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January 22, 2019

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1025 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 1104
Washington, DC 20036

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
U.S. Senate
524 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky
U.S. House of Representatives
2367 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Duckworth and Representative Schakowsky,

The Society for Women's Health Research (SWHR®) is pleased to support the congressional resolution recognizing January 25 as Women's Health Research Day. SWHR is an education and advocacy thought leader dedicated to promoting research on biological differences in disease and improving women's health through science, policy, and education. Given our organization's mission and focus, we appreciate your work on reintroducing this resolution to raise awareness of the value of including sex and gender as variables in scientific research.

As defined by the Institute of Medicine:

- Sex refers to the classification of living things according to reproductive organs and functions assigned by chromosomal complement.¹
- Gender refers to the social, cultural, and environmental influences on the biological factors of women or men. Gender is rooted in biology and shaped by environment and experience.²

The study of sex and gender differences is leading to critical discoveries of how women and men differ in fundamental ways and how these differences affect disease risk, pathophysiology, symptoms, diagnostic sensitivity and specificity, and response to therapy.

As a result of this important research, we are beginning to understand why certain conditions, disorders, and diseases occur disproportionately in women and/or affect women and men differently. There is a biological basis for sex differences in health that begins in early development and can be found even at the cellular level.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) policy (NOT-OD-15-102) implemented on January 25, 2016, requiring investigators to consider sex as a biological variable in NIH-funded research is a promising development for women's health. SWHR applauds this resolution's recognition of that important policy and hopes Women's Health Research Day will create further awareness of the need to expand the use of sex and gender as crucial biological variables in all scientific research.



Thank you for your leadership on this important issue to advance women's health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Amy M. Miller'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Amy M. Miller, PhD
President and Chief Executive Officer
Society for Women's Health Research

¹ Institute of Medicine. Exploring the Biological Considerations to Human Health: Does Sex Matter? Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2001.

² Ibid.