

RESOLUTION

Subject: Menstrual Poverty

Submitted by: Alex Thebert, MD and Jessica Adkins-Murphy, MD - Resident and Fellows Section

Referred to: Reference Committee

WHEREAS, menstrual poverty refers to the inability to purchase hygiene products (tampons, pads, reusable menstrual cups) regularly and lack of access to private areas with water and soap and places to dispose of menstrual products¹; and

WHEREAS, the poverty rate in Kentucky is 16% overall and 21% for children under 18, which is 48th and 47th worst in the nation respectively^{2,3,4}; and

WHEREAS, a study of low-income women in a large urban center showed that menstrual poverty may be more common than previously thought, with 64% of respondents being unable to afford menstrual products at one point in the past year⁵; and

WHEREAS, girls in school also struggle with period poverty, one study of teenage girls showed that 23% had difficulty obtaining menstrual products and 51% have worn menstrual products longer than recommended⁶; and

WHEREAS, low-income benefits such as SNAP and WIC do not cover menstrual hygiene products⁷; and

WHEREAS, the lifetime cost for menstrual products are estimated to be \$1800 and state taxes can add as much as 10% to the cost of menstrual products⁸; and

WHEREAS, Kentucky has a 6% sales tax applied to menstrual products⁹; and

WHEREAS, insecurity in menstruation hygiene can lead to anxiety, school absences, and decisions between menstrual hygiene and food^{1,5}; and

WHEREAS, when unable to afford menstrual product, women had to use alternatives such as rags, toilet paper, and children's diapers^{5,6}; and

WHEREAS, use of standard menstrual products for longer durations than recommended and these alternatives could produce negative side effects such as UTI, vulvar contact dermatitis, yeast infections, bacterial vaginosis, and even toxic shock syndrome; and

WHEREAS, Kentucky currently provides free menstrual products at state prisons¹⁰; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that KMA support legislation exempting menstrual products from the state sales tax; and be it further

RESOLVED, that KMA support providing menstrual hygiene products free of charge in public facilities such as state prisons and public schools.

References:

- ¹ Cardoso LF, Scolese AM, Hamidaddin A, Gupta J. Period poverty and mental health implications among college-aged women in the United States. *BMC Women's Health*. 2021;21(1):14. doi:[10.1186/s12905-020-01149-5](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-020-01149-5)
- ² Kentucky Report - 2020. Talk Poverty. Accessed May 5, 2022. <https://talkpoverty.org/state-year-report/kentucky-2020-report/>
- ³ Kentucky Poverty Rate. WelfareInfo.org. Accessed May 5, 2022. <https://www.welfareinfo.org/poverty-rate/kentucky/>
- ⁴ Advocates KY. 2021 Kentucky KIDS COUNT County Data Book: A Look at Data Trends and Solutions to Advance Racial Equity in the Commonwealth. Kentucky Youth Advocates. Accessed May 5, 2022. <https://kyyouth.org/2021-kentucky-kids-count-county-data-book-a-look-at-data-trends-and-solutions-to-advance-racial-equity-in-the-commonwealth/>
- ⁵ Sebert Kuhlmann A, Peters Bergquist E, Danjoint D, Wall LL. Unmet Menstrual Hygiene Needs Among Low-Income Women. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*. 2019;133(2):238-244. doi:[10.1097/AOG.0000000000003060](https://doi.org/10.1097/AOG.0000000000003060)
- ⁶ Period.org State of the Period 2021. Period.org. Accessed May 5, 2022. <https://period.org/uploads/State-of-the-Period-2021.pdf>
- ⁷ Kilpatrick AR and S. Changing the Cycle: Period Poverty as a Public Health Crisis. Accessed May 5, 2022. <https://sph.umich.edu/pursuit/2020posts/period-poverty.html>
- ⁸ The Unequal Price of Periods. American Civil Liberties Union. Accessed May 5, 2022. <https://www.aclu.org/report/unequal-price-periods>
- ⁹ Kentucky 2021 - Streamlined Sales Tax. Accessed May 5, 2022. <https://sst.streamlinedsalestax.org/TM/Form/4684>
- ¹⁰ *Regulation of Jails - Adoption and Revision of Standards - Classification of Jails*. <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/law/statutes/statute.aspx?id=51312>