



Welcome to the Advancing NIH Research for the Health of Women: A 2021 Conference!

I am delighted to welcome you to “Advancing NIH Research on the Health of Women: A 2021 Conference.” This conference fulfills an important part of Congress’s request that NIH put more focus on women’s health research to address rising maternal morbidity and mortality rates, rising rates of chronic debilitating conditions in women, and stagnant cervical cancer survival rates—specifically, that NIH convene a consensus conference with representatives from across NIH as well as individuals representing a wide array of stakeholders, from scientists and clinicians to advocates and members of the public. It is fitting that ORWH, in conjunction with the [Advisory Committee on Research on Women’s Health \(ACRWH\)](#), is leading this initiative on behalf of NIH. Since 1990, ORWH has advised the NIH Director on matters relating to research on women’s health and served as the focal point for coordinating and expanding women’s health research at NIH. Among its statutory duties are ensuring that NIH-funded research adequately addresses issues regarding women’s health and includes the participation of women in clinical studies. ORWH also develops opportunities and support for the recruitment, retention, reentry, and advancement of women in biomedical careers.



Furthermore, the initiative advances the goals set forth in the [2019–2023 Trans-NIH Strategic Plan for Women’s Health Research](#), which ORWH took the lead in developing, and the [NIH-Wide Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021–2025](#).

This conference serves as a vital forum for the thoughtful exchange of critical scientific information and ideas centered on improving the health of women. On behalf of NIH, I am grateful for the contributions of ACRWH, especially members of the working group that organized this conference, as well as the individuals and organizations who are participating in the meeting and/or submitted public comments. I am confident that with our combined voices, expertise, and commitment, we will achieve the goals set forth by Congress and improve the health of women.

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ORWH, in conjunction with the [Advisory Committee on Research on Women's Health \(ACRWH\)](#), is pleased to host "Advancing NIH Research on the Health of Women: A 2021 Conference." This meeting is a key step in a larger effort that began with a request from the U.S. Congress.

Congress's significant item (SI) related to FY 2022 NIH appropriations for women's health research expressed concern that more focus is needed to address rising maternal morbidity and mortality rates, rising rates of chronic debilitating conditions in women, and stagnant cervical cancer survival rates. The SI encouraged NIH to convene a consensus conference of representatives from across NIH as well as women's health advocates, researchers, clinicians, and other relevant public stakeholders.

This conference will be reported out on October 21 at the fall ACRWH meeting, which will focus on assessing the current state of NIH-supported women's health research and identifying priorities to advance research in the areas identified by Congress. Later this year, ACRWH will issue a report presenting its findings and recommendations to Congress.



In closing, let me thank the members of the ACRWH working group that organized this conference. The working group includes ACRWH members and ORWH staff members. Additionally, internal experts from across NIH and external public health experts from other Federal agencies participated in the review of current research efforts across NIH related to the health of women, especially the areas identified by Congress (maternal morbidity and mortality, rising rates of chronic debilitating conditions in women, and stagnant rates of cervical cancer survival). These efforts are integral to this important and enormous project, and they support ACRWH in its duty to make recommendations on priority issues affecting women's health and support ORWH's mission to advance science for the health of women.

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