



Examples of Urinary Incontinence-Focused Patient Participant Newsletters

EMPOWER Team – University
Hospitals of Cleveland

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Examples of Urinary Incontinence-Focused Newsletters

Resource Description: These are examples of quarterly email newsletters that the EMPOWER team sent to patients actively enrolled in their AHRQ EvidenceNOW: Managing Urinary Incontinence Initiative study as well as participating practices.

These emails were a way of keeping patient participants and practice staff engaged throughout the study. Typically, these newsletters included clinical trial status updates, “meet the study team” highlights, and various educational resources for patients.

Raising awareness of urinary incontinence (UI) is one strategy for sustaining the implementation of UI screening in primary care practices. Email newsletters present an opportunity to educate patients directly about UI as well as educate providers on how they can help women with UI.

The following pages highlight **three** newsletters issued by the EMPOWER team.

EMPOWERing Times

A newsletter for participants in the EMPOWER Study
Empowering women to manage bladder leakage

ISSUE 1, JAN. 2023

Welcome

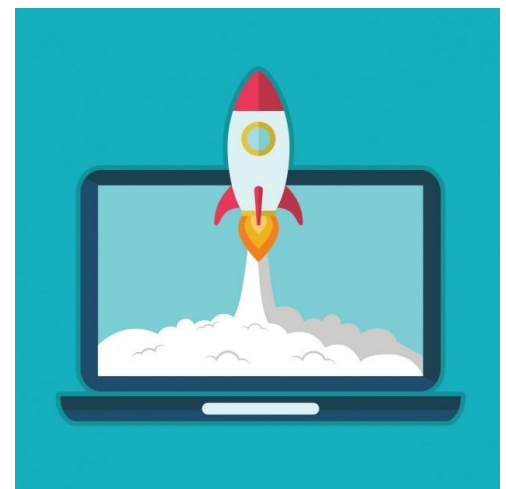
Greetings to all of you and Happy New Year! The EMPOWER Study Team would like to thank you for joining the EMPOWER Study and welcome you to the first issue of the quarterly newsletter.

Study Launch

On February 1, 2022, University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center received funding for a 3-year study under the direction of Dr. Adonis Hijaz from Urology and Dr. Goutham Rao from Family Medicine. This grant is from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) (pronounced "ark"). UH is one of five AHRQ award recipients across the country for studies focused on the management of urinary incontinence for women in the primary care setting.

Click [here](#) to read more about AHRQ's incontinence research mission.

Click [here](#) to read the UH press release about this study.



Did you know?

Two-thirds of women with a leaky bladder haven't spoken to their doctors about it. Women wait an average of 6.5 years before seeking professional help for a leaky bladder.

Goals at UH and for you

Our overall aim of this research is to improve the diagnosis of urinary incontinence and promote non-operative treatment. The first step is screening women for the condition within UH participating primary care practices. If you have any symptoms, we encourage you to seek treatment options that can positively impact your quality of life.

