

HERE FOR HER



2019-2020 IMPACT REPORT

**BC WOMEN'S
HEALTH
FOUNDATION**



TOGETHER WITH YOU:

A QUARTER-CENTURY OF SERVICE AND INVESTING IN WOMEN'S HEALTH

When we began in 1995, we were the BC Women's Hospital Foundation — with the sole mandate of supporting the needs of the world-class BC Women's Hospital. In 2005, the Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI) was founded and would become both a Foundation partner and a global leader in researching women's health. Over the past 25 years, these two incredible allies have proven to be the most tenacious, innovative, and inspirational partners we could ever aspire to collaborate with. Together with you, we are truly standing on the shoulders of giants. And it's these partnerships that have helped set the course for the next 25 years to come.

In 2019, we evolved to become the provincial BC Women's Health Foundation. We introduced our expanded mission **to ensure exemplary healthcare for women by providing holistic, solutions-focused philanthropy that delivers tangible societal impact.** As you will see throughout this *Here for Her* Impact Report, a lot has changed from 25 years ago. Namely, we have introduced Education + Awareness, and Advocacy as pillar commitments alongside our ongoing investments in Capital + Equipment to BC Women's Hospital, and in Research + Innovation funding to the WHRI. We've done so because much more is required in the pursuit of gender equity within healthcare — taking women from invisible to invincible.

Together with you and allies worldwide, a movement is underway to demand gender equality in women's healthcare and research, and we are at the forefront.

Women do not have equitable access to healthcare. Funding gaps between male and female medical research remain pervasive. Unconscious gender bias exists in research, medical education, and practice, and unless we all demand change, these gaps will never close. However, with your continued support, we will help achieve our collective purpose of **healthy women everywhere, capable of anything.**

Moving the needle on women's health will take all of us. And if you thought the last 25 years were incredible, just wait and see what we'll accomplish together going forward. We are going to change women's healthcare, and we can't do it without you. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Genesa M. Greening
President + CEO
BC Women's Health Foundation



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Karim Kassam
Board Chair
BC Women's Health Foundation



HEALTHY WOMEN EVERYWHERE, CAPABLE OF ANYTHING

When it comes to healthcare in BC, women are experiencing serious inequities that impact their physical, mental, and emotional well-being — primarily because of their gender. Women commonly experience misdiagnoses, minimized symptoms, and poorly targeted treatment.

BC Women's Health Foundation is BC's largest non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the full spectrum of women's health. We believe that women should have equitable access to the highest quality healthcare when, where, and how they need it.

Together with donors and partners like you, and women across our province, we are addressing the barriers to health equity.

By supporting **EDUCATION + AWARENESS initiatives, we are amplifying the voices of women, increasing knowledge, and changing discourse.**

By **ADVOCATING for women's health, we help shape systemic change for equitable healthcare policy, practice, and investment.**

By funding **CAPITAL + EQUIPMENT at the province's only dedicated women's hospital, together, we are supporting accessible, quality, women-centred healthcare.**

By investing in essential women's health **RESEARCH + INNOVATION, we are bridging the gender gap in funding while exposing the unconscious biases in women's healthcare and research.**

Through increased dialogue and concrete action, we help to ensure the unique health needs of half the population are no longer just an afterthought.

YOUR IMPACT

April 2019 - March 2020

\$10,101,745

contributed by donors

2,791

individual, foundation, and corporate donors

61

projects* funded

1,093

women's stories shared

*This includes Capital + Equipment projects at BC Women's Hospital, Research + Innovation projects at the WHRI, and Education + Awareness projects delivered by the Foundation.

TOGETHER WE ARE

AMPLIFYING WOMEN'S VOICES THROUGH EDUCATION + AWARENESS

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES AND HEALTHCARE NEEDS OF WOMEN THROUGH OUR EDUCATION + AWARENESS INITIATIVES HELP CHANGEMAKERS TARGET SOLUTIONS THAT MAKE AN IMPACT.



