



Women First Research Coalition

WFRC Second Quarter 2024 Activities Update

WFRC Solicits Co-Chair Nominations

Consistent with WFRC's organizational documents, WFRC put out a call for a new chair-elect whose term will begin on September 1 of this year. The call for nominations has concluded and the voting membership of WFRC will approve the chair-elect slate this summer. Look out for a welcome message from the new co-chairs in the Third Quarter update.

Legislative Activities

Update on Fiscal Year 2025 Appropriations

The House Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee marked up the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Labor-HHS appropriations bill on June 27, with the full committee mark-up scheduled for July 10. The [bill](#) provides for a seven percent cut to the Department of Health and Human Services and flat funds the National Institutes of Health (NIH) at \$48 billion.

What is more concerning is that the legislation adopts the [NIH reform framework](#) advanced by Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers. This represents an attempt to authorize major changes to NIH – reducing the number of NIH institutes and centers from 27 to 15 – through the appropriations process without moving the proposal through the committee process or providing an opportunity for public comment. WFRC is working with other likeminded organizations to oppose the policy's inclusion in the appropriations bill. We will be discussing the McMorris Rodgers framework at our July meeting. Much of the report does appear to be address Republican concerns about the NIH's work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides the proposal to reduce the number of institutes and centers from 27 to 15, the framework also imposes term limits on the institute and center directors and limits each investigator to no more than three ongoing awards.

At this time, we do not know whether our report language was adopted. We will know more when the report is released prior to the full Appropriations Committee markup on July 10.

The Senate is planning to hold subcommittee mark-ups in July. We expect the Senate funding levels will be higher than those included in the House Labor-HHS bill.

WFRC Report Language Requests for Fiscal Year 2025

WFRC continued to advocate for our three report language requests for FY 2025. As a reminder, the first request is for the committee to include \$8 million for the Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health (BIRCWH) program. The second request is for the committee to include \$3 million for the Women Reproductive Health Research (WRHR) career development program. The third request is for the NICHD to support research on the impact of OB/GYN closures on maternal morbidity and mortality, as well as women's health more broadly. We were pleased to see that 19 senators joined Senator Tammy Duckworth's (D-IL) Dear Colleague letter in support of all three of the report language requests.

FY 2025 Outside Witness Testimony Submitted to House and Senate Appropriations

The WFRC submitted outside witness testimony to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees for the FY 2025 Labor, Health and Human Services, Educated and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) appropriations bill. We requested \$51.303 billion, an increase of \$4.2 billion, to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). We also requested that the committees consider including our report language in the report that accompanies the final FY 2025 Labor-HHS appropriations bill.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS & GYNECOLOGISTS • AMERICAN GYNECOLOGICAL & OBSTETRICAL SOCIETY • AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR REPRODUCTIVE MEDICINE • AMERICAN UROGYNECOLOGIC SOCIETY • COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY CHAIRS IN OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY • INFECTIOUS DISEASE SOCIETY FOR OBSTETRICS & GYNECOLOGY • NORTH AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PEDIATRIC AND ADOLESCENT GYNECOLOGY • SOCIETY FOR ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY • SOCIETY FOR ACADEMIC SPECIALISTS IN GENERAL OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY • SOCIETY OF FAMILY PLANNING • SOCIETY OF GYNECOLOGIC ONCOLOGY • SOCIETY FOR MATERNAL-FETAL MEDICINE • SOCIETY FOR REPRODUCTIVE ENDOCRINOLOGY AND INFERTILITY • SOCIETY FOR REPRODUCTIVE INVESTIGATION • SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH

Support for NIH-focused Report Language Requests from WFRC Members

Thanks to input from WFRC members, we compiled letters in support of NIH-focused report language that has been submitted by WFRC member organizations. We sent the letters to the House and Senate appropriators, which support inclusion of the language in the report accompanying the FY 2025 Labor-HHS appropriations bill.

Congressional Meetings on the White House Initiative

WFRC staff continues to meet with key congressional offices to discuss potential funding and support for the White House Initiative on Women's Health Research and our planned congressional briefing. To date, we have met with Senate Appropriations Chair Patty Murray (D-WA), Senate Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee Chair Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), House Appropriations Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Women's Health Caucus co-chairs Reps. Kat Cammack (R-FL) and Susie Lee (D-NV), and House Appropriations committee member Rep. Julia Letlow (R-LA). We were also pleased to have Caitlin Peruccio from Ranking Member DeLauro's office on our May membership call to give an update on FY 2025 appropriations and implementation of the Women's Health Initiative.

Agency Outreach

NICHD Outreach on Understanding Chronic Conditions RFA

WFRC reached out to NICHD staff regarding concerns raised by our members on the recent [Understanding Chronic Conditions RFA](#), which was supported by several I/Cs and faced funding challenges and a low payline. We will report back once we are able to meet with NICHD on these concerns and to ensure that our members' concerns are heard.

Agency Activities

NASEM Panel on the Assessment of NIH Research on Women's Health

The NASEM panel on the Assessment of NIH Research on Women's Health [met](#) on May 20. Dr. Vivian Pinn gave a presentation on the history of the NIH's Office of Research on Women's Health. Several speakers, including WFRC member Dr. Christos Coutifaris, presented on the workforce development programs for women's health research.

NIH Releases Updated Strategic Plan for Research on the Health of Women

The NIH released the [NIH-Wide Strategic Plan for Research on the Health of Women, 2024-2028](#), which serves as a roadmap to guide and inform NIH-support research on the diseases and health conditions that uniquely affect women. The Strategic Plan includes the following five strategic goals:

- Advance research that examines the multiple biological, behavioral, social, structural, and environmental factors that influence the health of women, as well as the intersections of these factors.
- Improve data science and data management practices with innovative research methods, measurements, and cutting-edge technologies to prevent and treat conditions affecting women.
- Foster women scientists' career development and promote scientific workforce training and education that advances the health of women and the science of sex and gender influences.
- Support the basic and translational study of the biology underlying sex influences and its intersection with disease and health preservation in women across the life course.
- Advance community-engaged science across the research and practice continuum and enhance the dissemination and implementation of evidence-based solutions to improve the health of women.

NIH Director Dr. Bertagnolli shared a video to launch the new Strategic Plan, which can be found [here](#).

New Publication on the Consideration of Sex as a Biological Variable in Research

A new NIH publication, *Ensuring Accountability for Consideration of Sex as a Biological Variable in Research*, of which ORWH Director Janine A. Clayton is a contributing author, will appear in the July-August 2024 issue of *Nursing Outlook*. It asserts the expectation that researchers account for the influence of SABV in vertebrate animal and human studies and provides a strong justification for single-sex investigations. It also underscores that when SABV is considered in the research design, data analyses, and reporting, the rigor and reproducibility of the research are elevated and inform best practices.

Funding Opportunities from NIH I/Cs

NOSI: R13 Support for Conferences and Scientific Meetings to Support Consensus Building for Autoimmune Disease Research Related Common Data Elements ([NOT-OD-24-145](#))

First available application due date: August 12, 2024

NOSI: Women's Health Research ([NOT-OD-24-079](#))

Expiration date: November 5, 2027

NOSI: Research Supplements to Promote Re-Entry, Re-integration into, and Re-training in Health-Related Research Careers (Admin Supp - Clinical Trial Not Allowed) ([NOT-OD-23-170](#))

Expiration date: October 9, 2026