



WOMEN
FIRST
RESEARCH
COALITION

Women First Research Coalition

WFRC Fourth Quarter 2023 Activities Update

Legislative Activities

Update on Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations

Congress passed a two-part continuing resolution (CR) that maintains funding at the current levels for four appropriations bills through January 19 and for the remaining bills, including Labor, Health, and Human Services (Labor-HHS), through February 2. Congressional leadership has yet to reach an agreement on top-line numbers for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, which will make it difficult to pass any full-year funding bills by the January 19 deadline. We will continue to monitor this situation closely and engage as appropriate.

WFRC Letter on FY 2024 Appropriations

As Congress continues to work on FY 2024 appropriations, WFRC sent a letter to the chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate appropriations committees asking for \$49.224 billion for the NIH, which is what was included in the Senate Labor-HHS appropriations bill. We also requested that they adopt the report language included in the accompanying Senate report on the Women's Reproductive Health Research program, the Reproductive Medicine Network, and the Building Interdisciplinary Careers in Women's Health Research program.

Menopause Legislation

Representatives Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE) and Julia Letlow (R-LA) introduced a [resolution](#) recognizing World Menopause Awareness Month, which aims to raise awareness and access to care during menopause and post-menopause.

WFRC staff met with staff for Representative Blunt Rochester to discuss menopause legislation, which we will continue to work on in 2024. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) is also interested in leading on menopause legislation.

Request for Information on NIH Reforms

Senate HELP Committee Ranking Member Bill Cassidy (R-LA) sent out a request for information (RFI) on potential reforms to the NIH. WFRC submitted a response highlighting potential changes to the NIH that would strengthen support for OB/GYN researchers and increase investments in women's health research.

Agency Outreach

CSR-WFRC Meeting

WFRC met with the NIH's Center for Scientific Review (CSR) to discuss ways to improve the review of women's health related grant applications. CSR understood our concerns with the study section review process and encouraged us to submit reviewers with expertise in women's health research through their portal. WFRC will be collecting and submitting reviewers for CSR to consider. CSR also noted that any study sections changes are made through the ENQUIRE review process, so we will be reviewing the process and ensure that we weigh in when relevant study sections are up for review.

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

White House Initiative to Improve Women's Health Research

First Lady Jill Biden announced the launch of a new federal initiative to advance women's health research that calls on federal agencies including the NIH, the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Health and Human Services to work with the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to recommend strategies to boost innovation and close research and treatment gaps for women. The Initiative will be chaired by Dr. Carolyn Mazure. WFRC sent a letter to the administration that highlighted our priorities in women's health research across federal agencies.

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

The National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) women's health research panel has been named. This panel is the result of report language that the WFRC advocated for in Fiscal Year 2023. Congratulations to WFRC member Dr. Angeles Secord for being named to the panel! WFRC submitted comments suggesting that the panel add members with expertise on fibroids, endometriosis, menopause, and pelvic floor disorders.

The NASEM panel met on December 14 to receive the formal charge and to get an update from the NIH ORWH on federal women's health research. The panel is expected to release their report by the end of 2024, and WFRC will be providing public feedback as the panel continues its work.

Agency Activities

Dr. Bertagnolli's Confirmed as NIH Director

The Senate confirmed Dr. Monica Bertagnolli as the new NIH Director. Dr. Bertagnolli's key priorities include improving diversity in clinical trials, embracing new learning based analytical tools (such as AI) in NIH's work, and restoring trust in science by making it more accessible and inspiring the next generation of scientists and doctors.

Dr. W. Kimryn Rathmell to Lead the National Cancer Institute (NCI)

With Dr. Bertagnolli assuming the top post at NIH, President Joe Biden named Dr. W. Kimryn Rathmell to fill the vacancy at NCI left by Dr. Bertagnolli. Dr. Rathmell assumed the post just before the holidays and came to NCI from Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

BIRCWH Annual Meeting

ORWH hosted the Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health (BIRCWH) [annual meeting](#) on December 5. The meeting brought together senior and junior faculty to share scientific advances and to network. WFRC continues to advocate for increased funding to the BIRCWH program in our appropriations requests.

Funding Opportunities from NIH I/Cs

Notice of Special Interest (NOSI): Health Influences of Gender as a Social and Structural Variable

[\(NOT-OD-24-038\)](#)

Application due date: January 25, 2024 (first available due date)

The NOSI expires on October 1, 2025

Understanding the Impact of Healthcare System and Clinician Factors on Disparities in Maternal Morbidity and Mortality (R01 - Clinical Trial Optional)

[\(PAR-24-059\)](#)

Application due date: February 05, 2024

Notice of Special Interest (NOSI): Research on the Health of Women of Understudied, Underrepresented and Underreported (U3) Populations (Admin Supp Clinical Trial Optional)

[\(NOT-OD-24-032\)](#)

Application due date: February 1, 2024

Notice of Special Interest (NOSI): Research Supplements to Promote Re-Entry, Re-integration into, and Re-training in Health-Related Research Careers (Admin Supp - Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

[\(NOT-OD-23-170\)](#)

Application due date: 10/09/2023 (first available due date)

The NOSI expires on October 9, 2026