

BC WOMEN'S

HEALTH FOUNDATION

IMPACT REPORT
APR 2024 - MAR 2025

A LOOK BACK

The year's impact
on women's +
newborn health

LIFE-SAVING CARE FOR NEWBORNS

A full equipment
refresh for
BC Women's NICU

Q+A

Dr. Lori Brotto discusses
women's health research



THANK YOU FOR CHAMPIONING WOMEN'S + NEWBORN HEALTH

As BC Women's Health Foundation celebrates 30 remarkable years, we're reflecting on a legacy that has transformed the lives of women and newborns in British Columbia and across Canada.

Thanks to your unwavering support, BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre was first in the country to initiate the mom-and-baby model of care in the BC Women's NICU, keeping families together during their most vulnerable moments. Cervical cancer screening is now more accessible through self-screening kits, empowering more women to take control of their health. And groundbreaking research has led to free contraception across Canada, removing barriers and giving women greater freedom in their reproductive health choices.

Thirty years ago, the Women's Health Research Institute didn't exist. Today, it is the largest women's health research institute in the country, transforming research into care that changes lives.

BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre is a vital hub for women's health in our province. It's the only stand-alone women's hospital in the country with both a NICU and a dedicated labour and delivery unit. It's a beacon for what compassionate, innovative care can look like in BC and across Canada.



Karen Kerr
Board Chair,
BC Women's Health Foundation

And this year, we've made history once again. Together with our incredible partners at University of British Columbia (UBC) and the Women's Health Research Institute, we opened the doors to Western Canada's first-ever Complex Menopause Clinic, right here at BC Women's.

None of this would be possible without you.

To our generous donors, visionary researchers and compassionate healthcare professionals: thank you. You are at the heart of every breakthrough, every life changed and every barrier broken.

Together, we're unstoppable in building a future where every woman, everywhere, has the care she deserves.



Cally Wesson
President + CEO,
BC Women's Health Foundation



WORKING TOGETHER TO TRANSFORM HEALTH



BC Women's is a national leader in educating doctors, nurses and health professionals. It is also the provincial centre for the highest-risk maternity and neonatal care, and home to BC Women's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Canada's largest quaternary NICU.

Philanthropy also drives transformative research at the Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI), Canada's largest institute solely dedicated to women's and newborn health. With over 700 members across the province, the WHRI mission is to create new evidence-based solutions that inform and transform health and healthcare for all women and newborns.

As the philanthropic partner to BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre and the Women's Health Research Institute, BC Women's Health Foundation (BCWHF) plays a critical role in advancing care, research and innovation for women and newborns in British Columbia.

With the support of our generous donor community, we raise essential funds that fuel life-changing care at BC Women's, the province's only women's hospital, serving approximately 80,000 patients annually through over 60 specialized clinics and programs devoted to women's and newborn health.

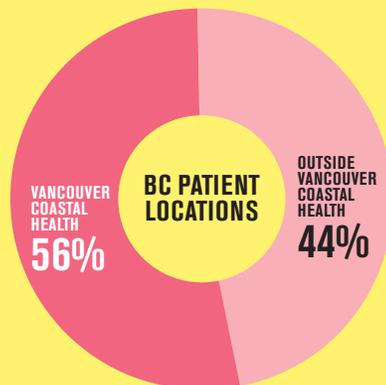
Together with the valued support of our donor community, we are impacting care and driving meaningful change in women's and newborn health in British Columbia.

BC Women's Health Foundation supports:



OUR IMPACT IN 2024

81,263
TOTAL AMBULATORY VISITS



6,530
BIRTHS

WHRI RESEARCH AWARDS FUNDED

10x \$25,000 CATALYST GRANTS
3x \$21,000 GRADUATE AWARDS

6,966
MATERNAL INPATIENT ADMISSIONS

4,025
GYNAECOLOGIC SURGICAL CASES

2,921
OBSTETRIC SURGICAL CASES

WOMEN'S HEALTH ISN'T PART OF WHAT WE DO – IT'S EVERYTHING WE DO.



