

**AUA**  
**2026**  
Washington, DC

MAY 15-18

**Empowering Practice and  
Expanding Access:**  
An Advanced Practice Provider-Led  
Model for Pelvic and Sexual Health

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No disclosures

## Session Goals

This presentation is designed to share

1

Why our center  
was needed

2

Rationale for  
APP-led model

3

Outcomes for  
patients, APPs,  
specialists

Pelvic and Sexual Medicine = inherently *multidisciplinary*

**Challenge** in women's health:

There is not one specialty that "owns" pelvic and sexual health

Women are not sure where to go for help.

*Primary Care? Gynecology? Urology? Counseling?*

Academic Medicine is *not* inherently communicative.

**Challenge** in our region: “silo effect”

Referring providers do not know where to send patients for problems.  
Even within the same institution.

*Especially true for pelvic and sexual health problems.*

## Prevalence in U.S.

**25%**

Women with at least  
one symptomatic  
pelvic floor disorder  
symptom

**10%**

Women who  
experience FI

**20%**

Lifetime risk of  
surgery for POP or  
incontinence

**40%**

Women who report  
a sexual problem

## Goals of Pelvic Wellness Center

To improve care:

1

Access

2

Continuity

3

Quality

## Access Issues

- Long wait times for new patients
- Multiple referrals before definitive evaluation
- Lack of comprehensive care

## Continuity Problems

- Lack of “one-stop shop”
- Fragmented communication across services
- Lost to follow-up common

## Quality Concerns

- Symptoms normalized or underreported
- Limited time for education and conservative management
- Care not consistently “person-centered”

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# Pelvic Wellness Center

**Mission:** to provide comprehensive, compassionate, and high-quality care to women with pelvic floor disorders and sexual health concerns

**Key partnerships:** OB/GYN, Urology, Colorectal Surgery, Gastroenterology, Pelvic Floor PT, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Infectious Disease, Neurology, Oncology, Psychiatry

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## PELVIC WELLNESS CENTER

The first multidisciplinary, nurse practitioner-led center within SIU Medicine, focusing on the pelvic and sexual wellness of women.



## OUR SERVICES



### BLADDER HEALTH

Bladder problems are common and can be frustrating for women. Our providers offer a variety of treatment options for conditions including overactive bladder, urine leakage, recurrent bladder infections, night-time urinary frequency and pelvic organ prolapse.



### BOWEL HEALTH

Accidental bowel leakage is the loss of normal control of the bowels leading to leakage of stool or gas. Although this problem is difficult for many to discuss, it is common and affects about 10% of young women and 15% of older adult women. Treatments are available and offered by the expert providers in our center.



### MENOPAUSE

Women make up 50% of the population, and every one of us will go through menopause. Unfortunately, most women are not provided education about what to expect and what happens to our bodies and moods during this time. Menopause is different for each woman, and our providers are trained to provide thorough education and an individualized management plan.



### SEXUAL HEALTH

Sexual wellness plays an important role in our overall well-being. Our sexuality counselor and educators provide a safe and supportive space for individuals to explore and address concerns related to their sexual health and relationships.

## Patient Experience

- Earlier access to diagnosis and treatment
- More time for education, normalization, shared decision-making
- Clear, stream-lined follow-up plans

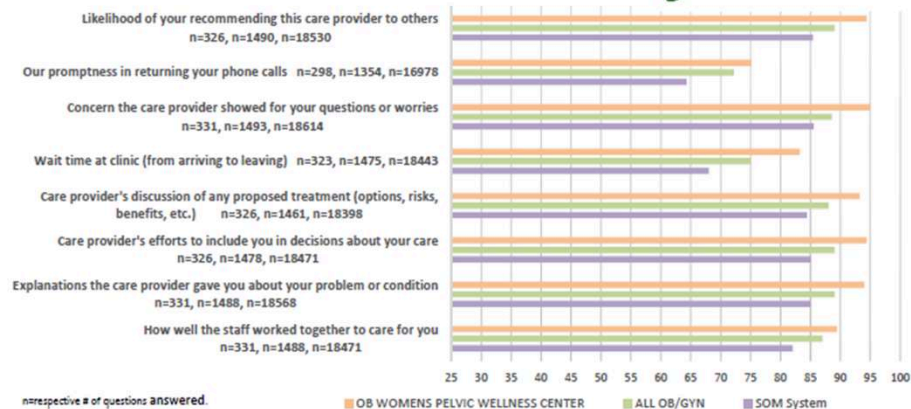
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- *“10/10 all around! She was amazing and compassionate. The staff was friendly. I can’t say enough positive about my experience. Pelvic floor is an embarrassing issue and they made me feel very comfortable throughout my visit.”*
- *“The entire staff was amazing. I felt completely comfortable. I never at any point in time felt like I was a burden. They listened openly. They explained everything very very well. One of the best appointments I’ve ever had in my life.”*
- *“Absolutely one of the best medical visits I’ve ever had. She answered my questions, informed me about my condition and validated my experiences. We met in a consult space which made it easier to have a discussion.”*

PATIENT EXPERIENCE % TOP BOX RESULTS, PRESS GANEY.

June 2025 through February 2026



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## Physician Partner Outcomes

- Well-informed and prepared surgical patients
- Fewer non-surgical referrals and consultations
- More time in surgery and training residents

## APP Outcomes

- Enhanced autonomy
- Improved levels of professional fulfillment
- Work-life balance benefits

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*“A key strength of practicing within a nurse practitioner–led pelvic wellness center is the high level of professional autonomy. Unlike many physician-led models, this setting allows for independent clinical decision-making, including the ability to evaluate, diagnose, treat, perform procedures, and document care without requiring physician co-signatures. This autonomy enhances efficiency, supports timely patient care, and reinforces accountability in practice, while still maintaining a collaborative team environment when consultation is needed.”*

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*“Opportunities for professional growth and fulfillment are plentiful. Our leadership supports conferences and continuing education. We can further our formal education if we choose and are supported financially and with the time needed to pursue this. We have a great (and thankful) patient population. We are lucky enough to help women who have been dismissed or gaslit by healthcare for much of their lives. We are able to pursue the patient populations we are interested in. We all have our niches within our group.”*

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*“The presence of multiple nurse practitioners fosters a collaborative work environment. We provide mutual support and coverage, which contributes to maintaining a healthy work-life balance and minimizing professional burnout.”*

*“Work-life balance is fantastic. We are all moms as are many of our patients. When family needs arise, adjustments are made without judgement or bias. Coverage (from the other 4 NPs) is there without asking.”*

**Any other positives you find in your role at PWC...**

*“A safe, calm, inclusive environment that allows patients to focus on their healing.”*

*“Having a director who is an APP has been essential; she has understood the barriers within the system for APPs, championed for our seat at the table, and brought the PWC to be an excellent space for providers and patients.”*

*“This is literally the **unicorn job**. We have such an amazing group of providers, nursing staff, patients, leadership.*

## Key Takeaways

APP-led care:

Improves  
patient access

Optimizes care  
continuity and  
quality

Enhances  
outcomes for  
everyone  
involved

## Questions?

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