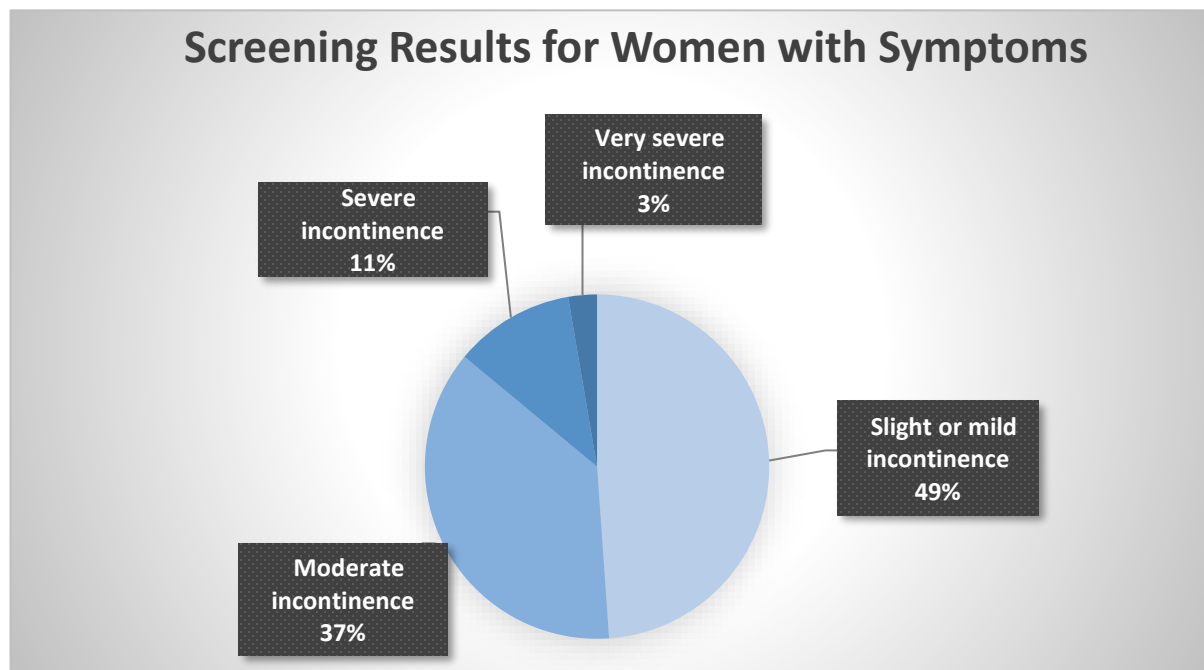
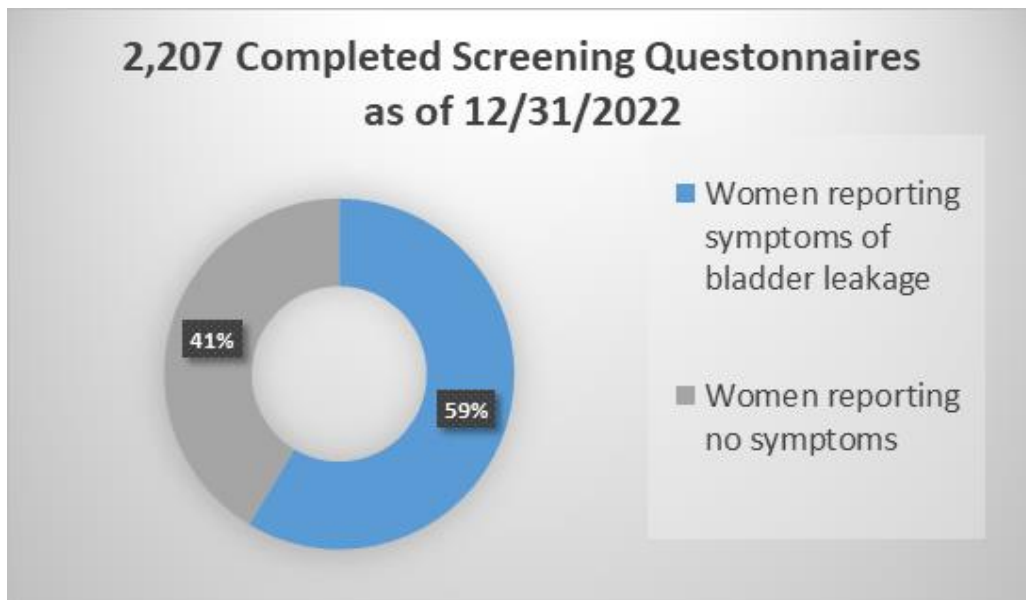
Helping Women Identify Symptoms

Under the new EMPOWER initiative, participating UH Primary Care practices are helping women identify symptoms of urinary incontinence by handing out screening questionnaires to all adult women for a 6-month time period. Women can complete the 4-question screener and add up their score in just a few minutes.

What are the results so far?

In the first quarter of the study, 59% of 2,207 women reported one or more symptoms of urinary incontinence. Of the women reporting symptoms, about half are categorized as "mild incontinence," and about half are "moderate," "severe," or "very severe."

See the results below.

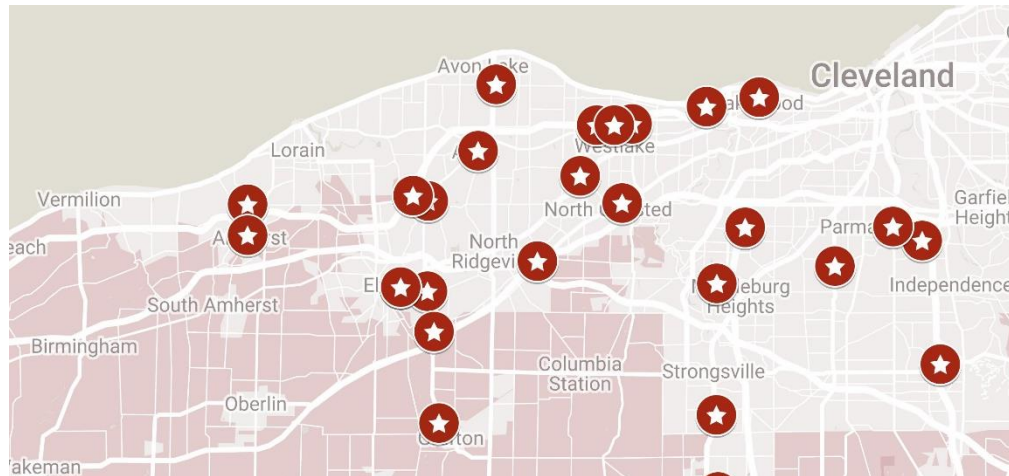


Involvement Across Northeast Ohio

The study will be available at most UH Primary Care practices around Cleveland and Northeast Ohio. It is rolling out at different times, depending on the region.

