

Nationally Recognized Healthcare and Business Leaders Convene in Phoenix for Screening of The M Factor 2.0 - Before the Pause



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PHOENIX, Feb. 18, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Perimenopause — the hormonal transition that can begin in a woman's late 30s or early 40s and last up to a decade — affects millions of women during their peak earning and leadership years. Yet it remains one of the least understood and least supported phases of women's health. Research shows that **up to 80–90% of women experience symptoms** such as sleep disruption, anxiety, cognitive changes, metabolic shifts, and increased cardiovascular risk. In the United States alone, menopause-related symptoms are associated with an estimated **\$1.8 billion annually in lost work productivity**, with total workplace and healthcare costs exceeding **\$26 billion per year**, according to findings published in *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*.

These numbers underscore a growing national reality: midlife women's health is not only a clinical issue — it is an economic and workforce imperative.

Building on the global success of the original *The M Factor* documentary — which was screened internationally and reached millions through digital downloads — *The M Factor 2.0 – Before the Pause* turns its focus to perimenopause, the critical and often overlooked years leading into menopause. The film examines systemic gaps in research, funding, and clinical education while highlighting the leaders and innovations working to reshape the future of care.

On Tuesday, February 24, healthcare executives, physicians, investors, entrepreneurs, and policymakers will gather in Phoenix for a special screening of the film, followed by a high-level panel discussion exploring the intersection of medicine, technology, workplace policy, and women's health innovation.

The screening is sponsored by HonorHealth, The City of Phoenix, Southwest Medical Imaging (SMIL), BTAC Capital, Arizona State University Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation, and The Pause Technologies.

The evening will feature a post-film panel moderated by **Greg Barr, Editor at Large of the Phoenix Business Journal**, with speakers including:

- **Kim Post, DNP**, Chief Operating Officer, HonorHealth
- **Megan Stuff**, Chief Operating Officer, Southwest Medical Imaging (SMIL)
- **Tammy McLeod, PhD**, President and Chief Executive Officer, Flinn Foundation
- **Dr. Mia Chorney, DNP, FNP-BC, MSCP**, Co-founder and Chief Medical Officer, The Pause Technologies
- **Jennifer Simone, MD**, Women's Service Line Chair, Honor Health Network
- **Dr. Katherine (Kathy) Kenny, DNP, RN, ANP-BC**, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Arizona State University Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation
- **Dr. John Shufeldt, MD, JD, MBA, FACEP**, Distinguished Professor of Practice, Arizona State University; Emergency Physician and Healthcare Entrepreneur
- **Melissa Lamson**, Executive Vice President for Venture Development and Innovation Strategy, Arizona Commerce Authority
- **Dr. Mitzi Krockover**, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Woman Centered, LLC; Managing Director, Golden Seeds

Together, these leaders will examine how healthcare systems, employers, investors, and policymakers can better support women navigating one of the most biologically complex and professionally demanding stages of life.

"Like many women, throughout my life I have taken on many roles—a mom, nurse, and healthcare executive," said Kim Post, DNP, Chief Operating Officer at HonorHealth. "I've seen firsthand how women's midlife health is often overlooked, especially during menopause transitions. That's why we're proud to support The M Factor 2 and help spark honest conversations that empower women to understand their bodies and advocate for their health. Women's health is community health."

Judith Karshmer, PhD, PMHCNS-BC, FAAN, Dean and Professor at the Arizona State University Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation, added, "For too long, menopause has been treated as something women should simply endure rather than understand and manage with proper care and support. By sponsoring this film, we reinforce our commitment to women's health, evidence-based education, and open conversations that lead to better outcomes."

Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego stated:

"Leaders such as Susan Sly and Dr. Mia Chorney are changing the future of care with The Pause Technologies, a Phoenix-based company revolutionizing women's health through innovative, science-backed, and accessible tools designed to improve their well-being. Thanks to pioneering companies like The Pause, Phoenix is shining bright on the international stage for advancements in biosciences and health care, and we're proud to support their work."

The film features **Susan Sly**, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of The Pause Technologies. Voted one of the top women in the world in real-time artificial intelligence, Sly is credited in the film as an **AI Ethicist**, where she addresses the urgent need for trustworthy and inclusive AI systems in women's healthcare.

"I am grateful to be featured in this film addressing why we cannot build trustworthy AI on faulty or incomplete data," said Sly. "When women are underrepresented in the datasets driving healthcare innovation, the technology itself becomes biased by design. Advancing women's health through AI isn't just a technical challenge, it is my life's mission to ensure these systems are accurate, inclusive, and built to serve women at every stage of life."

Among the innovations highlighted in the documentary is **The Pause app** which leverages clinically informed artificial intelligence to help women interpret symptom patterns, understand potential risk factors, and prepare for more informed conversations with their healthcare providers. In an increasingly crowded digital health landscape, the platform represents a new standard: combining medical oversight with AI-driven clarity to move women from uncertainty to confident action.

"As a clinician, I work with women every day who are navigating perimenopause and menopause with symptoms that significantly affect their health, cognition, and quality of life," said Dr. Mia Chorney, DNP, FNP-BC, MSCP, Co-founder and Chief Medical Officer of The Pause Technologies. "These transitions are frequently under-recognized and under-treated in clinical practice. Supporting The M Factor 2 is about translating what I see in the exam room into broader awareness, better education, and more effective care for women."

"As a woman in my 40s, this is one of the most demanding seasons of life," said Megan Stuff, Chief Operating Officer of SMIL. "Yet so many women navigate this stage without enough education or support. I'm proud to stand behind a film that moves this conversation forward."

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