A PROFILE & HISTORY OF WOMEN IN MEDICINE
By the beginning of the 20th century, the number of women physicians in the United States had increased to more than 7,000 – up from about 200 in 1860.

Nevertheless, women remained a minority in medicine throughout the 1900s.
However, the number of female physicians in medicine has been steadily increasing:

- In 2013, 31.9% of all physicians were women and 45.3% of all residents/fellows were women.
- Between 1980 and 2013, the number of female physicians increased by 514%.
- Since 1975, the number of female physicians has grown more than six-fold, from 35,626 to 333,294 in 2013.

Between 1975 and 2013, female physicians in patient care grew by 556.1%, which was largely accounted for by the high increase in the number of female physicians in office-based practice (792.0%).

In 1975, there were only seven specialties that had more than 1,000 female physicians: pediatrics; internal medicine; psychiatry; general/family medicine; anesthesiology; obstetrics/gynecology; and pathology.

By 2013, there were 10 specialties with more than 6,000 female physicians: pediatrics; internal medicine; general/family medicine; obstetrics/gynecology; psychiatry; anesthesiology; emergency medicine; general surgery; pathology; and diagnostic radiology.

The progress of women in medicine is a long and continuing journey.

There are many pioneering women physicians to thank, and many accomplishments to celebrate...
1849  Elizabeth Blackwell, MD becomes the first woman to receive a US medical degree, from Geneva Medical College in New York.

1864  Rebecca Lee Crumpler, MD becomes the first African-American woman to receive an MD.
1866  Ann Preston, MD, is appointed the first female dean of the Women’s Medical College of Pennsylvania.

1868  Elizabeth Blackwell, MD establishes the Women’s Medical College, affiliated with her New York Infirmary.

1870  University of Michigan becomes the first state medical school to formally admit women.
1876  Sarah Hackett Stevenson, MD, becomes the first woman physician to join the AMA.

1886  Mary Harris Thompson, MD, founder of the Hospital for Women and Children in Chicago, is the first woman to present a scientific paper at an AMA Annual Meeting and the first woman to be published in JAMA.
1889  Susan La Flesche Picotte, MD, graduates and becomes the first Native American woman to receive a medical degree in the US.

1897  Eliza Ann Grier, MD, an emancipated slave, becomes the first African American woman licensed to practice medicine in Georgia.
1915 The Medical Women’s National Association (now known as the American Medical Women’s Association) was founded by Bertha Van Hoosen, MD.

1919 Alice Conklin, MD, serves as a delegate from the Illinois State Medical Society, the first female delegate after the 1901 formation of the AMA House of Delegates.
1943  Margaret Craighill, MD, becomes the first woman physician to join the US Military.

1945  Harvard Medical School admits women for the first time.

1947  Gerty Cori, MD, is the first woman to win the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, sharing the prize with her husband, also an MD.
1952  Virginia Apgar, MD, develops the Apgar Score, the first standardized test used to evaluate newborns.

1960  Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, PA is the last medical school to admit female students.

1969  Louise C. Gloeckner, MD, is elected AMA vice president, becoming the highest ranking woman physician in the organization to date.
1979  AMA establishes the Ad Hoc Committee on Women Physicians to encourage the membership and participation of women physicians throughout organized medicine.

1989  Nancy Dickey, MD becomes the first woman elected to the AMA Board of Trustees.

1990  Antonia Novello, MD becomes the first woman and first Hispanic to be appointed U.S. Surgeon General.
The 1990s saw a dramatic increase in the influence and activism of women physicians:

- In 1990, the AMA launched *Women in Medicine (WIM) Month* as a national effort.

- The AMA issued its ground-breaking report on “Gender Disparities in Clinical Decision Making.”

- The AMA adopted policy reports, authored by the WIM Advisory Panel, on maternity leave, child care, sexual harassment, parental leave, gender neutral language and other issues critical to women in medicine.
1996 The American Medical Women’s Association (AMWA) is granted a voting seat in the AMA House of Delegates. Diana Dell, MD is seated as the first AMWA delegate.

1997 The AMA establishes the Women Physicians Congress (WPC) as an advocacy and networking forum dedicated to women in medicine.
1998  Nancy Dickey, MD is inaugurated as the first female President of the AMA.

2000  AMA elects Nancy Nielsen, MD as the first female vice-speaker of the House of Delegates.

2003  Dr. Nielsen is elected speaker, the first woman to hold that position in the AMA.
2007 The AMA House of Delegates unanimously votes for Dr. Nielsen to fill the post of President-Elect, the second woman ever elected to the position.

2008 Dr. Nielsen was inaugurated as the second female president of the AMA.

2012 Ardis Dee Hoven, MD is inaugurated as the third female president of the AMA.
2013 The AMA established the Women Physicians Section (WPS), which represents more than 70,000 women physicians and medical students.

2015 Susan R. Bailey, MD is elected as the second female speaker of the House of Delegates.
From the inception of the Ad Hoc Committee on Women Physicians in 1979 to the newly established Women Physicians Section in 2013, the AMA has celebrated the achievements of women in medicine and advocated for women’s health and professional concerns. The AMA will continue to support women in medicine.