- Wave 1 started in September 2022 and includes the Northwest and Southwest areas.
- Wave 2 starts in April 2023 and includes the Central and South areas.
- Wave 3 starts in November 2023 and includes the Northeast and Southeast areas.

Here's a map of all the practices currently participating.



Amherst - UH Amherst Primary Care
 Amherst - UH Tri City Family Medicine
 Avon - UH Westshore Primary Care
 Avon Lake - UH Westshore Primary Care
 Brook Park - UH Parma Medical Associates
 Elyria - UH Elyria Internal Medicine
 Elyria - UH Elyria Primary Care
 Elyria - UH Ohio Medical Group
 Elyria - UH Tri City Family Medicine
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 Middleburg Hts. - UH Ohio Medical Group

Middleburg Hts. - UH Southwest Internal Medicine
 North Olmsted - UH Westshore Primary Care
 North Ridgeville - UH Westshore Primary Care
 Olmsted Township - UH Ohio Medical Group
 Parma - UH Parma Medical Associates
 Parma - UH South Primary Care
 Rocky River - UH Westshore Primary Care
 Sheffield - UH Sheffield Primary Care
 Sheffield Village - UH Westshore Primary Care
 Strongsville - UH Family Medicine Center
 Westlake - UH Ohio Medical Group
 Westlake - UH Westshore Primary Care
 Westlake - UH Westshore Primary Care - Hyland

Meet the Study Team



In each newsletter, we will highlight different study team members. To begin, we are sharing a post from the UH Urology Institute's Twitter account with a photo of our Nurse Navigators and those who coordinate and manage the study. This team has been busy orienting the Primary Care Practices to the EMPOWER Study.

For patients interested in hearing about the study, our team makes recruitment phone calls and carries out the consent process to participate.

When women enroll in the study, this team sends out questionnaires and coordinates the study activities. Contact the EMPOWER Study Team any time at (216) 286-7235 or EMPOWER.Study@uhhospitals.org

Study Enrollees

Women who enroll in the EMPOWER Study are assigned to one of the three following study groups and answer questionnaires periodically for up to 18 months.

78 women have joined the study as of the end of December. The table below shows the number of individuals in each group of the study so far.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
26 women	23 women	29 women
Usual Care – A patient's urinary incontinence is managed using standard of care treatment by her primary care provider.	Nurse Navigation – Along with what is described for "Usual Care," a nurse navigator works with a patient to provide education and help the patient move through the care pathway with options to explore behavioral changes and/or physical therapy.	Nurse Navigation and ChatBot – Along with what is described for "Usual Care" and "Nurse Navigation," this group includes a ChatBot that works like a mobile app and allows patients to interact with a program that provides education and coaching.

Thank you

YOU are making a DIFFERENCE. We appreciate you for sharing your experience and your time through study participation. Your participation helps us learn how to spread best practices for urinary incontinence.

Questions or comments: You are welcome to contact the Study Team at (216) 286-7235 or EMPOWER.Study@UHhospitals.org.

Opt out of newsletters: If you do not want to receive future issues of this newsletter, please reply to this message with the message "UNSUBSCRIBE" and we will remove you from the mailing list. This will not affect your participation in the study.

EMPOWERing Times

A newsletter for participants in the EMPOWER Study
Empowering women to manage bladder leakage

ISSUE 2, APR. 2023

Wondering What Inspired our Research?

University Hospitals, along with four other academic institutions, are working with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to improve nonsurgical treatment for women with urinary incontinence in the primary care setting.

Below are links to the official webpage and a public webinar that provides an overview of the entire initiative.

[Managing Urinary Incontinence \(MUI\) website](#)

[Webinar video](#)



In the webinar recording, some of the time points below may be of particular interest to you.

- Minute 15:00 – Hear from a patient about her urinary incontinence journey.
- Minute 33:00 – Hear about how urinary incontinence affects women across the nation.
- Minute 38:30 – Hear from our study leaders at UH: EMPOWER overview with Dr. Hijaz & Dr. Rao.

Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy is One Treatment Option for Urinary Incontinence

Have you been considering pelvic floor physical therapy?

University Hospitals does a great job providing specialists from different fields to ensure high quality health care options for women in our communities. One of the specialties offered is pelvic floor physical therapy. Pelvic floor physical therapy can help patients improve urinary incontinence by helping patients strengthen their pelvic floor muscles. In addition, physical therapy can help improve pelvic pain and pelvic organ prolapse. Initial consultation includes a screening, history and physical exam. A physical therapist will evaluate muscles of the pelvis, develop a personalized plan of care, and then use therapy exercises to help build your muscles in the pelvic floor.

