



WOMEN
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COALITION

Women First Research Coalition

WFRC Third Quarter 2024 Activities Update

Announcement of New WFRC Chair-Elect

We are pleased to announce that Dr. David Turok has been elected as the WFRC chair-elect for 2024-2025. Below, please find Dr. Turok's bio. We look forward to his leadership for the coming year! We appreciate the work of our past co-chairs who are rotating off, Dr. Irina Burd and Dr. Lisa Barroilhet. Dr. Marianna Alperin will serve as the chair and Dr. Mostafa Borahay as the past chair for 2024-2025.

David Turok MD, MPH is Professor and Division Director of Family Planning in the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology at the University of Utah where he also serves as the Director of the ASCENT Center for Reproductive Health. He is an active clinician, researcher, and educator focused on increasing access to high quality family planning care in Utah and Intermountain West. His research on developing novel contraceptive methods, overcoming barriers to contraceptive access, and community engaged projects delivering no-cost contraception has been funded by the NIH, private foundations, and pharma. This includes an NICHD mid-career research and mentoring award (K24).

Dr. Turok has led several local and multi-institutional research collaborations including a significant body of work expanding use of IUDs for emergency contraception. The results of these projects, supported by NIH funding, have yielded extensive publications including work by his team published in the New England Journal of Medicine. This work has changed global clinical practice. Dr. Turok also serves as the Utah site PI for the NICHD's Contraceptive Clinical Trials Network and has leadership experience in a several career development programs (K12 and KL2). In addition, he has served on several NIH study sections. As a WFRC member he represents the Society of Family Planning (SFP). His research, mentoring, and reviewing experiences enable him to share a wide range of personal experiences that highlight WFRC advocacy positions to augment research funding.

Legislative Activities

Update on Fiscal Year 2025 Appropriations

The House Appropriations Committee marked up the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Labor-HHS appropriations bill on July 10. The [bill](#) cuts the Department of Health and Human Services by seven percent and flat funds the National Institutes of Health (NIH) at \$48 billion. The House Labor-HHS report did not include any of the WFRC's report language requests.

The legislation also 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. Much of the framework does appear to 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.

The Senate Appropriations Committee marked up the FY 2025 Labor-HHS appropriations bill on August 1, 2024. As expected, the [bill](#) included higher funding for health programs than the House version of the bill; it provides \$50.224 billion in funding for the NIH, which is a \$2.05 billion increase from FY 2024. The [report](#) accompanying the bill includes all three of the WFRC's report language requests, as well as support for the White House Initiative on Women's Health Research.

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

Congress was not able to finish FY 2025 appropriations before the new fiscal year began on October 1. Instead, Congress passed a continuing resolution through December 20 that keeps current funding levels in place until after the election. Whether Congress finalizes FY 2025 funding levels during the lame duck session will depend on the outcome of the November election.

Action Alert Opposing the FY 2025 Labor-HHS Bill

WFRC members had the opportunity to take action and contact their representatives asking them to oppose the House Labor-HHS appropriations bill. We flagged how the bill would undermine biomedical research and research efforts to support women's health, particularly by flat-funding the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and reorganizing the NIH without input from experts.

Response to Energy & Commerce's NIH Reform Framework

The WFRC submitted comments to the Energy & Commerce Committee in response to the RFI on the Framework for Discussion on Reforming the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Our comments focused on concerns with the process and the need to have an open and transparent bipartisan process to reform the NIH. We also expressed concerns with the impact of the proposal on women's health research, as well as the specific issues with the proposed I/C consolidation. The WFRC reached out to Energy & Commerce staff to meet and discuss our comments.

Agency Outreach

NICHD Outreach on Reproductive Medicine Network

WFRC reached out to NICHD staff regarding next steps for the Reproductive Medicine Network since the linked R01s have expired. Once the meeting is scheduled, we will work with WFRC members on an agenda for the meeting.

CDMRP Outreach on Women's Health Research Investments

WFRC reached out to the Congressional Directed Medical Research Programs at the Department of Defense to discuss the recent \$500 million investment in women's health research and how the WFRC can support this work. The meeting will be on October 8.

Agency Activities

NICHD Issues Request for Information on Strategic Plan

NICHD is updating its current (2020-2024) [strategic plan](#). The updated plan for 2025-2029 will help guide the research NICHD will support over the next five years. The RFI solicits feedback on the scientific goals and opportunities under consideration for the refreshed NICHD strategic plan. WFRC is drafting a response to submit to NICHD, with feedback from membership.

NIH Request for Information on Implementation of Post-Doctoral Training Recommendations

The NIH is [seeking feedback](#) from the biomedical research community to inform implementation of the [recommendations](#) from the Advisory Committee to the Director on re-envisioning NIH-supported post-doctoral training. This RFI is seeking input on how the NIH can most effectively implement certain recommendations from the Advisory Committee. The six recommendations made by the Advisory Committee are below:

- Recommendation 1: Increase pay and benefits for all NIH-supported postdoctoral scholars.
- Recommendation 2: Create and expand mechanisms to support the full talent pool of postdoctoral scholars.
- Recommendation 3: Facilitate the transition of postdoctoral scholars into the next career stage, including roles beyond academic faculty.
- Recommendation 4: Promote training and professional development of postdoctoral scholars and their mentors.
- Recommendation 5: Support safe and diverse perspectives and research environments within institutional research programs
- Recommendation 6: Improve means to measure and share postdoctoral scholars' career progression.

The WFRC previously submitted comments that lead to the Advisory Committee's recommendations, and we will be submitting comments to this RFI based on feedback from membership.

Upcoming Meetings

The next [meeting](#) of the NIH Advisory Committee on Research on Women's Health will be held on October 8. On November 13 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM ET, ARPA-H will be hosting a [virtual "Doing Business with ARPA-H" event](#), which is open to the public and is designed for entities that are interested in applying for ARPA-H funding and/or collaborating with ARPA-H on R&D initiatives.

Funding Opportunities from NIH I/Cs

Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health (BIRCWH) (K12 Clinical Trial Optional) ([RFA-OD-21-006](#))

Expiration date: May 29, 2026

NOSI: Health Influences of Gender as a Social and Structural Variable ([NOT-OD-24-038](#))

Expiration date: October 1, 2025

The Intersection of Sex and Gender Influences on Health and Disease (R01 Clinical Trial Optional) ([RFA-OD-22-028](#))

Expiration date: November 23, 2024

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

Expiration date: December 14, 2026

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