From left to right: Heidi Worthington, Senior Vice President + Chief Revenue Officer, Pacific Blue Cross; Dr. Lori Brotto, Executive Director, Women's Health Research Institute; Genesa Greening, President + CEO, BC Women's Health Foundation; John Crawford, President + CEO, Pacific Blue Cross; and Kim van der Woerd, Principal, Reciprocal Consulting at the In Her Words Press Conference.

UNCOVERING HEALTHCARE REALITIES FOR WOMEN IN BC

In the fall of 2019, in partnership with Pacific Blue Cross (PBC), we released *In Her Words*, a report and accompanying stories that uncovered the stark realities of how women of all ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic groups interact with the healthcare system in BC. With almost 18 million media impressions, *In Her Words* amplified and validated the experiences of over 1,000 women participants.

In Her Words provided not only critically important baseline data, but served as a catalyst for change throughout the healthcare system. The findings inspired our pillar partner, PBC, to develop a gender-focus to their insurance products that recognizes the unique needs of women. It also shaped the focus for the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade's Women's Health Care Forum in October 2019, sponsored by PBC. Bringing together healthcare experts with business leaders provided a crucial opportunity for dialogue on the realities of the gender health gap, and multi-dimensional solutions to address these inequities in organizations.

MAINSTREAMING WOMEN'S HEALTH THROUGH MEDIA

Magnifying the breadth of women's health topics is essential to educate the broader public and address the systemic inequities that have gone unspoken, under-diagnosed, and under-treated. Our ongoing CTV *Her Health* feature has aired dozens of interviews focused on women's health as addressed by BC Women's Health Foundation's President + CEO, Genesa Greening, alongside a featured women's health leader. Reaching an average of 21,000 viewers per segment, *Her Health* continues to boost awareness of crucial women's health topics in our province.

"Lack of information is just one of the many barriers women face in accessing the high-quality healthcare they deserve."

— Mi-Jung Lee, veteran investigative journalist, CTV Vancouver news anchor, and advocate for women's health, shared her story for *In Her Words*. "When women speak out, lives can be saved."

EXPOSING RESEARCH BIAS

Research informs healthcare policy and practice, yet there is a significant bias against funding women's health research. At our annual ***Illuminations*** luncheon, presented by RBC Wealth Management, we highlighted evidence of this bias, the personal struggles of underfunded women's health researchers, and the impact this is having on women's health outcomes. This conversation at *Illuminations* led to the generous contribution of over \$220,000 from our donors and partners to directly support women's health research at the WHRI, bringing us a step closer to ensuring women are better represented in health research.



Professor Liisa Galea noted during *Illuminations* that less than 8% of federal funding goes to women's health research.



Healthy Women Healthy Companies brought together professionals to discuss balancing life with the workplace and women's health.

PROVIDING THE TOOLS FOR SELF-ADVOCACY

Through community events and partnerships, we bring women together to learn and discuss health issues and create or support initiatives that foster solutions. This past year, we hosted ***Women Aging Well*** in partnership with The Secret Garden Tea Room, ***Caring For Your Whole Self*** in partnership with YYOGA, and ***Healthy Women Healthy Companies*** in partnership with TELUS and Special Risk Insurance Managers, involving hundreds of women, women's healthcare experts, and advocates. These events helped raise essential funds for women's health and provided women with the tools to learn and advocate for their health and make it a continued priority.

FROM UNSEEN TO UNSTOPPABLE. YOUR SUPPORT OF OUR EDUCATION + AWARENESS INITIATIVES IS CHANGING THE DISCOURSE ON WOMEN'S HEALTH.

TOGETHER WE ARE GENERATING TRANSFORMATIONAL INVESTMENT THROUGH ADVOCACY

THROUGH TARGETED ENGAGEMENT WITH POLICYMAKERS, BUREAUCRATS, AND ELECTED OFFICIALS FROM ALL PARTIES, WE HELP SHAPE SYSTEMIC CHANGES IN POLICY AND INVESTMENT TO MOVE THE NEEDLE ON WOMEN'S HEALTH.