Why might you choose to go to pelvic floor physical therapy? Physical therapists help their patients create an individualized treatment plan to improve the pelvic floor muscles. Pelvic floor physical therapy "can help you gain control your symptoms; reduce the need for pads, special underwear, and medicines; possibly avoid surgery."

(<https://www.choosept.com/guide/physical-therapy-guide-incontinence>)

How long will you have to go to pelvic floor physical therapy? Typically, it takes about 12 weeks to see improvement. This will vary for individuals, though.

Does health insurance cover pelvic floor physical therapy? Many health insurances do cover pelvic floor physical therapy. You can call your insurance provider to confirm the coverage before you schedule a visit.



How can you schedule a visit with a pelvic floor physical therapist at University Hospitals? Call 1-866-UH4-CARE (866-844-2273) to schedule an appointment.

Learn about ways to prevent and treat urinary incontinence symptoms through pelvic floor physical therapy in this [UH Health Talk](#).

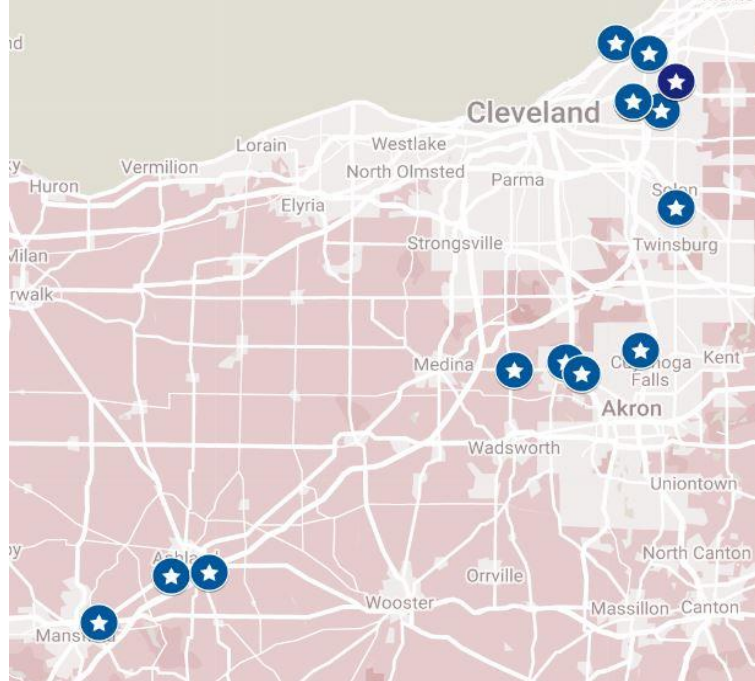


Continued Involvement Across Northeast Ohio

The EMPOWER Study will be available at most UH primary care practices around Cleveland and Northeast Ohio. It is rolling out at different times, depending on the region.

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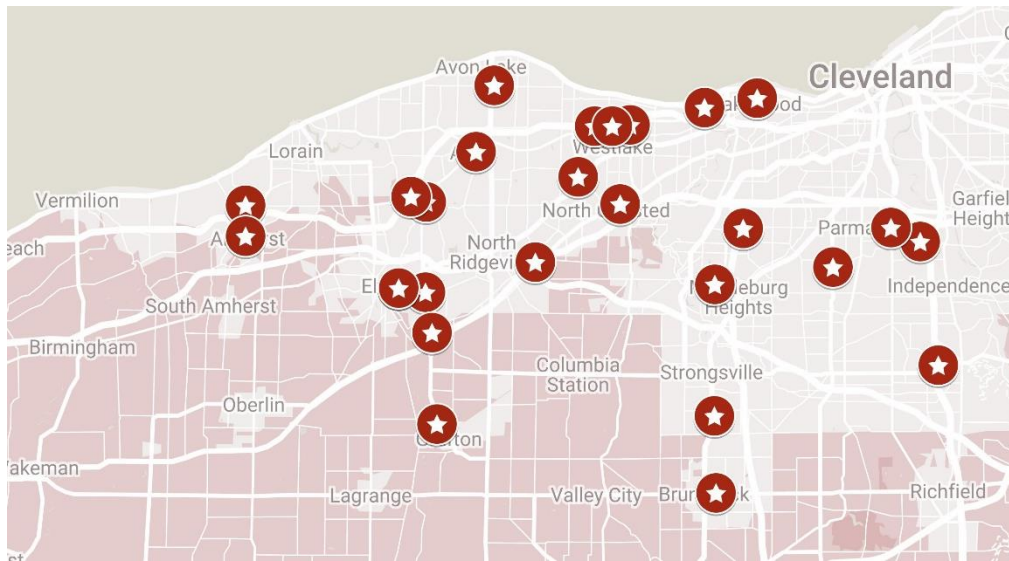
Here is a map of all the new practices currently participating in Wave 2.



Ashland - UH Samaritan Primary Care
Ashland - UH Mid-Ohio Internal Medicine
Cuyahoga Falls - UH Internal Medicine Specialists
Euclid - UH Euclid Internal Medicine
Fairlawn - UH Copley Medical Group
Fairlawn - UH Internal Medicine Specialists
Mayfield Village - UH Georgian Medical Group

Mayfield Village - UH Sass, Friedman & Associates
Mayfield Heights - UH Landerbrook Medical Group
Richmond Heights - UH Gregory L. Hall Practice
South Euclid - UH Green Road Cleveland Physicians
South Euclid - UH Green Road Primary Care
South Euclid - UH Green Road Suburban Health Ctr.
Solon - University Suburban Health Center Physicians
Wadsworth - UH Sharon Family Physicians

Here is a map of all the practices participating in Wave 1.



Amherst - UH Amherst Primary Care
 Amherst - UH Tri City Family Medicine
 Avon - UH Westshore Primary Care
 Avon Lake – UH Westshore Primary Care
 Brook Park - UH Parma Medical Associates
 Elyria - UH Elyria Internal Medicine
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 Strongsville – UH Family Medicine Center
 Westlake - UH Ohio Medical Group
 Westlake - UH Westshore Primary Care
 Westlake - UH Westshore Primary Care (Hyland)

Meet the Study Team

In each newsletter, we will highlight different study team members.

Meet Karen Connor, a talented pelvic floor physical therapist who works at University Hospitals Westlake location.



Karen Connor, PT DPT, PRPC works as a pelvic health clinical specialist at University Hospitals. In addition to her doctorate, she holds a certification pelvic floor rehabilitation. Her passion is demystifying the pelvic floor and pelvic floor function. She has presented at local universities, community groups and professional organizations on topics including: physiology of stress, yoga and the pelvic floor, pregnancy, and common pelvic floor dysfunctions (urinary/bowel dysfunction). Dr. Connor is currently developing several health initiatives for patients at University Hospitals including sexual health, chronic pelvic pain and postpartum recovery.

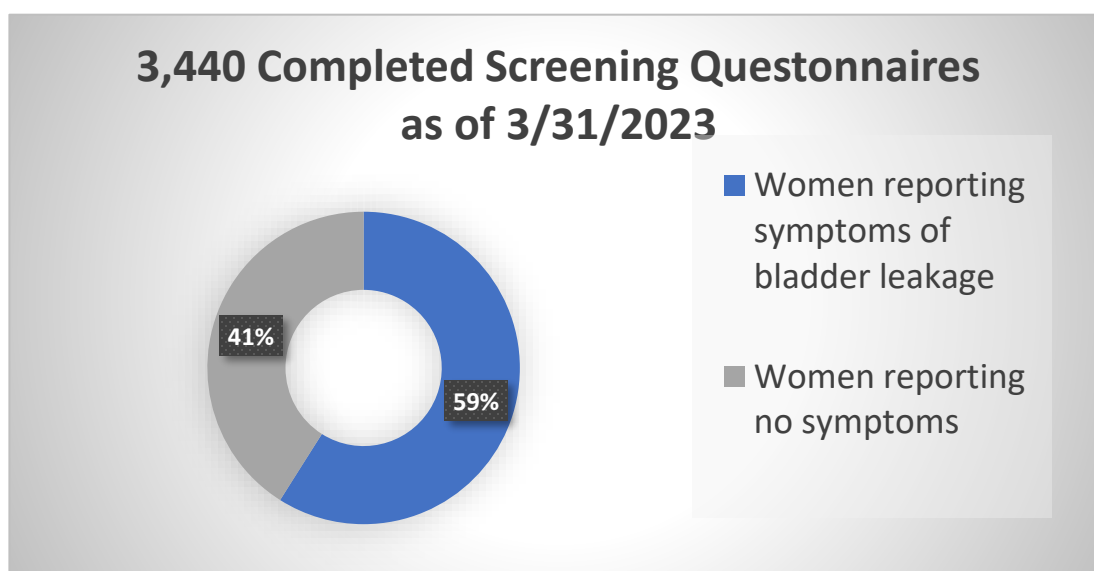
Contact the EMPOWER Study Team any time at (216) 286-7235 or <mailto:EMPOWER.Study@uhhospitals.org>

Helping Women Identify Symptoms through the EMPOWER Initiative

Participating UH primary care practices are helping women identify symptoms of urinary incontinence by handing out screening questionnaires to all adult women.

What are the results so far?

In the first 7 months of screening, 2,054 out of 3,440 women reported one or more symptoms of bladder leakage—that's 59%! Of the women reporting symptoms, about half have moderate to severe incontinence.



EMPOWER Study Enrollees

Women who enroll in the EMPOWER Study are assigned to one of the three following study groups and answer questionnaires periodically for up to 18 months.

116 women have joined the study as of the end of March. The table below shows

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
30 women	49 women	37 women
Usual Care – A patient’s urinary incontinence is managed using standard of care treatment by her primary care provider.	Nurse Navigation – Along with what is described for “Usual Care,” a nurse navigator works with a patient to provide education and help the patient move through the care pathway with options to explore behavioral changes and/or physical therapy.	Nurse Navigation and ChatBot – Along with what is described for “Usual Care” and “Nurse Navigation,” this group includes a ChatBot that works like a mobile app and allows patients to interact with a program that provides education and coaching.

the number of individuals in each group of the study so far.

Study Statistics from September 2022 – March 2023

- Women range in age from 23 through 86 and the average age of all participants is 58 years.
- 85% of participants are white, 4% black, 2% multi-racial, 2% are other races and 7% did not answer.
- 4% of participants are Hispanic/Latino/Latinx.
- Participants with all levels of incontinence severity are in the study: 34% mild incontinence, 51% moderate incontinence, 26% severe incontinence, 7% very severe incontinence.

Would you like to post a question?

If you would like to ask a question that we can address in a Q & A section of a future issue of EMPOWERing Times, please reply to this email or send your question to us at EMPOWER.Study@UHHospitals.org. Questions will be posted without using your name.

Thank you!

YOU are making a DIFFERENCE. We appreciate you for sharing your experience and your time through study participation. Your participation helps us learn how to spread best practices for urinary incontinence.

Questions or comments: You are welcome to contact the study team at (216) 286-7235 or EMPOWER.Study@UHHospitals.org.

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*EMPOWER Study
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Cleveland, OH 44106*

EMPOWERing Times: Newsletter Issue #3

EMPOWERing Times

A newsletter for participants in the EMPOWER Study
Empowering women to manage bladder leakage

ISSUE 3, JUL. 2023

Hello again from the EMPOWER Team!

We hope that you are enjoying the summer and making the most of each day.

This issue of the *EMPOWERing Times* newsletter is packed full of resources that you may find interesting and useful. Feel free to share this and any issue with family and friends. Our mission is to help raise awareness and decrease the stigma of addressing bladder leakage. We aim to EMPOWER women and their providers in managing urinary incontinence.

To catch a recent story about EMPOWER, check out the Tweet below or visit www.uhhospitals.org/UI-NewApproach to read the article

Improving Urinary Incontinence: Lifestyle Changes That Can Make a Difference

Urinary incontinence is a common condition that can significantly impact a woman's quality of life. Lifestyle changes can play a crucial role in managing and improving urinary incontinence symptoms. Here are some lifestyle changes that may help:

- **Quit Smoking:** Did you know that smoking is linked to a higher risk of urinary incontinence? Smoking may cause more frequent urges to use the restroom, as



nicotine is an irritant to the bladder. Quitting smoking not only improves your overall health but also reduces the severity and risk of urinary incontinence symptoms.

- **Manage Chronic Coughing:** Persistent coughing can put pressure on the bladder, contributing to stress urinary incontinence. If you have a chronic cough, it's important to consult with a healthcare professional to identify and treat the underlying cause.
- **Maintain a Healthy Weight:** Excess weight can strain the bladder and pelvic floor muscles, worsening urinary incontinence. Engaging in regular physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight can alleviate this pressure and reduce symptoms.
- **Make Dietary Modifications:** Certain foods and beverages can irritate the bladder, making urinary incontinence worse. Consider avoiding or reducing the intake of bladder irritants such as caffeine, alcohol, spicy foods, and artificial sweeteners.
- **Manage Constipation:** Chronic constipation can put pressure on the bladder and cause you to strain when having a bowel movement - this can worsen incontinence. Incorporate a high-fiber diet, stay physically active, and establish regular bowel habits to prevent constipation.

Remember that everyone's experience with urinary incontinence is unique, and not all lifestyle changes may work for everyone. It's important to be patient and persistent while finding the combination of strategies that work best for you.



Helpful resources for smoking cessation

A website that has a live online chat-bot and other good resources including an app to use:

www.smokefree.gov

- This site that has an app and texting program to aide in smoking cessation:
www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/how_to_quit
- Get free confidential coaching through a telephone quit line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), this is the national portal to all state-level quit lines.
- This website provides information about an agency sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - The Office on Smoking and Health (OSH).
www.cdc.gov/tobacco/about/osh/
- Some insurance plans cover nicotine replacement therapy for quitting smoking and patients can get prescriptions from their primary care provider.

Do you feel like you want a bit more support and/or resources?

A number of organizations provide information and support for women with urinary incontinence.