CALLY WESSON
President + CEO,
BC Women's Health
Foundation



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Former President,
BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre
2008-2017

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DR. LORI BROTTTO
Executive Director,
WHRI

For 30 years, BC Women's Health Foundation has been transforming women's health, powering new possibilities through breakthrough research and delivering life-changing care.

And we couldn't have done it without your support!

To all of our supporters – every donor, partner, volunteer, researcher, allied health professional and clinician: thank you for turning vision into reality.

With our partners, BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre and the Women's Health Research Institute, we've powered breakthrough discoveries and advanced exceptional care for women and newborns across the province and globally.

With your support, BC Women's Health Foundation is helping to create better outcomes for women at every stage of life, from caring for the tiniest babies in BC Women's NICU, to providing world-leading mental health support for new moms, to redefining care through menopause and midlife.

Together, we're making bold possibilities a reality. We are the future of women's health in BC and beyond.

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BRIGHT BEGINNINGS

Babies receive life-changing care in the refreshed BC Women's NICU – made possible by donors like you.

Babies in BC Women's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) are among our most vulnerable and fragile patients. That's why access to the most advanced technologies and equipment is critical for their survival, care and recovery, helping to ensure they have the brightest possible start in life.

Thanks to the generosity of our philanthropic community at the 2024 BC Women's Health Foundation Glow Gala presented by RBC, an incredible \$1.35 million was raised in support of the BC Women's NICU. These funds went directly toward fulfilling the unit's most urgent and essential equipment needs. With this support, every item on the BC Women's NICU team's wish list was met.

The impact of this generosity is life-changing for the 1,200 critically ill newborns and their families who count on this urgent care each year. This equipment gives the BC Women's NICU team the state-of-the-art tools to provide advanced neonatal care to the babies in the unit, so they can deliver the best possible outcomes for the babies and much-needed peace of mind for their families.



“BC Women's NICU had the equipment needed to provide Tru with life-saving care. Today, she is a thriving 9-year-old with a bright future.”

Chantal + Rob Beare, Tru's parents

Baby Tru (below); and Tru today (left) with her sister, Faith, mom and dad at the 2024 Glow Gala.





“This ventilator isn’t just a piece of equipment – it’s peace of mind; it empowers families; and it’s a step toward a stronger future for babies with chronic lung disease.”

Dr. Emily Kieran, Division Head, Neonatology, BC Women’s NICU

Dr. Emily Kieran demonstrates how to use a home ventilator.

Here’s what your dollars have acquired for BC Women’s NICU babies:



10 CO2 MONITORS

These monitors alert the clinical team to signs of respiratory distress due to dangerous high CO2 levels, so that babies with underdeveloped lungs can be immediately supported.

4 CRITICOOL MINI

The portable CritiCool MINI safeguards newborns with brain injuries from neurological impairment in the NICU or during transport.



4 HOME VENTILATORS

For infants with chronic lung disease, these ventilators are used as important training tools for families who will be managing their baby’s care at home.

1 VENUE R4 ULTRASOUND

For babies too fragile to move, Venue R4 ultrasounds provide quick and accurate assessments and diagnoses, so that babies quickly get the support they need.



8 BRAINZ MONITORS

Brainz monitors act as a lifeline for babies who have suffered brain injury, providing the monitoring information necessary for immediate clinical response.

2 JET VENTILATORS

Jet HFV ventilators deliver gentle, precise and effective respiratory support to optimize lung function for sick and premature newborns too weak to breathe on their own.

THE FUTURE OF WOMEN'S HEALTH STARTS HERE

Dr. Lori Brotto, Executive Director of the Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI), shares her thoughts on the importance of advancements in women's health research, shaping policy and inspiring the next generation of researchers.



Why is Women's Health Research Month so important?