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH

Our advocacy work has brought a **National Institute for Women's Health Research** from the pages of our strategic plan into the federal government's 2019 mandate. We recognized that while incremental investments in research will indeed make strides for the diagnosis, treatment, and management of specific diseases, we need sustainable investment in all areas of women's health research to improve health outcomes for all women. The proposed institute will be dedicated to advancing women's health research in Canada and globally. We envision an interdisciplinary collective that will drive progress in women's health, from microscope to patient care, and from health promotion to policy development.

"Change is urgently needed to make health systems gender-responsive ensuring women, girls and gender-diverse people survive, thrive, and realize their right to health, dignity, and equality."

— Maryam Monsef, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development; Genesa M. Greening, President and CEO of BC Women's Health Foundation; and Cassandra Hallett, Secretary-General of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, in a joint Vancouver Sun op-ed.



Dr. Gina Ogilvie, Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Global Control of HPV; Genesa Greening, President + CEO, BC Women's Health Foundation; the Honourable Minister Ginette Petitpas-Taylor; and, Professor Gavin Stuart, Department of Obstetrics/Gynecology at UBC.

ELIMINATING CERVICAL CANCER

Last year, the Foundation's advocacy efforts resulted in a \$10 million investment from the federal government towards a national cervical cancer research program. This funding was the single largest government investment in cervical cancer research and the efforts required to eliminate this devastating disease.

Each year, approximately 1,550 Canadian women are diagnosed with cervical cancer leading to an estimated 400 deaths. Cervical cancer tends to occur in mid-life when many women are at the centre of their families, communities, and professional lives. Indigenous women and new immigrant women are less likely to be screened early due to access barriers, a lack of culturally-safe screening options, and limited targeted educational outreach. Yet with vaccination, early detection, and effective management, cervical cancer is one of the most preventable forms of cancer.

The Accelerate Cervical Cancer Elimination in Canada (ACE-Canada) research program will examine how to improve the reach and impact of primary and secondary prevention programs, particularly for marginalized communities who often have much lower screening rates. The program will be led by world-renowned physician and researcher, Dr. Gina Ogilvie, and her team at the WHRI, the BC Elimination of Cervical Cancer Task Force, and colleagues at the Gynecological Cancer Initiative.

BC Women's Health Foundation will be looking to our community of donors for a matching \$10 million commitment over the next five years. These funds will help ensure this research program will not only lead to a reduction in the annual number of women diagnosed with cervical cancer in Canada, but will also inform policy and practice for international partners, including the World Health Organization, in their journey to eliminate this disease.

INVISIBLE NO MORE. YOUR SUPPORT OF OUR ADVOCACY INITIATIVES HAS LED TO TRANSFORMATIONAL INVESTMENT THAT WILL HAVE LASTING EFFECTS FOR WOMEN ACROSS CANADA FOR DECADES TO COME.

TOGETHER WE ARE

ADDRESSING WOMEN'S HEALTH NEEDS THROUGH CAPITAL + EQUIPMENT

INVESTING IN BC WOMEN'S HOSPITAL + HEALTH CENTRE ENSURES THEIR FACILITIES MATCH THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE WORLD-CLASS MODEL OF CARE THAT WOMEN DESERVE.

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GYNECOLOGICAL SURGERIES

Thanks to a \$5 million visionary investment by the Diamond Foundation, longstanding supporters of women's health, the **Integrated Gynecology Surgical Program** at BC Women's Hospital has been expanding its services to better support women. The objective is to improve access for women by consolidating gynecological day surgeries in the Lower Mainland. Rather than waiting many months, often with symptoms that can be physically and emotionally debilitating, women suffering from chronic pelvic pain and a broad range of gynecological challenges receive timely treatment thanks to your support.

There are two forms of gynecological surgeries now possible for women at BC Women's Hospital — surgical day care and procedural sedation (conscious sedation) surgeries. The ability to perform procedural sedation surgery is of immense benefit to both women and the

healthcare system. Made possible by technological and medical advances, it offers women less invasive options, such as hysteroscopy, which results in less tissue damage and lower postoperative pain. Moving cases into procedural sedation frees time in the general operating rooms for surgeries requiring general anesthesia, and further increases access for patients waiting for surgery.

Last year, over 1,000 women benefited from rapid access to gynecological procedures and surgeries at BC Women's Hospital. There are now 28 surgeons working in the Gynecologic Surgery Program, seeing an average of 40 patients a week in the Procedural Sedation Program and performing 30 specialized, complex surgeries every week in the Gynecological Operating Room.



BC Women's Hospital surgical staff from the Gynecology Surgical Program with donor funded Hysteroscope Tower and Exam Power Table.

“Women value having their medical needs met in a timely fashion and overwhelmingly prefer the use of procedural sedation, which reduces both their hospital stay and recovery time. Facilitating improved access and minimal disruption to women's other responsibilities enhances their ability to care for themselves. The benefits of the BC Women's Hospital procedural sedation model has been recognized at a provincial level, and we are actively working to support access for women across the province.”

– Dr. Stephanie Rhone, Senior Medical Director, Ambulatory and Surgical Programs at BC Women's Hospital.



PHYSICIAN Q + A

Dr. Alison MacInnes

Family physician, Dr. Alison MacInnes, started working at BC Women's Hospital in the year 2000. She has been bringing babies into the world ever since.

Q: As a woman, what does supporting women's health mean to you?

AM: As a woman and a physician, supporting women's health is of utmost importance to me. Not only maternity care but the health of women of all ages. Being a family doctor, I get to know my patients over the long term, which I think gives me the unique advantage of recognizing when something does not seem quite right — my patients can trust that I will give them the care they deserve.

Q: What motivates you to get out of bed every morning in your role?

AM: I love the variety of doing clinical work as well as my leadership role at BC Women's Hospital. Being part of an administration team that sets goals to ensure that patients receive the best care possible is challenging and rewarding. The opening of the Cedar Birthing Suites is a perfect example of how BC Women's Hospital meets this goal.

Q: How will the new Cedar Birthing Suites impact the delivery of care for your patients?

AM: We know that single room maternity care is what women want for their birth experience and now with a 27-bed unit, we can offer this to most women. Cedar Birthing Suites is the new "default" unit where all women will be admitted unless there are maternal or fetal conditions that make them more appropriate to deliver in the higher risk Labour and Delivery unit. I cannot thank all the donors enough for making Cedar Birthing Suites a reality.

WORLD-CLASS BIRTHING FACILITIES

Thanks to our generous donors — including Wesgroup Properties with a \$600,000 investment, Michael Bubl , and generous gifts from guests at the 2018 GLOW Gala, sponsored by TELUS — we've raised \$1.75 million towards the new **Cedar Birthing Suites Unit** at BC Women's Hospital. The new Unit opened its doors in September 2020. Now, 27 new and upgraded single-patient rooms will support approximately 2,800 women annually, an increase of 40%. All Cedar Birthing Suites

have private bathrooms, beds for support persons, and a modern, comfortable, "home-like" feel. As part of the expansion, a new family lounge has been created to foster a family-centred approach to care. The new unit is providing more women than ever before with a comfortable and safe birthing experience that is inclusive for their families.



Photos of the brand-new Cedar Birthing Suites Unit at BC Women's Hospital.



Participants of the Butterfly Run Vancouver are part of a community that has come together to support each other.

SUPPORTING WOMEN THROUGH GRIEF

Approximately one in four women and their families are affected by pregnancy and infant loss, and one in six women experience infertility. **The Butterfly Run Vancouver** is a memorial run/walk to raise awareness and funds supporting those who have experienced infertility, or pregnancy or infant loss. Last year's inaugural run hosted 500 participants and raised \$55,000 — funding a crucial educational project through the Early Pregnancy Assessment and Recurrent Pregnancy Loss Clinic. New educational videos provide information about miscarriages, the medical and emotional support available, and affirmation to women that they are not alone in their experience.

"Being a bereaved parent is not a path that anyone should have to walk alone. We hope that through the programs at BC Women's Hospital, which the Butterfly Run Vancouver has supported, that more resources and support are created to help the families needing it most."

— Laura Markle and Kim Lockhart, Co-Chairs of the Butterfly Run Vancouver.

GIVING MOMS TOOLS TO SUPPORT BEST OUTCOMES

The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at BC Women's Hospital cares for the greatest number of high-risk infants in BC. For preterm babies whose bodies are still developing, breast milk can reduce devastating intestinal infections. With the support of donors like the Variety Cares Fund, the **NICU Breast Pump Program** provides a free, electric breast pump — an invaluable tool for women unable to nurse their fragile infants. Donor funding of approximately \$20,000 annually ensures that mothers are equipped to support the best outcomes for their high-risk babies.

"My baby was born at 34 weeks and was in the NICU for feeding and oxygen support for over five months. I used to stay with him in the hospital as much as I could, but there were times when I needed to go home because I also have a toddler to take care of. The breast pump was a blessing for me because I was able to pump milk even when not in the hospital. My baby can't latch and orally feed, so storing my milk and making sure I didn't run out was a big help. Thank you so much for your organization's support for NICU moms like me."

— Ayesha Cruz, NICU parent.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT:

Megan Martin (马丽)

For Megan Martin honouring women is a core value.

Since first arriving in Vancouver, Megan has made it her mission to break down barriers and spearhead leadership positions for women in her community. She understands first-hand the resilience women carry into every sector, every day, and sees this as a through-line in all her charitable giving. When women are empowered, an entire community benefits.

"Women play such an important role in society. I believe in doing everything I can to empower them. I always knew I wanted to support women's healthcare when I had the chance."

— Megan Martin (马丽), Li Ma Family, Beautiful Life Foundation. Megan donated \$200,000 to BC Women's Health Foundation's initiatives in 2019.

Megan's two grandchildren were born at BC Women's Hospital. The high-quality care they received inspired her to give back to ensure even more women, newborns, and families can access BC Women's Hospital's world-class care.

YOUR SUPPORT OF CAPITAL + EQUIPMENT HAS HELPED FUND ESSENTIAL MEDICAL EQUIPMENT, FACILITIES, TRAINING, AND PROGRAMS SUPPORTING WOMEN + FAMILIES.

TOGETHER WE ARE

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE THROUGH RESEARCH + INNOVATION

THROUGH INVESTMENTS IN RESEARCH + INNOVATION, YOU ARE ADVANCING THE UNDERSTANDING OF WOMEN'S UNIQUE HEALTH NEEDS.

VIRTUAL SUPPORT FOR POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

During the critical period after birth, connection to others can mean a world of difference to women with postpartum depression. With the generosity of donors, the WHRI is creating a web-based resource called postpartumcare.ca. This evidence-based web resource is developed as part of the **SUPPORT** research project (Survey and Development of a Universally Accessible Postpartum Online Resource for the Treatment of Postpartum Depression).

This resource will help women share their stories and support each other through postpartum depression by facilitating community building through first-person blog posts. It will provide information about postpartum depression, self-care, access to practical resources, and information on local services tailored to each woman's geography and cultural background.

Our donors have funded the first phases of this project to incorporate women's insights with lived postpartum experience in developing a supportive website. We are now actively fundraising for the final \$200,000 of this \$450,000 project that is needed to complete the web-

based resource so that it can be tested for effectiveness, further refined, and then shared with women across the province.

As part of the next phase, the team is partnering with Indigenous and immigrant women from across the province for focus groups to gain an understanding of website content that is culturally accessible.



DID YOU KNOW?

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, a survey of Canadian women found that 37% of women who are pregnant reported symptoms of depression, and 57% reported symptoms of anxiety.



“This facility will accelerate critical research in women’s health, including research focused on the underlying biological causes of so many women’s health conditions. These conditions affect millions of women in Canada yet are understudied due to the lack of a dedicated women’s health research space. This lab will catalyze made-in BC discoveries that will undoubtedly improve the lives of women.”

– Dr. Lori Brotto, Executive Director, WHRI.

Radiologists in training perfect their skills using state-of-the-art imaging equipment.

FACILITIES TO ADVANCE RESEARCH + INNOVATION

Recently completed in September 2020, thanks to a visionary \$2.5 million donation, the **Skidmore Goodman Research Lab for Women’s Health** will provide a research foundation that will impact women across BC. This donor-funded, one-of-a-kind research facility in Canada encompasses both the **Perinatal Research IMaging Evaluation (PRIME) Centre** and the **Women’s Health Research Wet Lab**.

The facility is equipped with four scanning rooms and two high-tech obstetrical ultrasound simulators. Healthcare providers and researchers use an interactive pregnancy-replication mannequin for training, which can mimic many high-risk scenarios encountered with real patients. BC Women’s Hospital’s Diagnostic Radiologist and Fetal Imaging Specialist, Dr. Denise Pugash says, “The expertise in PRIME is incredibly unique because all the research is based on taking photos of mothers, fetuses, and newborn babies using different techniques, not just ultrasound. By collaborating with

specialists, we present [clinicians] with new expertise, pushing us forward and unveiling high-level research on pregnant women and their babies.”

PRIME researchers from the Department of Electrical Engineering at UBC are presently testing a new ultrasound technology to identify women who might be at high risk for complications in pregnancy by looking at placentas. Their goal is to discover new methods of treatment during pregnancy and how to best time deliveries.

In the first dedicated Women’s Health Research Wet Lab in BC, researchers can now undertake cutting-edge biological research into all aspects of a woman’s biology. Researchers will pursue discoveries to better inform diagnostics, treatments, and health practices from endometriosis and reproductive health issues to ultrasound imaging of fetal heart abnormalities to brain cell imaging.

GRADUATE AWARDS: SUPPORTING HEALTH LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

Recognizing how vital early mentorship and funding for new researchers are, the Foundation began awarding donor-funded **Graduate Awards**. With the support of a generous donor, the first graduate award went to Suzie Maginley in 2019. Suzie is a PhD candidate whose research is focused on the use of intrauterine contraceptives (IUCs) in BC.

IUCs are the most effective method of contraception available in Canada. Yet, there can be many barriers to accessing this form of contraception and other reproductive health services in our province, particularly in rural areas. Working with the UBC Contraception and Abortion Research Team, the BC Ministry of Health, and Population Data BC, Suzie will examine IUC use patterns and identify regional access gaps to support greater IUC uptake in BC.

There is tremendous demand for the kind of early career support this \$13,750 Award offers. Last year, there were nearly 40 applicants for just one recipient! This year, donors like you are helping to provide three Graduate Awards — and inspiring the most gifted young researchers to continue on the track of investigating women's health issues.

“The BC Ministry of Health is very invested in the outcomes of my research as they’re considering a universal IUC subsidy, which would be the first of its kind in Canada. However, they currently lack sufficient evidence for generating evidence-based policy on this topic. I intend to give them the information they need to move forward with a policy decision, which hopefully involves reducing barriers—financial or otherwise—to accessing contraception in BC.”

— Suzie Maginley, PhD candidate and Graduate Award recipient.



CATALYST GRANT AWARDS: DIGITAL STORYTELLING TO COMBAT STIGMA

Catalyst Grant Awards, of \$27,500 each, provide crucial opportunities for early career researchers to gain critical insights into new ways to prevent, treat, or cure debilitating women's health issues. Initiated with one Catalyst Grant in 2016, donor funding has expanded the number of projects supported to six in 2020.

One Catalyst Grant project is using innovative digital storytelling methods to discover how best to support women with endometriosis.

It is estimated that one in ten women in Canada has endometriosis, many of whom report chronic pelvic pain starting in their teenage years. The stigma attached to a woman's pain experience means that even when women seek help, they are often dismissed.

With their Catalyst Grant and alongside patient partners, project leads Dr. Fuchsia Howard and Dr. Paul Yong, and Research Manager Heather Noga, are compiling digital stories in the form of written and audio narrations and videos. Through these stories, researchers and women can learn about the impact of endometriosis-related painful sex, and how women respond and manage. This innovative and engaging way of creating and sharing information has been made possible thanks to our generous donors.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT: **Leslie Blake**

Leslie Blake has a long history as an advocate for equity in women's health. Passionate about making a tangible impact, she and her husband Peter, have given back to support innovative projects like the Catalyst Grant profiled within this report. Learn why she is dedicated to supporting women's health research in her own words.

