

# FRIENDS OF ORWH

*NIH Office of Research  
on Women's Health*

March 10, 2026

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chair  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Chair  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Aderholt and Capito and Ranking Members DeLauro and Baldwin:

The undersigned organizations, representing members of the Friends of the Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) coalition, urge you to remain fixed in your commitment to American's health by dedicating robust funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the NIH ORWH in fiscal year (FY) 2027 appropriations. Specifically, we urge appropriators to allocate no less than **\$51.303 billion for the NIH** and **\$115.74 million for the ORWH**. These requests are consistent with the broader scientific community's request and represent an 8.7% increase from the FY2026 enacted levels, which provides meaningful growth after accounting for the biomedical research and development price index (BRDPI).

The Friends is a coalition of more than 50 organizations representing researchers, clinicians, patients, and policy advocates that are committed to elevating the mission of ORWH to address biological sex differences in health and prioritize research gaps to advance women's health. We were deeply appreciative of Congress providing sufficient funding for the NIH and increasing the budget of ORWH in FY2026 appropriations, and we encourage appropriators to maintain these commitments in FY2027 appropriations.

For decades, NIH-funded research has delivered extraordinary value to the American people. The NIH is the global leader in driving medical and scientific breakthroughs that improve and save lives. Researchers in every state rely on NIH support to advance discoveries that strengthen our nation's health and economic competitiveness. From discovering novel diagnostic pathways and earlier detection methods to revolutionizing how chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and Alzheimer's disease are treated and managed, NIH investments have fundamentally reshaped our understanding of health and disease. Americans broadly [support](#) the work being done at NIH, reflecting the agency's longstanding reputation as a trusted, reliable steward of taxpayer dollars and a cornerstone of our nation's research enterprise.

Today, health challenges are increasingly complex, and a [significant share](#) of Americans are living with chronic conditions, multiple comorbidities, or poor overall health outcomes. NIH continues to deliver transformative discoveries and is evolving alongside rapidly advancing technologies across genomics, data science, artificial intelligence, and precision medicine.

The ORWH has a central role to play in supporting the NIH's delivery of reputable, reproducible medical science. Biological sex differences influence differences in genetics, physiology, and endocrinology in male and female sexes, meaning that the way diseases progress and present among men and women differ. Research that accounts for and studies these differences leads to scientifically-sound evidence for informing disease and condition detection, diagnoses, and treatment options.

Housed within the NIH Office of the Director's Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives (DPCPSI), the ORWH plays a distinct and essential role at NIH and across the research enterprise. It coordinates and advances research on sex-based differences and works to ensure that these considerations remain central in the broader scientific community—ensuring that women's health research is prioritized and integrated across the agency. The ORWH partners with each NIH Institutes, Centers, and Office (ICOs) to promote women's health research and support the inclusion of women in study populations.

Some highlights of ORWH's work include the following:

- **Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health (BIRCWH)** - A career development and training program that invests in junior faculty scholars focused on interdisciplinary basic, translational, behavioral, clinical, and/or health-services research in women's health and sex differences. This program is administered through the ORWH and hosted in partnership with other NIH ICOs. In

September 2025, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the ORWH announced the launch of the [NIH-VA BIRCWH Scholars Program](#) to support VA junior investigators to participate in the BIRCWH program.

- **Implementing a Maternal Health and Pregnancy Outcomes Vision for Everyone (IMPROVE) Initiative** – In partnership with the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), this initiative provides support for research focused on improving maternal outcomes and reducing maternal morbidity by advancing studies across a variety of key condition areas, including but not limited to diabetes, heart disease, mental health disorders, and obesity.
- **Specialized Centers of Research Excellence (SCORE) Program** - This program provides pilot funding, training, and education to investigators focused on sex as a biological variable (SABV) and sex differences in medical research. One example illustrating the value of this program can be found in a recent [Yale study](#) that found that, while healthy women naturally have more of the brain’s immune cells than men, women with mild to moderate alcohol use disorder show a significant loss of these cells – linked to worse mood and thinking problems – highlighting the need for women-specific treatments.
- **Women’s Health Research in Institutional Development Award (IDeA) Programs** – In partnership with the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS), this program provides funding mechanisms to help institutions in eligible states – particularly, those states with historically low levels of NIH funding – to improve research capabilities by supporting faculty and infrastructure, helping improve health outcomes for local populations at risk of poorer health outcomes.

ORWH also leads advancements in our nation’s federal research response to autoimmune diseases and conditions – of which an estimated 80% of the patients diagnosed are women – through the **Office of Autoimmune Disease Research (ORWH-OADR)**. In September 2025, the NIH released its first [NIH-Wide Strategic Plan for Autoimmune Disease Research](#), a plan developed in close coordination with the OADR that is focused on accelerating medical discovery to understand autoimmune disease.

Every dollar invested in NIH generates [an estimated \\$2.56](#) in economic activity. To invest in the NIH and the ORWH is to invest in the health of the American people and strengthen our economy. The research supported by the ORWH underpins groundbreaking discoveries that prevent disease, extend life, reduce health care costs, and improve quality of life for millions. For women’s health research, in particular, reliable, sustained investments empower NIH-supported investigators to deliver life-saving breakthroughs, train the next

generation of scientists and innovators, and accelerate medical advances that benefit everyone.

**Investing in the NIH and ORWH is one of the most beneficial and cost-effective investments our government can make.**

The Friends of ORWH looks forward to working with you to ensure sufficient and necessary support for federal medical research agencies in FY2027. Please reach out to SWHR Chief Advocacy Officer Lindsey Miltenberger at [lindsey@swhr.org](mailto:lindsey@swhr.org) for any questions or for additional information.

Sincerely,

AcademyHealth

Alliance for Aging Research

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American Medical Women's Association

American Physiological Society

Avestria Ventures

Black Women's Health Imperative

Breast Cancer Early Detection Coalition

Endo Excision for All

Endocrine Society

Endometriosis & Adenomyosis Coalition

EndPreeclampsia, Inc

Fibroid Foundation

Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research

Healthy Americas Fund

HealthyWomen

HERhealthEQ

Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance (MMHLA)

National Alliance for Hispanic Health

National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health

Preeclampsia Foundation

Society for Women's Health Research

Women First Research Coalition

WomenHeart

Women's Health Advocates