

## Challenges facing collective healthcare for women

Since the early decades of the last century, the call for a broader perspective on healthcare for women has increasingly been heard in Brazil. Thanks to the organization and mobilization of civil and governmental sectors in general – and the feminist movement as protagonist, in particular – the transformations of these aspirations into programmed guidelines and actions have occurred in the political field. Among all the various legal texts that sought, and still seek, to provide an impetus for these changes, the most important is the National Policy for Comprehensive Women's Healthcare, created in 2004 and in force to the present day.

In its guidelines, this policy is geared to provide care for women at all phases of their life cycles, taking into account the specifics of the varied population groups, including afro-descendant, indigenous, urban, rural, incarcerated, homosexual and handicapped women, among others. There are two main lines of action underpinning these guidelines. The first relates to the perspective of gender, race and ethnicity that should guide policy, whereas the second refers to broadening the spectrum in order to move forward to include all aspects of women's health, in addition to sexual and reproductive health.

Even though the objectives of this policy have been successful throughout its existence, it is paramount to focus on some challenges, especially when it comes to facing cutbacks that often occur in the context of practices that seek to make these objectives viable. In this sense, difficulties are observed in providing comprehensive healthcare for women, due to biomedical reductionist approaches; failure to place women in context in the field of gender relations; almost exclusive domination of heteronormativity; structural issues that limit access to healthcare and compromise the quantity and quality of healthcare services rendered.

These challenges should not be seen as a stultifying factor. On the contrary, they should serve as a call to action to move forward in ensuring women's healthcare. One of the ways for this to occur has to do with the socialization of both theoretical and empirical research findings that seek to shed light on the commitments and actions of prevention and promotion of women's healthcare. It is with this purpose in mind that a collection of articles focused on women's healthcare is presented below.

Romeu Gomes  
*Chief Editor*