

## Ten actions to advance the role of women in medicine

**By Dr. Clover Hemans, co-chair OMA Women**

I urge women physicians to choose at least one or two of these actions that resonate with you. Talking alone will not change behaviour.

1. Put women (especially BIPOC women) on search committees when hiring physicians, physician leaders, medical educators and surgical specialists, or when appointing people to hospital or other medical boards. Diverse representation on search committees leads to increased diversity in hiring and leadership.
2. Demand transparency in job descriptions and compensation.
3. Require all staff receive bias and awareness training to alleviate the excuses/responses to some of the more blatantly misogynistic, racist and sexual affronts and discrimination in medicine. Follow this up with anti-discrimination policies and enforce them.
4. Press for fair and equitable compensation, including fair parental leave compensation. The gender pay gap is real. It cannot be explained by hours of work. It has long-term consequences for livelihood, respect and promotion. When specialties become “feminized” they become fiscally devalued.
5. Continue the fight against “pink-pointing,” where women are pointed toward specialties more “suitable” for their gender, are penalized when applying to areas such as surgical specialties and are as viewed as “less” if their working life interferes with their role as a mother.
6. Measure and report data around the lack of female clinical chiefs of departments, corporate division heads and equally paid leaders.
7. Learn to leverage informal networks. Make friends with writers and journalists. Become comfortable with writing so you can share your insights and experiences.
8. Build and support formal mentorship, allyship and nurturing relationships that support excellence and skill acquisition for women in leadership. Join organizations/committees that appreciate, nurture, elevate and amplify women and their work.
9. Advocate for a deliberate rebalance of roles/positions where women are unfairly absent. Waiting for voluntary steps to rebalance gender inequities and power does not work.
10. Become social media savvy. Leverage this tool for increased awareness of the “cement” ceiling. An enlarged digital footprint and outreach means women can lend support across the globe even when borders are closed.