RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
CONNECTICUT

COMMITTEES:

ARMED SERVICES

HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

JUDICIARY

VETERANS' AFFAIRS
RANKING MEMBER

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

503 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224–2823
FAX: (202) 224–9673

90 STATE HOUSE SQUARE, TENTH FLOOR
HARTFORD, CT 06103
(860) 258–6940
FAX: (860) 258–6958

915 LAFAYETTE BOULEVARD, SUITE 304
BRIDGEPORT, CT 06604
(203) 330-0598
FAX: (203) 330-0608

http://blumenthal.senate.gov

October 28, 2026

Mr. Kyle Diamantas
Acting Commissioner
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20993

Dear Acting Commissioner Diamantas,

I write today to highlight growing concerns regarding the ongoing shortage of estradiol transdermal patches (estrogen patches) currently impacting women experiencing menopause across the country. I strongly urge the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to work with manufacturers to mitigate supply issues and restore reliable access to estrogen to protect patients. This includes adding estrogen patches to the FDA's Drug Shortage Database, seeking alternative suppliers, and extending expiration dates for HRT drugs as appropriate.

Last year, the FDA removed a black box warning for estrogen patches to reflect current scientific consensus supporting the safety and efficacy of estrogen patches in helping women manage menopause symptoms, including hot flashes, mood swings, decreased bone density, and more. The surge in demand left patients scrambling to fill their prescription. As a result, women are experiencing disruptions in their treatment with many reporting joining long waiting lists[1] or discontinuing use all together.[2]

Each day, approximately 6,000 women in the United States reach menopause[3] and in a given year more than 8 million women experience symptoms that affect their quality of life.[4] Despite

[1] Cassidy Williams, "Local pharmacies run out of estrogen patches as demand surges," *WFSB Eyewitness News 3* (Wolcott, CT), March 23, 2026, https://www.wfsb.com/2026/03/23/local-pharmacies-out-estrogen-patches-demand-surges/.
[2] Angelica Peebles, "Estrogen patches are hard to find, and it may not be resolved any time soon," *CNBC* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ), June 26, 2026, https://www.cnbc.com/2026/06/26/estrogen-patches-are-in-short-supply-as-women-seek-menopause-support.html.
[3] https://swhr.org/health_focus_area/menopause/
[4] "Women in Menopause Often Go Untreated," AARP Public Policy Institute, last modified April 17, 2025, https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/health/conditions-treatment/menopause-women-untreated/.

the prevalence, very few are able to access treatment.[5] Estrogen patches are the most common form of hormone therapy for women experiencing menopause and help to alleviate symptoms by gradually releasing estrogen through the skin.[6] In the past two years, the use of estrogen patches has more than doubled from 594,000 prescriptions in June 2024 to 1.6 million prescriptions in May 2026.[7] While the demand for this treatment has increased, persistent shortages have prevented women from accessing the care they need.

Recently, Women's Health Connecticut, a provider of gynecology care serving over 330,000 Connecticut women annually, reported that only 10 percent of their patients with a prescription for estrogen patches were able to access their prescriptions. Further, their pharmacy data revealed that their monthly fill rate declined from approximately 50 percent to below 8 percent recently.[8] One woman in Connecticut reported having to stop her treatment after calling numerous pharmacies in search of her estrogen patch and being told there were "72 people in the queue waiting for them".[9]

Last month, FDA said it was working with manufacturers to increase supply of the patches but has stopped short of declaring a shortage.[10] Further, while FDA has recommended that individuals work with their health care providers to find alternative treatments, estrogen patches, are the preferred formulation and recommended by providers over other alternatives.[11] That is why it is imperative that FDA use its authorities to mitigate this shortage before it gets worse.

American women battling menopause deserve access to comprehensive medical care and treatments or we risk eliminating years of progress in women's health. I urge the FDA to take every possible step to address this shortage and work to prevent future disruptions.

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[5] "Women in Menopause Often Go Untreated," AARP Public Policy Institute, last modified April 17, 2025, https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/health/conditions-treatment/menopause-women-untreated/.
[6] Angelica Peebles, "Estrogen patches are hard to find, and it may not be resolved any time soon," *CNBC* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ), June 26, 2026, https://www.cnbc.com/2026/06/26/estrogen-patches-are-in-short-supply-as-women-seek-menopause-support.html.
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] Women's Health Connecticut, "As estrogen shortage continues, Women's Health Connecticut data reports sharp rise in HRT demand & gap in supply," press release, September 14, 2026.
[9] Cassidy Williams, "Local pharmacies run out of estrogen patches as demand surges," *WFSB Eyewitness News 3* (Wolcott, CT), March 23, 2026, https://www.wfsb.com/2026/03/23/local-pharmacies-out-estrogen-patches-demand-surges/.
[10] Sriparna Roy, " US House Democratic Women's Caucus press health secretary on estrogen patch shortages," *Reuters,* September 29, 2026, *https*://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/us-house-democratic-womens-caucus-press-health-secretary-estrogen-patch-2026-09-29/.
[11] Marina Šprem Goldštajn, *et al.,* "Effects of transdermal versus oral hormone replacement therapy in postmenopause: a systematic review," *Archives of Gynechology and Obstetrics 307* (June 2023): 1727–1745. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10147786/

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate