FRIENDS OF ORWH

NIH Office of Research on Women's Health

October 15, 2026

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

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

Dear Chair Capito and Ranking Member Baldwin:

On behalf of the Friends of the Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH), we write to thank you for your efforts to keep the federal government funded and to ensure that critical government functions and programs can continue without interruption. As the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) Appropriations subcommittee considers its fiscal year (FY) 2027 funding requests, we urge you to remain firm in your commitment to the health of all Americans by providing no less than **$51.303 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)** and **$115.74 million for the ORWH** in the Senate Labor-HHS funding bill.

The Friends of ORWH 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 closing research gaps to advance women's health. Earlier this year, the Friends of ORWH sent a letter to congressional appropriators detailing the promise and benefits of the NIH and ORWH. We further demonstrated the value of sustained women's health research investment in testimony to both the House and Senate Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittees .

While we were encouraged by the proposed $111.48 million for the ORWH in the House Labor-HHS bill passed in June, we continue to urge Congress to provide no less than $115.74 million for the ORWH. Not only is this request consistent with recommendations from the broader scientific community (representing an 8.7 percent increase over FY2026 enacted funding), but investment at this level is necessary to continue advancing research to close the women's health gap. At a time when NIH funding has not kept pace with inflation, this level of funding would support meaningful growth in research funding even after accounting for

increases in the cost of conducting biomedical research, as reflected by the Biomedical Research and Development Price Index (BRDPI).

We recognize the challenges of the current fiscal environment and the many competing priorities before Congress, but sustained investment in women's health research is essential to addressing some of the nation's most pressing health challenges. Chronic conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, heart disease, and autoimmune diseases burden a large portion of the U.S. population, and these conditions disproportionately or disparately affect women.[1,2,3] Yet research is only recently beginning to reveal evidence of how sex and gender influence disease risk, progression, diagnosis, and treatment across condition areas. ORWH is uniquely positioned to help build the evidence base. By coordinating and advancing women's health research across NIH Institutes and Centers, and through programs that support training and mentorship for investigators and programs in sex-differences research, the ORWH ensures that women's health is considered throughout the biomedical research enterprise.

The consequences of insufficient investment in biomedical research on women's health extend beyond scientific progress. When women's unique biology and health needs are not adequately reflected in research, it can contribute to missed or delayed diagnoses, less effective treatments, and preventable deaths. These gaps also carry significant economic costs, increasing avoidable health care spending, reducing productivity, and placing added financial strain on individuals, families, and communities.

While the Friends appreciate Congress passing the continuing resolution (CR) to keep the government open through December 11 and avoiding a government shutdown, CRs create an environment of scientific uncertainty. They can disrupt ongoing studies, delay research milestones, and create difficult financial pressures for research teams, including potential staff reductions or the termination of studies, in medical research laboratories and institutions across the country. These disruptions are particularly concerning for women's health research, which often depends on longitudinal studies that collect and analyze data over many years to understand how women's health and disease risk change across the lifespan. **The Friends of ORWH strongly encourages Congress to work in a bipartisan manner to pass a full-year spending bill as soon as possible**. Maintaining stable, predictable federal funding is essential to preserving these investments and ensuring that years of research, data collection, and scientific progress are not lost.

---

[1] O'Neal M. A. (2024). Women and the risk of Alzheimer's disease. *Frontiers in global women's health*, *4*, 1324522. https://doi.org/10.3389/fgwh.2023.1324522

[2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *About women and heart disease*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/heart-disease/about/women-and-heart-disease.html

[3] Kronzer, V. L., Bridges, S. L., Jr, & Davis, J. M., 3rd (2020). Why women have more autoimmune diseases than men: An evolutionary perspective. *Evolutionary applications*, *14*(3), 629–633. https://doi.org/10.1111/eva.13167

The Friends of ORWH looks forward to working with you to ensure sufficient and necessary support for federal medical research agencies in FY2027. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with your offices to discuss our request in more detail. Please reach out to Lindsey Miltenberger, MA, Chief Advocacy Officer at the Society for Women's Health Research, at lindsey@swhr.org for any questions or if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

51&
AcademyHealth
Alliance for Aging Research
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists
American Medical Women's Association
American Physiological Society
Avestria Ventures Management
Black Women's Health Imperative
Center for Endometriosis Care
Cleveland Clinic Women's Comprehensive Health and Research Center
Endocrine Society
Evia Wellness, LLC
Fertility Alliance Providers
Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research
Global Health Technologies Coalition
Healthy Americas Foundation
HealthyWomen
Impact Advocacy
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance (MMHLA)
Miles for Migraine
Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation
National Alliance for Hispanic Health
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance
Preeclampsia Foundation
RESOLVE: The National Infertility and Family Building Association
Society for Women's Health Research
Women First Research Coalition
Women's Alzheimer's Movement at Cleveland Clinic
Women's Health Advocates
WomenHeart
World Health Education Foundation