



Champion of Women in Pain Talks to ABC News

Cynthia Toussaint Discusses Bias Across America Involving the Undertreatment of Women in Pain

MAY 9, 2005 -- Cynthia Toussaint, founder of For Grace and author of a landmark Women in Pain Bill of Rights, was a guest tonight on ABC's World News Now, discussing bias and prejudice by the medical community involving the undertreatment of women in pain across America. The segment, titled "Top Priority," is part of a week-long series on pain-related stories by the network.

Toussaint, who suffers in pain herself as a result of a chronic pain disease, Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy, told the ABC host that "we women are told by our physicians our pain is 'hormonal', or 'all in our heads.' We are given sedatives and anti-depressants, whereas men are likely to be believed and are given painkillers. I want equal treatment for all women suffering pain in this country."

Toussaint, a champion of womens' health issues involving pain and equality, testified recently before a California legislative hearing that focused on eliminating healthcare disparities for women in pain.

"Society's attitudes toward men and women in pain may influence physicians' treatment," says Toussaint. "Women openly discuss their pain, but oftentimes we are seen as 'too emotional, which, unfortunately, can lead to inadequate care. There are very real molecular differences between men and women that must be taken into account when treating pain."

Toussaint, 44, knows pain all too well. As a 21 year-old ballerina, she suffered a minor ballet injury that led to a lifetime of pain and poor treatment by those in charge of taking care of her.

"I don't want what happened to me to happen to anyone else," Toussaint says. "There must be greater accountability and more rigorous testing and research on behalf of all women."

About For Grace

For Grace is a national organization dedicated to raising awareness of the chronic pain disease, Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (also known as Complex Regional Pain Syndrome). For more information about For Grace, call 818.760.7635 or visit our website at <http://www.forgrace.org>.

To arrange interviews with Cynthia Toussaint, founder of For Grace, call 818.760.7635.