

**SOCIETY FOR WOMEN’S HEALTH RESEARCH FISCAL YEAR 2027 OUTSIDE
WITNESS TESTIMONY**

PREPARED FOR SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, EDUCATION AND RELATED AGENCIES

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Testimony Re: National Institutes of Health; Office of Research on Women’s Health; *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

The Society for Women’s Health Research (SWHR)—the nation’s leading nonprofit organization working to close the women’s health gap—is pleased to submit outside public witness testimony for fiscal year (FY) 2027. In SWHR’s more than 35-year history, it has advanced women’s health by identifying clinical, education, and research gaps; raising awareness of diseases, conditions, and life stages that differently, disproportionately, or exclusively affect women; and championing policies to improve women’s health outcomes. The Society’s FY 2027 testimony addresses how appropriators can support women’s health research—an investment that elevates health systems and outcomes for everyone—through funding and activities within the National Institutes of Health’s (NIH) Office of Research on Women’s Health (ORWH) and *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Included in our FY 2027 funding requests are **\$336 million in total funding for ORWH, \$1.8917 billion for NICHD, and at least \$51.3 billion for the NIH.** This testimony also includes proposed report language relevant to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of the Secretary.

NIH: SWHR is grateful that Congress continued its historic bipartisan support of the NIH within its final FY 2026 budget, providing a \$216 million increase for the agency over FY 2025 levels. It is imperative that this bipartisan support for NIH—the nation’s “crown jewel” of scientific research and medical innovation and a critical driver of economic growth—continue to be prioritized in FY 2027 and beyond. SWHR supports the broader scientific community’s request of **at least \$51.303 billion for NIH** in FY 2027, in addition to support for the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H).

While ORWH and NICHD serve as institutional homes for women’s health within the agency, NIH’s Institutes and Centers support basic, clinical, and translational research that is uncovering critical insights that will benefit everyone, fuel economic growth, and drive innovation that leads to new cures and lives saved.

ORWH: Since its establishment in 1990, the ORWH has played a pivotal role in reshaping biomedical research and policy. Its contributions, which include but are not limited to, elevating the importance of studying biological sex differences in health and disease, catalyzing landmark programs like the Women’s Health Initiative, and serving as the coordinating body for women’s health research at the NIH, have not only advanced women’s health, but also changed how biomedical research is conducted.

SWHR requests \$336 million in total funding for ORWH in FY 2027 to support both new and existing initiatives driving women's health research forward. SWHR requests the following report language:

Office of Research on Women's Health.—The Committee recommends **\$336 million in total funding for the Office**, including \$14 million for the Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health (BIRCWH) program and \$200 million to establish a new women's health research fund. This office ensures women's health research and research on the biological and sociocultural influence of sex and gender are included within the larger NIH scientific framework. Congress recognizes that ORWH is the first public health service office to officially promote women's health research within and beyond the NIH scientific community.

However, the Committee recognizes the need for increased, sustained, and integrated investment in women's health research at NIH. Therefore, the Committee establishes a central fund within the ORWH — funded at \$200 million — to support interdisciplinary women's health research with a focus on innovation and accelerating biomedical discoveries on diseases and conditions that differently, disproportionately, or exclusively affect women. This fund should support research across NIH and incentivize Institutes and Centers to prioritize women's health research and collaborate, allowing NIH to catalyze the ambitious, multi-faceted, interdisciplinary research projects that are needed to advance women's health in a meaningful way.

The Committee urges NIH to continue to expand basic, clinical, and translational research into women's health, including improving understanding of the mechanisms underlying endometriosis, fibroids, pelvic floor disorders, and other prevalent gynecological conditions; advance early diagnostic and later prognostic markers of these heterogeneous conditions; and develop new preventative treatment methods. The Committee urges expansion of these programs and directs NIH to provide an update in the FY 2028 CJ on the research activities and the number of new women's health researchers supported by these programs in FY 2027.

SWHR has also supported renewed and increased investment in the Office of Autoimmune Disease Research (OADR-ORWH), which has been housed within ORWH since its inception. Given that 60% of the patients diagnosed with autoimmune diseases and conditions are women, investing in this research is integral for advancing the entire field of immunology. However, SWHR believes that OADR-ORWH funding should be supplemental to the funding provided to ORWH, allowing each of these entities to have the funding necessary to build on their existing portfolio and tackle major research priorities. SWHR supports the community's request of **\$120 million in funding to OADR-ORWH for the implementation of its strategic plan**.

NICHD: SWHR calls on Congress to provide **\$1.8917 billion for NICHD** in FY 2026. The NICHD was established to study human development across the lifespan. As such, its research portfolio spans critical women's health areas, such as gynecological and maternal health, which includes focus areas like infertility, pregnancy, menopause, endometriosis, and uterine fibroids. Additionally, the Institute serves as the primary hub for research involving pregnant and lactating

women—populations that have long been overlooked in federal research, with resulting gaps in clinical care and limited evidence to support safe, informed medication decisions for both mother and child.

Within the past few appropriations cycles, Congress has allocated \$200,000 for the Task Force on Research Specific to Pregnant Women and Lactating Women (PRGLAC) Implementation Working Group of Council, which is tasked with monitoring and reporting on how the PRGLAC Task Force’s recommendations are being implemented. The Working Group’s latest report, released in July 2024, found that many recommendations are only “in progress or planned” or “have not yet been implemented.”¹ Adopting PRGLAC’s recommendations advances more rigorous and actionable research, improving maternal and infant health, addressing disparities, and enabling informed decision-making for families across the country. SWHR supports the following report language request of the [Coalition to Advance Maternal Therapeutics](#) (CAMT), for which SWHR serves as Chair:

Pregnant and Lactating Women’s Advisory Committee.—The Committee continues funding for the advisory committee to continue activities within the 2020 Task Force on Research Specific to Pregnant Women and Lactating Women (PRGLAC) Implementation Plan. The Committee urges NICHD to hold at least one public meeting of the Advisory Committee and federal agencies in fiscal year 2027 to review how each agency plans to renew their commitment to implementing PRGLAC recommendations over the next five years.

Office of the Secretary, HHS: SWHR was encouraged to see the administration host the inaugural HHS [National Conference on Women’s Health](#), a forum held in March 2026 to “explore breakthroughs in research, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of health conditions that affect women across the lifespan.” Continuing to integrate and elevate women’s health research across the federal government will be necessary for addressing systemic gaps and, ultimately, the effectiveness of the U.S. health care system.

The Offices of Women’s Health across the federal government (including those within HHS, FDA, and NIH) are important partners for this work. Together, they play a complementary role in advancing women’s health across the full spectrum of research, regulation, and public health and coordinating efforts across agencies, aligning scientific priorities with regulatory oversight and public health initiatives. However, SWHR believes that continued efforts to strengthen transparency and public engagement would support broader awareness and understanding of these Offices’ activities. Therefore, SWHR supports appropriators including the following report language in FY 2027 appropriations legislation:

Report on State of HHS Offices of Women’s Health.—The Committee directs the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to publicly release, not later than 180 days after enactment of this Act, a report on the status of Offices of Women’s Health across the Department and its operating divisions. The report shall

¹ Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2024). *PRGLAC implementation progress report*. https://www.nichd.nih.gov/sites/default/files/inline-files/PRGLAC_Progress_Report.pdf

include a description of the mission, statutory authority, organizational placement, and leadership structure of each Office of Women's Health, including the HHS Office on Women's Health, the NIH Office of Research on Women's Health, and the FDA Office of Women's Health, as well as any comparable offices or women's health functions within other operating divisions. The report shall also include a description of interagency coordinating activities; an assessment of how each office fulfills its statutory responsibilities; a description of efforts to ensure transparency and public awareness of each Office's activities, including publication of strategic plans and reports, stakeholder engagement processes, and mechanisms for public input; and any recommendations to strengthen coordination, accountability, or effectiveness. The Secretary is encouraged to publish a notice in the Federal Register announcing the opportunity for comment and shall solicit input from patients, researchers, clinicians, advocacy organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. The report shall include a summary of comments received and a description of how such input was considered in developing the report's findings and recommendations.

SWHR appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony and thanks the Subcommittee for considering the above requests. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact SWHR President and CEO Kathryn Schubert at kathryn@swhr.org or SWHR Public Policy and Advocacy Manager Madelyn Adams at madelyn@swhr.org. We look forward to working with you to advance women's health research in FY 2027 appropriations legislation and beyond.