Women's Health Research Month is vital because it shines a light on the longstanding gaps in research that affect women's health outcomes. Historically underfunded and understudied, women's unique health needs deserve focused attention. This month amplifies the stories of researchers, community partners and women with lived experiences to advance equity, improve care and ensure that women's diverse experiences are reflected in science, policy and practice. When women are healthy, all of society benefits.

How does BC stand out on the map for women's research?

BC stands out because it has one of the only research institutes dedicated to women's health in Canada, the Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI). The Institute is embedded within BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre, and it enjoys a vital partnership with the BC Women's Health Foundation. We live out the Learning Health System model where research directly informs care, and we also share research with women and the public. Researchers at the WHRI have led ground-breaking and internationally policy-changing research that has directly improved the lives of women and the people they love.

Why is training the next generation of researchers so critical?

Trainees and early-career researchers bring fresh perspectives, personal insights and innovative methods to address complex issues through all stages of a woman's life. Investing in their growth ensures continued progress, diversity in leadership and sustainable impact. By mentoring new leaders, we build a stronger, more inclusive research ecosystem that prioritizes equity and improves health outcomes for all women.

What is your proudest accomplishment this year?

There are many! But one I'd like to highlight was the WHRI's lead on the Health and Economics Research on Midlife Women in British Columbia project, or HER-BC. This project was done in partnership with community members, clinicians, researchers and women with lived experience, and was funded by the BC Women's Health Foundation and Pacific Blue Cross. To date, we have presented the findings and the five key recommendations to thousands of people. The project also paved the way for two additional knowledge translation grants and led directly to the UBC Faculty of Medicine now including curriculum on menopause for future doctors.

How will these investments in research make positive changes for women's health in the future?

Investments in women's health research drive long-term, life-changing health improvements by generating evidence that leads to better prevention, diagnosis and treatment tailored to women's unique needs. These investments uncover solutions to conditions long overlooked, influence health policy and promote equity in care. For every dollar invested in women's health research today, the return on investment for women in the future, and by extension society as a whole, is profound.

Why is it critical to translate science into everyday life?

Translating science into language that is accessible to all people is essential, especially in women's health, because research alone doesn't improve lives unless it reaches the people who can benefit from it. Women often face health challenges that are misunderstood or overlooked, and our understanding of many women's health issues lags far behind our understanding of men's health. By making scientific findings accessible, we take knowledge from the medical journals directly into women's lives. Furthermore, by equipping healthcare providers with this knowledge, it bridges gaps in knowledge, drives equity and leads to healthier outcomes for all women.



Sign up for our newsletters to receive our stories of impact, including breakthrough research updates.



ILLUMINATIONS SHINES BRIGHT FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH

Each year, BC Women's Health Foundation kicks off Women's Health Research Month with our annual Illuminations Luncheon presented by RBC Wealth Management. It's an opportunity to bring women's health scientists and clinicians together with others who celebrate the importance of women's health research initiatives, including our growing community of dedicated donors.

This past March was our 23rd Illuminations, and it made the biggest impact yet, raising a record-breaking \$540,000 – and funding more catalyst grants in one day than any other in the Foundation's history. We're extremely proud of these accomplishments, and we want to profoundly thank all of those who supported Illuminations 2025.

FROM RESEARCH TO RELIEF: PERIODPAIN.CA

Period pain is real – and for many, it can interfere with daily life, from enjoying regular activities to attending work or school. In 2024, BC Women's Health Foundation funded the launch of a first-of-its-kind resource in Canada, **PeriodPain.ca**, to empower individuals to better understand and manage their menstrual pain. Developed by the WHRI, the site translates cutting-edge research into accessible information, including links to useful resources and an interactive quiz that helps individuals recognize what's not normal and what next steps to take.



MENOPAUSE REDEFINED

BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre has launched a first-of-its-kind menopause program in Western Canada, supported by BC Women's Health Foundation.