HealthUnlocked.com/SimonFoundationForContinence – Offers a moderated form where you're able to post questions and receive a response within 48 hours. This can be a useful tool for troubleshooting symptom relief and learn how to prevent symptoms.

Toll-Free Number for the Simon Foundation: 1-800-23SIMON (1-800-237-4666) – Leave a voicemail and receive information within 48 hours. Clinically based staff and information scientists curate the information and resources provided.

VoicesForPFD.org/Bladder-Control/Prevention – This site was created by American Urogynecologic Society to focus on pelvic floor disorders (PFDs). The site offers many education sheets, some frequently asked questions, a list of other fantastic resource options, and much more.

SupportIncontinence.org – This website contains definitions, facts, information on how you can get help and treatment options. This site also offers testimonials that you are able to view and a blog that will help you stay up date on all the latest news and developments regarding incontinence.

NAFC.org – The National Association for Continence (NAFC) is a worldwide consumer advocacy organization for consumers and is dedicated to public education and awareness of incontinence. Their website offers education and support to patients suffering from

urinary incontinence. To check out some "Life Without Leaks" Podcast episodes, click here: www.nafc.org/life-without-leaks-podcast.

ToTellOrNot.org – A disclosure toolkit is available if you are trying to figure out how to start a conversation about your urinary incontinence with others and disclose that you suffer from urinary incontinence. This site also offers small group virtual coaching workshops and support groups.

If you are looking for local support and would like to see a urologist in the Northeast Ohio region, visit www.uhhospitals.org/services/urology-services/locations for a list of locations and phone numbers.

Meet the Study Team

In each newsletter, we highlight different study team members.

Meet Dr. Goutham Rao, a board-certified family physician and the Co-Principal Investigator of the EMPOWER Study.



Goutham Rao, MD, is the Jack H. Medalie Professor and Chairman of the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at both University Hospitals of Cleveland and Case Western Reserve University. He is a health services researcher with an interest in improving primary health care delivery, especially for the identification, evaluation, and management of cardiovascular risks. Rao directs University Hospitals' medical obesity treatment program. He has served on a number of prominent national committees, including as Chair of the American Heart Association's Obesity Committee. In 2012, he was among the first groups of physicians to be board certified in obesity medicine. He has received research funding from government agencies and is currently a member of the Health Information

Technology and Research Study Section for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). He is also a member of the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force. Dr. Rao is the author of more than 100 publications, including four published books. Dr. Rao resides with his family in Chagrin Falls, Ohio.

During the lockdown months of COVID, Dr. Rao picked up a new hobby of playing the piano! Now he eagerly plays piano every morning, reminding us all to set aside time for ourselves every day.

Did you know that University Hospitals offers a weight loss program called Fitter Me founded by Dr. Goutham Rao that encourages behavioral changes to promote weight loss? More information about this program can be found at www.UHhospitals.org/FitterMe.

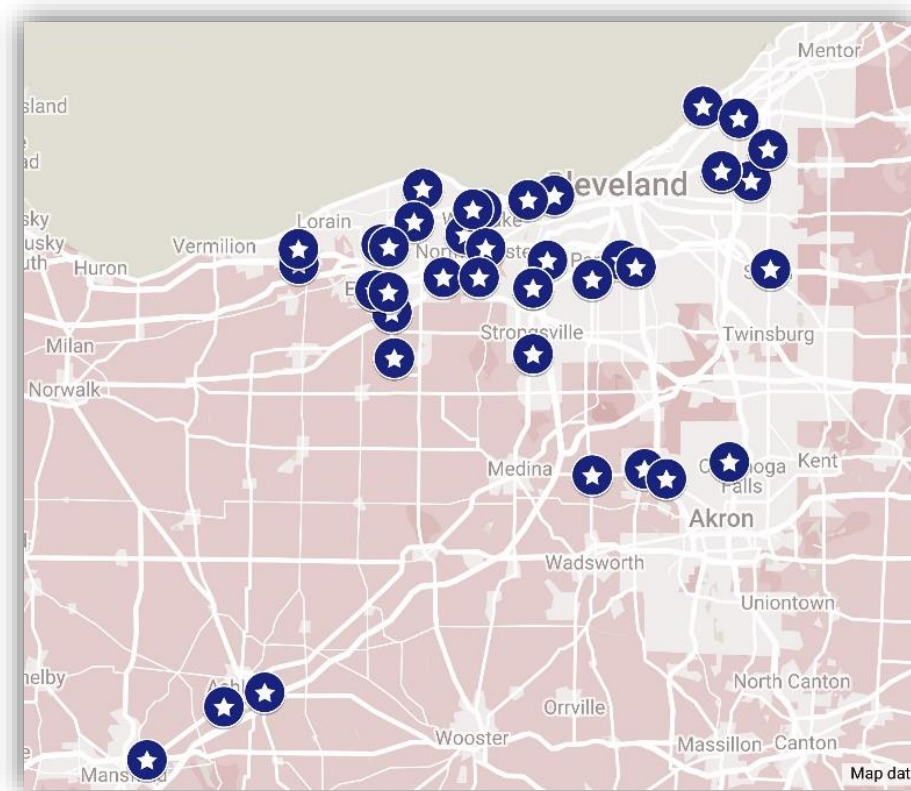
Helping Women in Northeast Ohio Identify Symptoms through the EMPOWER Initiative

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The project begins at different times, depending on the region.

