

Committee on Women's Rights 2024 Report on Committee Activity for APHA Governing Council (December 2023 through October 2024)

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Commitment to Women's Rights: History, Mission, Values, and Vision

The **Committee on Women's Rights** was established as a Standing Committee by the APHA Governing Council in 1971. According to APHA's Bylaws, Article VIII, Standing Committees are those that are essential to the ongoing and effective operations of the Association, tasked with responsibilities related to the internal organizational, structural, and administrative functions of APHA.

The mission of the Committee on Women's Rights, as outlined in the Bylaws, Article VIII, Section 4, is to address the concerns of APHA members and to collaborate with all APHA units, Affiliates, and Caucuses. Its focus is on the challenges facing women in society, particularly at the intersection of health policy, healthcare services, public health leadership, and career opportunities.

Additionally, the Committee strives to improve women's health by addressing the social, cultural, economic, educational, environmental, and political factors that influence the well-being of women and families.

The core values guiding the APHA Committee on Women's Rights are: **health, equity, diversity, integrity, dignity, self-determination, respect, ethical practice, and knowledge**. These principles shape the Committee's commitment to promoting and protecting the health and well-being of all women across the globe.

2024 Goals for Women's Health and Rights

1. **Enhance the overall well-being and quality of life for all women** by addressing physical, mental, and social health needs across the lifespan.
2. **Ensure equitable access to comprehensive, high-quality health care services**, particularly those tailored to women's unique needs.
3. **Expand and strengthen preventive care services** that focus on women's health promotion and injury/illness prevention, fostering long-term wellness.
4. **Advocate for a healthier physical and social environment** by promoting policies and programs that protect women's health in all communities.
5. **Defend and advance the rights of all women**, ensuring their autonomy in making informed health decisions.
6. **Champion equal opportunities for women in the health workforce**, with a focus on leadership development and dismantling barriers to career advancement.

Description of Issue

The mission of the Committee on Women's Rights addresses the concerns of the entire APHA membership and its organizational components, focusing on the challenges women face in society. These challenges

encompass health disparities, access to healthcare services, and equitable opportunities in health-related careers. The Committee is dedicated to ensuring that these issues are recognized and addressed across the public health landscape.

2024 Strategies in Support of the Goals

- 1. Recruit Subject Matter Experts for Panel Discussions**
The Committee on Women's Rights has organized five oral sessions, each featuring high-level panelists with specialized expertise. Expert moderators and speakers were carefully selected to ensure insightful discussions and impactful presentations. These sessions focus on critical issues at the intersection of women's rights and public health, providing attendees with valuable perspectives and strategies.
- 2. Develop Sessions Addressing Social and Ethical Challenges in Public Health**
To contribute to building the healthiest nation, the Committee organized five oral sessions and two themed poster sessions. These sessions tackle social and ethical challenges in public health, emphasizing the promotion of women's health and well-being. By addressing these issues, the Committee helps foster a more equitable health system.
- 3. Enhance Inclusivity by Addressing Previously Overlooked Populations and Topics**
In alignment with this year's theme, the Committee prioritized inclusivity and diversity in session topics. Sessions were crafted to ensure that underrepresented populations and overlooked topics were highlighted, broadening the scope of discussion and ensuring no group is left behind.
- 4. Foster Collaborations with Other Sections and Caucuses**
The Committee recognizes the power of collaboration in advancing women's health and rights. Early discussions and strategy sessions with other APHA groups and caucuses laid the foundation for joint efforts. These collaborations ensured that session planning included diverse voices and perspectives that directly or indirectly affect women's health.
- 5. Apply a Women's Rights Lens to Policies and Procedures**
The Committee actively engaged in reviewing and shaping policies, particularly those that impact women's health and rights. By participating in policy discussions, the Committee ensures that a women's rights perspective is integrated into APHA's procedures and public health initiatives.
- 6. Strengthen Marketing and Social Media Presence**
To amplify its impact, the Committee is committed to enhancing its marketing and social media efforts. By increasing visibility through targeted communication strategies, the Committee will raise awareness of women's health issues and engage a broader audience in its mission.

The Committee on Women's Rights has created promotional flyers for all sessions it has organized. These materials, along with targeted messages, have been shared with APHA through the Committee's Liaison to increase participation within the APHA community and beyond. In addition, Committee members are actively using social media to further expand outreach and engagement, ensuring broad awareness of the sessions.

Key 2024 Achievement By Committee On Women's Right:

Efficient Planning and Coordination:

- The Committee on Women's Rights organized and conducted multiple meetings including ad-hoc meetings to support members in topic selection, abstract review, and panel selection, all towards planning for the APHA 2024 Annual Conference, ensuring smooth coordination of all committee activities.

Call for Abstracts and Session Review:

- The Committee promoted the Call for Abstracts, receiving over 25 submissions along with invited speakers. Following a thorough review, the Committee is hosting 4 invited oral sessions and 2 themed poster sessions for the APHA 2024 conference.

Promoting Intersectional Engagement and Partnerships:

- This year, the Committee on Women's Rights collaborated with the International Health Group APHA, the International Abortion Working Group under International Health, and the Sexual and Reproductive Health Group to foster joint initiatives.
- The Committee also partnered with the Human Rights Group to organize a session titled *Violations of Human Rights Within the Justice and Prison Systems*, demonstrating the importance of intersectional engagement in addressing critical public health issues.

2024 SESSION HIGHLIGHTS: ORGANIZED BY THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

POSTER SESSIONS:

3070.0 - Committee for Women's Rights Poster Session on Women's Mental Health & Social Challenges.

3071.0 - Committee on Women's Rights Poster Session on Violence Against Women and Interventions

ORAL SESSIONS:

4004.0 - Overcoming War and Conflict: Women Overcoming Barriers Created By War.

5104.0 - Women in the Workforce: Championing Equity and Leadership for Women,

3007.0 - Policy Innovation: Transforming Government Approaches to Women and Substance Use.

2047.0 - Empowering Women and Rebuilding Trust in Maternity and Fertility Care.

COLLABORATIVE SESSION (with Human Rights Group)

Violations of Human Rights Within the Justice and Prison Systems

Duly submitted,

Hanna Idriess

Chair, Committee on Women's Right, APHA.