Most women in menopause live with symptoms that can range from being uncomfortable and disruptive to life-altering and debilitating. From hot flashes and joint pain, to poor sleep and mental health struggles, the effects are wide-ranging – yet many women feel unprepared, unheard and unsupported.

Thanks to the ongoing commitment of our donor community, the hospital has launched the BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre Complex Menopause Clinic, the first-of-its-kind in Western Canada. The clinic cares for eligible women from across the province who are experiencing medically complex symptoms related to menopause and midlife, both in person and virtually. Through generous donor support, BC Women's Health Foundation helped fund the launch and continues to support ongoing operations and establish a professorship within the clinic to lead both research and care delivery.

In partnership with the Women's Health Research Institute and the University of British Columbia, the Complex Menopause Clinic is integrating research directly into its care model to better understand midlife health challenges and generate evidence-based solutions. These insights will be shared across BC's healthcare network to improve the standard of care in real time.

BCWHF is also funding a series of webinars designed to shine a light on menopause and perimenopause, bringing the latest evidence directly into women's homes through the voices of medical experts, researchers and patients with lived experience.

Together, we're redefining what support for women in midlife looks like. By continuing to invest in research, education and access, we're helping to ensure that no one has to navigate menopause alone.

1 in 3
women in BC are currently experiencing menopause-related symptoms

HER-BC

This past November, Women's Health Research Institute, in collaboration with BC Women's Health Foundation and Pacific Blue Cross, released **HER-BC: Health and Economics Research on Midlife Women in British Columbia**, a first-ever provincial study exploring perimenopause, menopause and post-menopause, and highlighting the impact menopause has on those experiencing it.

The study confirmed that menopause symptoms impact everything from their jobs (32%) and missing work (24%), to seeking help from extended healthcare providers (43.5%), spending an average of almost \$900 annually. Mental health issues were experienced by 41.2%.



The report showed that women could be better supported with public-health awareness campaigns, collaborative healthcare, better workplace policies and further research – and BC Women's Hospital used this vital information as the benchmark to help shape the new menopause program.

whri.org/her-bc

A CRITICAL TOOL

From detection to diagnosis, point-of-care ultrasound is a game-changer.

BC Women's Health Foundation is deeply grateful for the support of philanthropists like Edward and Eugenie Yeung and other generous donors who have helped us raise more than \$475,000 for our Ultrasound Campaign – enough to purchase five point-of-care-ultrasound machines for BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre.

In today's healthcare settings, essential ultrasound technology empowers teams to make timely and informed decisions that improve patient outcomes and ultimately save lives. In the Maternal Newborn Program, for example, ultrasound is relied on for everything from assessing fetal position and placental function, to confirming uterine rupture or internal bleeding during pregnancy, to turning breech babies and supporting delivery function, and so much more. Point-of-care ultrasound has made it possible for medical teams to deliver the best possible care when and where it's needed most.



“Ultrasound is a critical tool, providing real time, life-saving imagery at bedside, where speed, accessibility and accuracy matter most.”

Anne Margaret Leigh, Executive Director,
Maternal Newborn Program, BC Women's
Hospital + Health Centre



“For the first time, we heard our baby cry. It was magical and meant the world to us.”

Morgan, Wilson's mom

PORTABLE ULTRASOUND TECHNOLOGY WHEN AND WHERE IT'S NEEDED

Moments after Morgan and Kyle welcomed their baby boy, it was clear something was terribly wrong. Six hours later, baby Wilson was being transported from Kamloops to the BC Women's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

Upon his arrival, Wilson was immediately placed on a breathing tube. Wilson's care team used the point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS) to assess his lungs and quickly discovered he needed medications to clear his lungs of fluid. The next day, another scan confirmed that Wilson was ready. The breathing tube came out smoothly, and Wilson successfully transitioned to non-invasive breathing support.

The POCUS is portable, which meant Wilson never had to be moved or disturbed during the process. The machine was brought right into their room while Wilson rested in his dad's arms.

