

Physician develops lab coats for women

The slits in the sides of a lab coat were more than just openings to access pants pockets.

They let through an idea for something better.

“One morning after coming home from an especially difficult shift, I complained to my husband about my awful lab coat,” says Leslie Latterman, MD, a board-certified internist and a practicing hospitalist for Allegheny Health Network.

“It was dingy and heavy and it fit me like a tent. In exasperation, I yelled at my husband, ‘What are these stupid holes on the sides for?’ His response was, ‘That’s to allow men to reach into their trouser pockets.’

“We’ve been forced to wear a lab coat designed for a man.”

Women doctors want a lab coat that suits their needs, Dr. Latterman says. It took her six years to launch Designs by Dr. Leslie, a company that makes designer lab coats with women in mind. Her motto is: “You’re extraordinary! ... Shouldn’t your lab coat be?”

When Dr. Latterman started her first job, she was asked what size she wore



PHOTO PROVIDED

A model wears a lab coat designed specifically for women by Dr. Leslie Latterman.

in a men’s lab coat.

“A men’s lab coat?” she says. “I had to ask again to make sure I heard the

question properly. It’s the same basic coat that doctors have worn for over 100 years. They didn’t have pagers or cellphones back then and they certainly didn’t have very many women physicians. That’s when I decided to make something better.”

Dr. Latterman proportioned the coat so that it looks like what it is – a woman’s garment. For style and function, epaulettes were added to improve the look of the coat, make it more flattering for the wearer, and, with a Velcro closure, provide a way to attach a stethoscope. Also, the coat is more form fitting to enhance the fundamental femininity of the physician, assert her identity, and set her apart from her male counterparts.

“When you are doing your job, you want to be able to perform at your best,” says Dr. Latterman.

For details, visit www.designerlab-coats.com

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