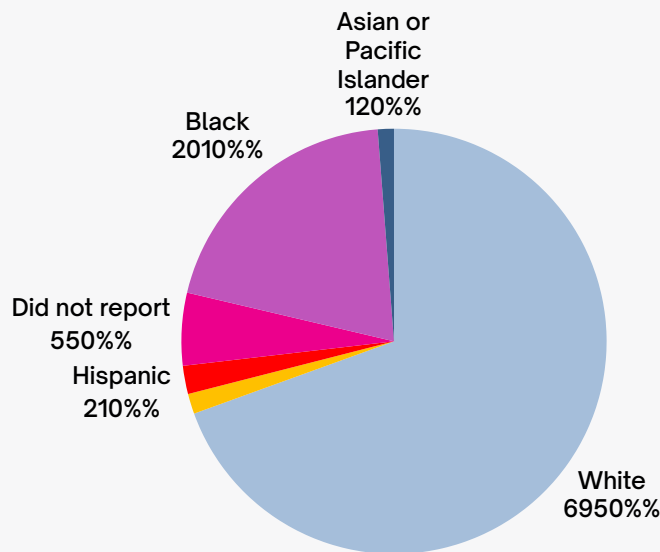
The majority of respondents were women in their midlife, aged between 35 and 60 years old.

Menopause in the Workplace Survey Respondent Ages

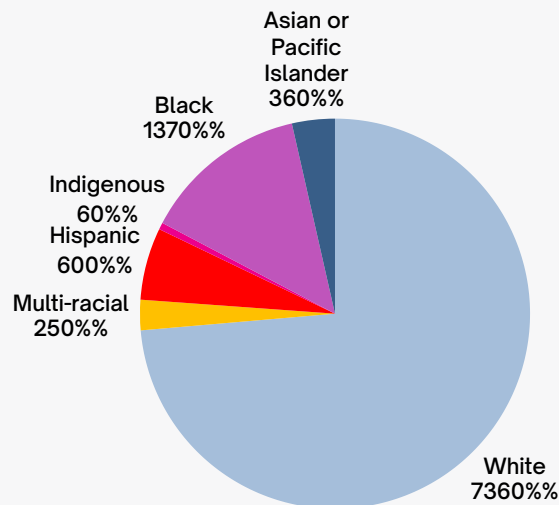


The racial and ethnic composition of respondents is comparable to the racial and ethnic composition of Michigan overall. *Note that the White, Indigenous, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and multiracial Michiganders were underrepresented in this survey and Black Michiganders were overrepresented. This may be in part to missing data (5% of those surveyed did not report race).

Racial and Ethnic Composition of Survey Respondents



Racial and Ethnic Composition of Michigan Overall



62%

of menopause able respondents said their medical providers **did not discuss** menopause with them

52%

of respondents indicated their workplace culture **did not foster** an environment where employees would be comfortable taking time off due to menopause

79%

of respondents agree that a menopause-supportive workplace is **important** to them

77%

77% of respondents agree that they would like to **learn more** about workplace menopause protocols

Two large, stylized pink numbers '11' are positioned at the top of the page. The numbers are bold and have rounded, friendly-looking shapes. They are centered horizontally.

**respondents reported that
they left their job due to
menopause symptoms**

Assuming this survey is representative of all midlife working Michigan women experiencing menopause symptoms, this represents a loss of **16,500 women** from the workforce **yearly** due to menopause symptoms.

