

October 4, 2022

Monica M. Bertagnolli, MD
Director
National Cancer Institute
9609 Medical Center Drive
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Dr. Bertagnolli:

On behalf of the Society for Women's Health Research (SWHR) – a more than 30-year-old national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting research on biological sex differences in disease and improving women's health through science, policy, and education – I would like to congratulate you on your historic appointment as Director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

Since its founding in 1990, SWHR has worked to address unmet needs and research gaps in women's health. This includes ensuring that sex and gender influences in health and disease are considered in research, promoting policies that support women in the biomedical research workforce, and identifying and addressing gaps across research, clinical care, and policy.

As the second leading cause of death among females in the United States, cancer remains a critical focus area for federal research and public health education efforts. SWHR, as an organization actively working to advance research for the health of women and move toward our vision of making women's health mainstream, stands ready to serve NCI as a partner in addressing those cancers that differently, disproportionately, or exclusively affect women, including:

- **Gynecologic Cancers.** These cancers, including cervical, ovarian, uterine, vaginal, and vulvar cancer, have high morbidity and mortality rates, and would benefit from additional research investments to improve prevention, diagnosis, and therapeutic options. Ovarian cancer, for example, is the fifth leading cause of cancer-related deaths in women, and estimates suggest that nearly 20,000 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer each year and that more than [12,800 women](#) will die from ovarian cancer.
- Some of SWHR's past work related to gynecological cancers includes:

- Penning an editorial piece, “[The Value of Prevention in Combatting Cervical Cancer](#),” for Mediaplanet’s 2022 Women’s Reproductive Health Campaign
 - Hosting two public forums on gynecologic cancers—“[How Vaccines and Screening Can Prevent Cervical Cancer](#)” and “[Ovarian Cancer Screening: More than a Pelvic Exam](#)”—to share the role of screenings and diagnostics in detecting and monitoring disease and guiding treatment
 - [Providing input](#) to the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force on its Draft Research Plan on Cervical Cancer Screening
- **Colorectal Cancer.** While colorectal cancer affects both men and women, it is the [third most common](#) cancer diagnosed in the United States, excluding skin cancers. Further, it is the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in both men and women in the United States.
 - **Breast Cancer.** The most common cancer found in American women (excluding skin cancers), breast cancer remains a critical priority area for federal research efforts. A woman’s risk of developing breast cancer is 1 in 8 (about 13%). SWHR remains committed to ensuring continued federal research investments to identify better diagnostic, treatment, and prevention options in the breast cancer space.

SWHR’s work in breast cancer includes:

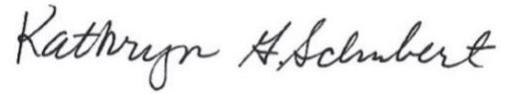
- Hosting an upcoming public forum in SWHR’s *Value of Diagnostics* webinar series, “[Understanding the Tests that Could Save My Breasts](#)”
 - Responding to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [on its draft guidance](#) for industry containing recommendations regarding the inclusion of premenopausal women in breast cancer clinical trials
 - Spotlighting the [personal story](#) of a breast cancer survivor on the SWHR blog
- **Lung Cancer.** According to the [American Lung Association](#), while more men are diagnosed with lung cancer each year than women, the rate of new lung cancer cases over the past 42 years have dropped 36 percent for men, while it has risen 84% for women.

Looking to the future, SWHR sees myriad opportunities for research that can improve health and quality of life outcomes for women affected by cancer. Given your significant expertise and background in surgical oncology and your commitment to increasing the diversity of patients enrolled in clinical trials, we are eager to see all that the NCI is able to accomplish under your leadership.

We look forward to working with you in your new role and stand ready to assist you and your team as you build upon NCI’s mission to lead, conduct, and support cancer research across the nation to advance scientific knowledge and help all people live longer, healthier lives.

If you have questions or if there is anything SWHR can do to be of assistance at this time, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn G. Schubert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathryn G. Schubert, MPP
President and CEO
Society for Women's Health Research