“The ultrasound was so easy – Wilson stayed comfortable the whole time,” said Morgan. “We are so grateful.”

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

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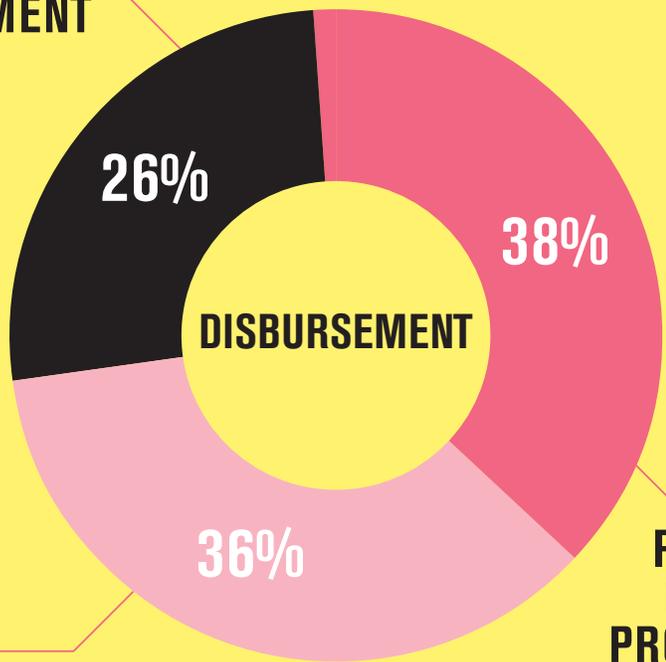
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HAS BEEN INVESTED IN WOMEN'S AND NEWBORN HEALTH INITIATIVES AT BC WOMEN'S AND WHRI

URGENT EQUIPMENT

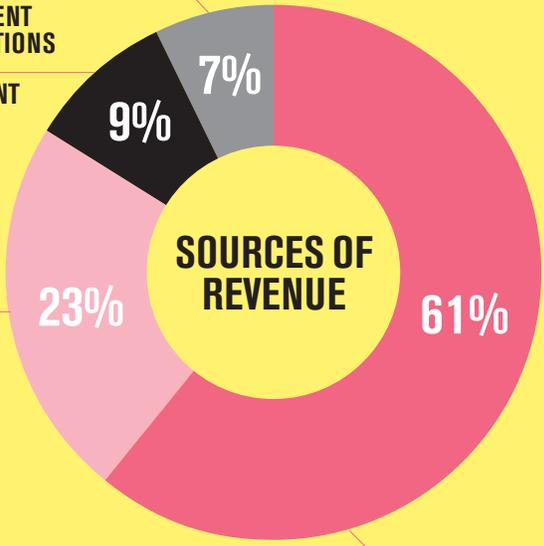


PATIENT CARE + PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS

RESEARCH

GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

INVESTMENT & OTHER INCOME



EVENTS

SOURCES OF REVENUE

PHILANTHROPY

YOUR DONATIONS MADE A BIG IMPACT THIS YEAR:

30+ 10x \$100k

PIECES OF EQUIPMENT SUPPORTING BC WOMEN'S PROGRAMS

CATALYST GRANTS DRIVING BREAKTHROUGH DISCOVERIES

TOWARD DIGITAL HEALTH RESEARCH ACCELERATOR GRANTS

ENHANCED PATIENT CARE AND PROGRAMS AT BC WOMEN'S:

MATERNAL AND NEWBORN, BC WOMEN'S NICU, MIDLIFE AND MENOPAUSE, MENTAL HEALTH AND MORE

Allison Fulton
with her husband
and twin boys.



LEARN MORE ABOUT
BC WOMEN'S HEALTH FOUNDATION
[BCWOMENSFOUNDATION.ORG](https://bcwomensfoundation.org)

BC WOMEN'S
HEALTH
FOUNDATION

