

2023-2024 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Since its inception in 1990, the Society for Women's Health Research (SWHR) has worked with policymakers to implement policy measures to advance women's health and drive the national conversation on the unique needs of women and sex differences research.

The following represent the legislative and regulatory areas where SWHR plans to engage in 2023-2024. Key goals include seeking funding increases for federal research, championing evidence-based policy, and pushing for improved inclusion and representation of women of all populations within clinical trials and in the biomedical research workforce—each of which will lead to reducing health disparities and promoting health equity.

CORE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

The policy priorities included in this category represent areas in which SWHR should play a leadership role and serve as a potential convener for advocacy activities and initiatives. These priorities are directly aligned to SWHR's mission and scope and would have tremendous bearing on women's health and women's health research.

> Federal Research Funding

- Support increased investments in federal research and public health agencies that predominately fund and support women's health research, such as the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH)
- Identify opportunities to promote critical women's health research needs and opportunities
- Promote incorporation of women's health-focused research within research entities, such as the newly formed Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H)

> Federal Women's Health Programs and Initiatives

- Champion prioritization of women's health at the federal level through creation and/or expansion of Offices of Women's Health
- Drive targeted initiatives focused on women's health issues

> Women in Clinical Trials

- Ensure sufficient representation of women and sub-populations of women (e.g., pregnant and lactating populations) in clinical trials
- Remove barriers that prevent women's participation in clinical trials
- Advocate for greater adherence to policies that call for incorporation of sex as a biological variable in research and reporting

- Support data collection and surveillance efforts geared toward improving health equity and reducing health disparities

➤ **Appropriate Access to Health Care and Research**

- Support policies that ensure women—both as patients and caregivers—have an equal opportunity to be healthy and that policies reflect the ability of women to access and receive quality health care
- Ensure that policies support, consider, and meet the needs of women of underrepresented minorities in research
- Engage in opportunities surrounding health care value assessment frameworks



➤ **Biomedical Research Workforce**

- Support policies that foster the recruitment and retention of diverse populations of women across all levels of the STEMM workforce and promote pathways to leadership positions
- Foster and promote safe work environments for women in the biomedical research workforce to improve recruitment and retention of diverse scientists

KEY POLICY PRIORITIES AND AREAS OF ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

The policy priorities included in this category represent areas in which SWHR will actively partner and engage with key stakeholders in order to drive success. While these areas are of critical importance to SWHR’s policy priorities, SWHR recognizes that there are dedicated leaders already driving meaningful change in these spaces, and we wish to complement those efforts. SWHR will seek opportunities to engage with our partners on the various topics—whether by joining advocacy campaigns, lending our name to sign-on letters and community statements, or participating in coalitions:

➤ **Public Health and Research Agency Funding**

- Support efforts to increase funding across federal research agencies, namely the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), among others

➤ **Maternal Health**

- Advocate for efforts to address maternal morbidity and mortality, maternal mental health, and other policy priorities related to maternal health
- Address the disparities in maternal health care, access, and outcomes and the need for education about the equity concerns and bias that exist within the health care system

- **Advancing Regulatory Science Focused on the Unique Attributes of Women**
 - Identify opportunities to weigh in on the tools, standards, and approaches that are developed to assess safety, efficacy, and quality of products, with an emphasis on how these approaches may impact women's health outcomes

- **Promoting a Lifespan Approach Across Federal Research, Programs, and Initiatives to Ensure Women's Reproductive Years Are Not Considered in Isolation from Whole-Person Health**
 - Work to ensure information linkage and longevity (e.g., connecting maternity information, family history/hereditary information, and between health care providers and institutions)

- **Protect and Preserve Regulatory Decision-Making Authority in the Nation's Public Health Institutions**
 - Ensure federal policies do not prevent women from accessing medically necessary care (e.g., women with autoimmune diseases and conditions losing access to methotrexate)

- **Policies Touching Areas that Solely, Differently, or Disproportionately Affect Women**
 - Represent women's health needs on policies spanning health care access and coverage, clinical trial diversity, and research opportunities within the following spaces:
 - Alzheimer's Disease
 - Autoimmune and Immune-Mediated Diseases and Conditions
 - Bone Health
 - Cancer
 - Cardiovascular Disease
 - Menopause
 - Migraine
 - Reproductive Health
 - Sleep
 - Uterine Health (Endometriosis and Uterine Fibroids)
 - Vaccination Needs

- **Caregiver Needs**
 - Support policies that reduce the economic burden associated with caregiving
 - Encourage creation of resources and programs to assist informal caregivers

- **Coverage for and Access to High Quality Health Care**
 - Champion policies that seek to address gender bias and other forms of implicit bias in health care
 - Promote efforts to expand clinical education to increase awareness of diseases, conditions, and life stages that differently, disproportionately, or specifically affect women

- Promote federal response to the health care workforce and physician shortages (e.g., rheumatologists, geriatric health care workforce)
- Support policies that remove barriers to care and ensure people have access to high quality health care, such as through telemedicine, regardless of their unique circumstances (e.g., living in a health care desert, unable to take time from work)
- Ensure that women have access to necessary health care coverage and that policies do not create unnecessary barriers to treatment
 - Step therapy
 - Prior authorization
 - Non-medical switching
 - Co-pay accumulators

➤ **Mental Health**

- Champion policies that support women’s mental health, including policies surrounding maternal mental health, assistance for women disproportionately impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic, frontline health workers, etc.

➤ **Women in the Workplace**

- Advance policies that support women in the workplace and workplace accommodations for conditions, including but not limited to, autoimmune diseases and conditions, heavy menstrual bleeding, narcolepsy, and menopause

OTHER AREAS FOR POTENTIAL ENGAGEMENT

The policy priorities included in this category may touch women’s health and women’s health research in some capacity, but the tie may more indirect than in the sections above. SWHR will monitor and support efforts identified in this tier as capacity allows.

- Electronic Health Record Interoperability
- Pandemic Preparedness and Response
- Research into Long COVID
- Telehealth
- U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Guidelines and Modernization