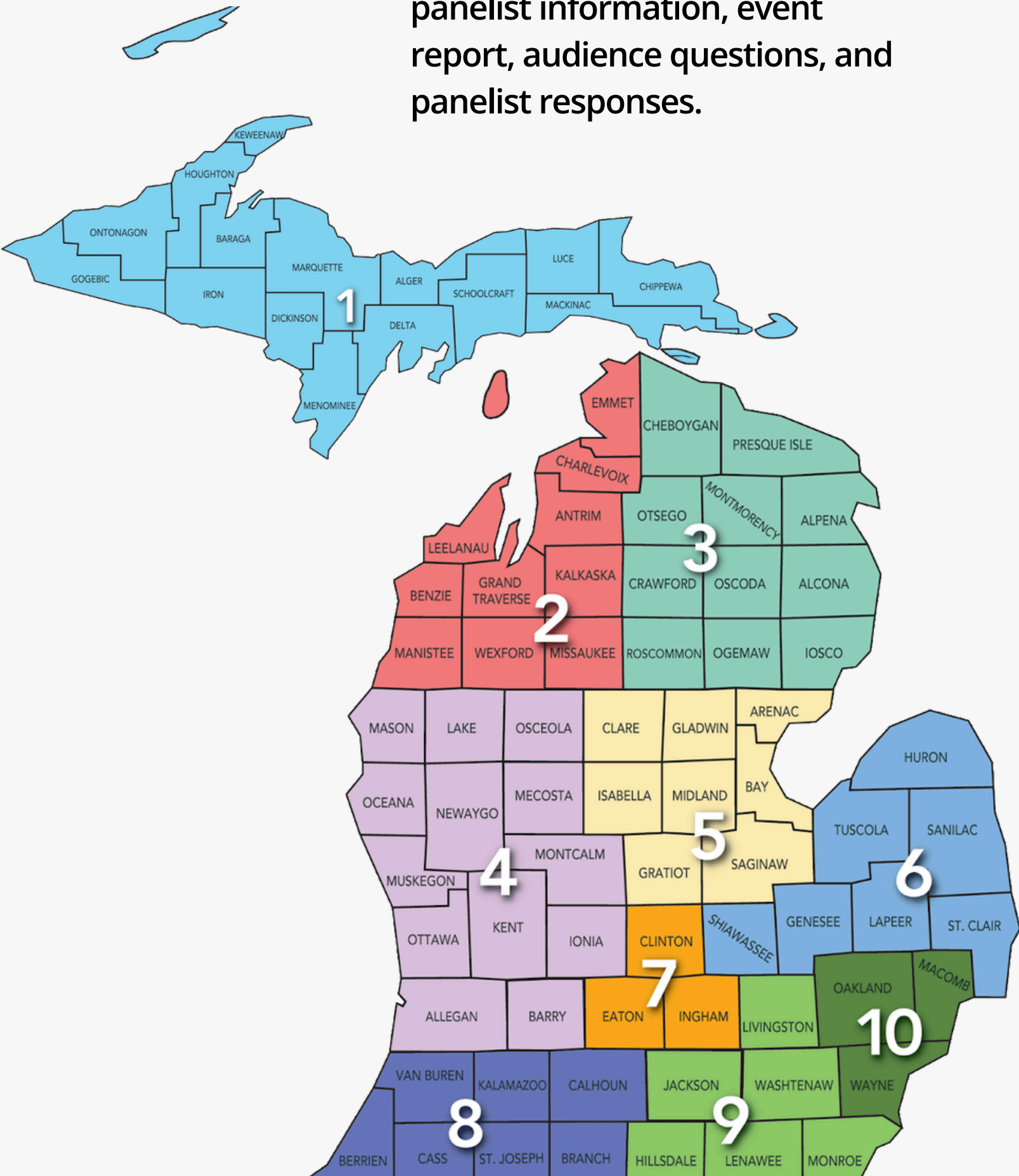


Statewide Menopause Conversations

MWC hosted 13 conversations in each of Michigan's prosperity regions convening healthcare professionals, naturopathic practitioners, mental health experts, and legislators to understand the needs and capture stories in each community.



Click on each region to view panelist information, event report, audience questions, and panelist responses.



The Top Questions Raised by Women Statewide

Across statewide Menopause, It's a Movement! conversations, several themes consistently emerged from both expert panelists and women sharing their lived experiences. Women across Michigan consistently asked three categories of questions:

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT): Risks, Safety, and Coverage

Participants expressed significant confusion about HRT, including:

- Risks and benefits
- Safety for women with a history of breast cancer
- Non-hormonal alternatives
- Insurance coverage and affordability

The recurring nature of these questions signals a clear need for better clinical guidance, updated provider education, and accessible, evidence-based public information.



Finding Knowledgeable Healthcare Providers

Many women reported difficulty locating healthcare providers trained in menopause care. Common concerns included:

- How to identify qualified providers
- What credentials or certifications to look for
- How to advocate for appropriate treatment when symptoms are dismissed

This highlights a gap in provider training and patient navigation support.



Managing Symptoms and Maintaining Workplace Productivity

Women sought practical guidance on managing:

- Weight gain
- Brain fog
- Hot flashes
- Sleep disruption
- Mood changes

Questions frequently included interest in both hormonal and non-hormonal approaches, reflecting a desire for individualized care plans that allow women to remain healthy, engaged, and thriving in their communities and workplaces.

“If I Had a Magic Wand...”

Panelist Priorities

Panelists were asked “If you had a magic wand and could create immediate change, what is one thing you would do to make this life transition easier for women?” Panelists’ priorities fell into three main categories:



Greater Education and Public Awareness

Normalize menopause as a standard life stage through public education, workplace awareness, and medical training.