- Wave 1 started in September 2022 and includes the northwest and southwest areas.
- Wave 2 started in April 2023 and includes the central and south areas
- Wave 3 starts in November 2023 and includes the northeast and southeast areas.

Here is a map of the 41 practices currently participating in Wave 1 and Wave 2.

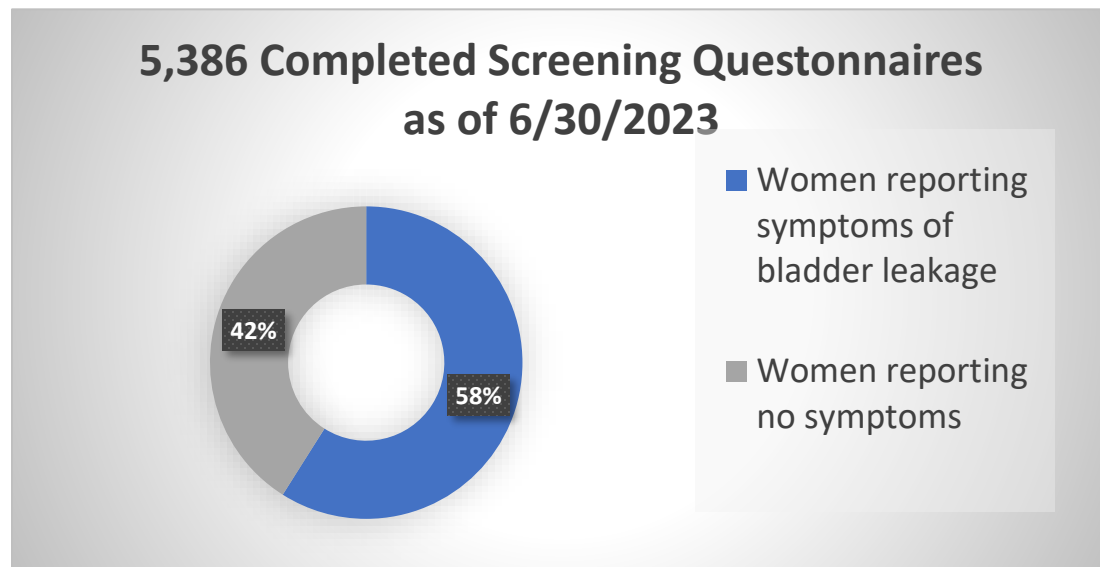


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What are the results so far?

In the first 10 months of screening, 3,103 out of 5,386 women reported one or more symptoms of bladder leakage—that's 58%! Of the women reporting symptoms, about half have moderate to severe incontinence.



EMPOWER Study Enrollees

You are one of the **171 women** who have joined the study as of the end of June.

Your participation in this research is incredibly valuable and will help us help women in the future. The table below shows the number of individuals in each group of the study so far.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
59 women	61 women	51 women
Usual Care – A patient’s urinary incontinence is managed using standard of care treatment by her primary care provider.	Nurse Navigation – Along with what is described for “Usual Care,” a nurse navigator works with a patient to provide education and help the patient move through the care pathway with options to explore behavioral changes and/or physical therapy.	Nurse Navigation and ChatBot – Along with what is described for “Usual Care” and “Nurse Navigation,” this group includes a ChatBot that works like a mobile app and allows patients to interact with a program that provides education and coaching.

Study Statistics from September 2022 – June 2023

- Women range in age from 23 through 86 and the average age of all participants is 58 years.
- 83% of participants are white, 6% black, 1% multi-racial, 2% are other races and 8% did not answer.
- 4% of participants are Hispanic/Latino/Latinx.
- Participants with all levels of incontinence severity are in the study: 33% mild incontinence, 42% moderate incontinence, 20% severe incontinence, 5% very severe incontinence.

We collect this information because our goal is to reach ALL women who are seen in the participating UH primary care practices. The more diversity we have in our study participants, the more we will learn. We strive to reach women of all ages, races, ethnicities, whether symptoms are mild or severe.

What questions do you have about bladder leakage?

If you would like to ask a question that we can address in a Question & Answer section of a future issue of *EMPOWERing Times*, please reply to this email or send your question to us at EMPOWER.Study@UHHospitals.org. Questions will be addressed anonymously.

Thank you!

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