

November 30, 2023



## Joint Statement from Leaders in Women's Health on Arkansas Executive Order

Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders has signed an executive order banning the use of gender-neutral language in state documents. As healthcare organizations, the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN), the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH), and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) recognize the importance of providing culturally proficient and gender-affirming care for all women, transgender people, non-binary people, birthing people, and newborns.

We reject antiquated, oppressive, and non-scientific practices, ideologies, or beliefs that interfere with the provision of accessible and equitable care. Further, we believe it is the responsibility of government to ensure legal protections are comprehensive and encompass all individuals, irrespective of their biological sex or gender identity.

Traditional language associating childbirth exclusively with women can reinforce rigid gender stereotypes. Acknowledging the diversity of gender experiences promotes a sense of belonging and equal rights for all individuals, fostering social cohesion and ensuring dignified and inclusive healthcare. This benefits not only transgender individuals but also women who may not conform to traditional gender roles.