Improved Access to Medical Care

Expand access to affordable, evidence-based menopause care, including appropriate insurance coverage.



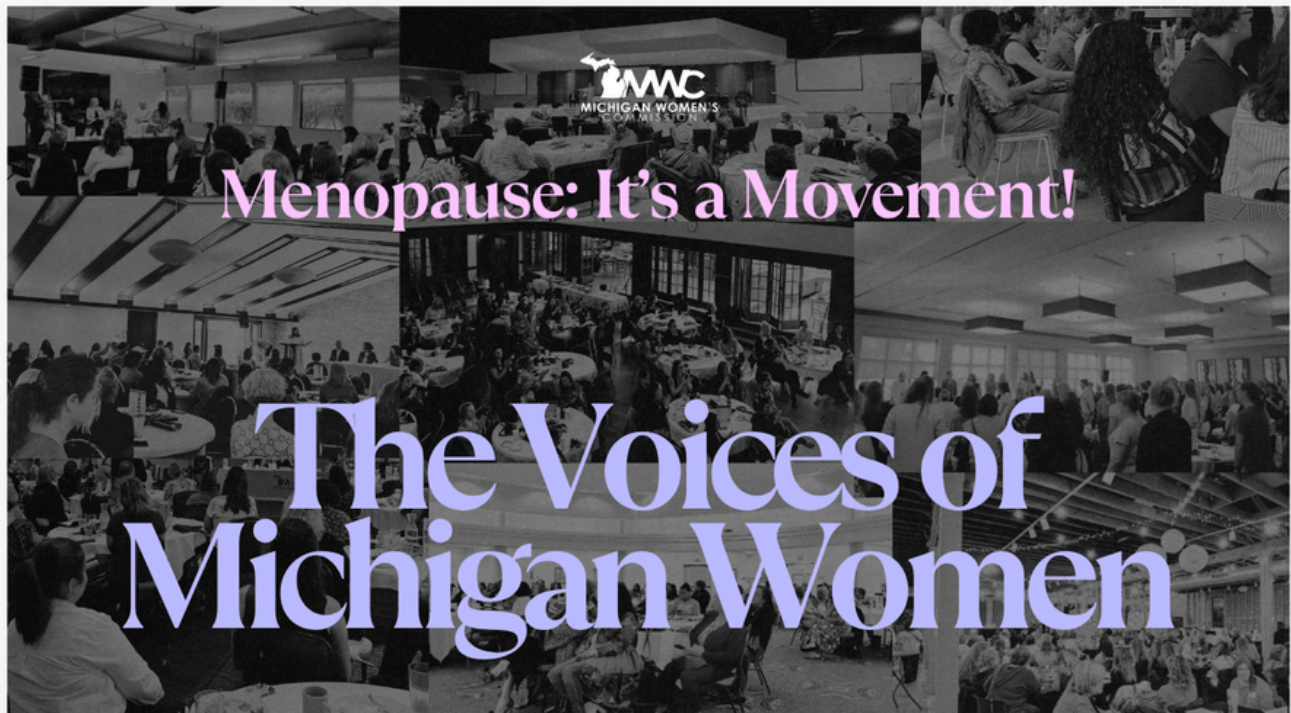
Holistic and Personalized Treatment Approaches

Ensure care that recognizes the full spectrum of women’s physical, mental, and social health needs during midlife.

These priorities underscore that menopause is not solely a health issue, it’s a workforce participation, economic security, and quality-of-life issue.

The Voices of Menopausal People in Michigan

At each menopause conversation attendees had an opportunity to share their menopause story by recording a video. This film is about the real Michigan women whose personal stories about menopause will inspire you to care, to cultivate knowledge, and to create change with us.



[Click this link to view the video](#)



A Message from Governor Gretchen Whitmer

In the following video, Governor Gretchen Whitmer reflects on the report's findings and underscores why menopause is not only a health issue, but an economic and community issue that deserves thoughtful action.

She calls on employers and lawmakers alike to listen to Michigan women and work together on practical, bipartisan solutions that strengthens families, workplaces, and our state's economy.



A Message from Governor Gretchen Whitmer

“Midlife women’s health and menopause are economic, health, and community issues — and we can no longer ignore them. I encourage employers and lawmakers alike to read the report, listen to these voices, and help women thrive during this important stage of life.”

- Gov. Gretchen Whitmer



[Click this link to view the video](#)

[Read the video transcript here](#)

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Their generosity and engagement made this memorandum possible.

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