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“Peter and I were first inspired to contribute to the BC Women's Health Foundation when our daughters were toddlers. They are now 18 and 20! As we considered how we wanted to become involved in supporting women's health, partnering with BC Women's Health Foundation's work and focus felt both natural and necessary.

Over the past 15 years, we have been proud to support initiatives such as improving the Labour and Delivery suites to increasing women's accessibility to cervical self-screening programs.

More recently, we have been inspired to contribute to the amazing research that has been made possible through the BC Women's Health Foundation and the WHRI. Women's health research is an area that we are particularly drawn to partner with BC Women's as we strongly believe that funding research into women's health issues is pivotal to improving women's health and well-being at every stage of their life.

We are excited about all that the BC Women's Health Foundation has achieved in advancing women's health across BC. Our hope is that our involvement with the Foundation will help to promote and support a legacy of healthy women living full, happy lives, imbued with strength, awareness, and optimism about their future.”

IF HEALTHCARE IS THE TRAIN TO BETTER WOMEN'S HEALTH, THEN RESEARCH IS THE TRACK ON WHICH IT RIDES. YOUR SUPPORT HELPS VALIDATE WOMEN'S HEALTH NEEDS THROUGH SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED RESEARCH + INNOVATION.

TOGETHER WE ARE

SUPPORTING WOMEN THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

We know that previous epidemics have had disproportionate impacts on women — and COVID-19 is no different. We have already seen economic, health system, and societal impacts that will have long-term and detrimental effects on women's health in Canada.

In March 2020, the Foundation established three COVID-19 funds to respond quickly and effectively to the emerging needs of BC Women's Hospital staff, women, and families:

COVID-19 Fund: Hospital + Staff

COVID-19 Fund: Women + Families

COVID-19 Fund: Women's Health Research

“Especially during the pandemic, it has been a very busy time, and reliance on technology has significantly increased.”

– Melanie Kozak, Clinical Operations Manager,
Maternal Newborn Program, BC Women's Hospital.

THROUGH GENEROUS DONATIONS, WE HAVE BEEN FACILITATING INVESTMENT TOWARDS NEEDS THAT HAVE BEEN GENERATED AND AMPLIFIED BY COVID-19. HERE ARE FOUR EXAMPLES OF YOUR IMPACT THUS FAR:

VIRTUAL HEALTH TECHNOLOGY

Bolstered by a \$100,000 donation from Darren Entwistle, President + CEO of TELUS, along with numerous donors and supporters' generosity, virtual health technology has been delivered to the BC Women's + Children's Hospital campus. This initiative has equipped staff with virtual tools to continue providing expert care while physically distanced from patients. The donor-funded technology has allowed more than 30% of appointments at BC Women's Hospital to be held virtually.



Healthcare staff using the new virtual health technology equipment at BC Women's Hospital.

FOOD VOUCHERS FOR HOSPITAL STAFF

There was an instant outpouring of support for BC Women's Hospital frontline workers, who, in this time of uncertainty, put in long hours, worked tirelessly, and went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the health and protection of the patients they serve. Within weeks, our donor community helped raise funds to provide 700 BC Women's staff with food vouchers to the hospital's "essentials store."

“The vouchers have come at a time in the COVID-19 pandemic response where our staff are tired and facing the tough realization that changes to how we do our work, and the uncertainty of this pandemic, will continue for the foreseeable future.”

– BC Women's Hospital healthcare worker.



WOMEN EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE

Together with the **Ending Violence Association of BC** (EVA BC), we launched a \$600,000 provincial fundraising initiative to ensure life-saving resources continue to be made available for women who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing violence. From risk assessments and safety planning to clinical support and consultations, women's support organizations across BC have expanded their resources for women thanks to over \$100,000 already raised by donors like you.

“The funds [raised] will help our frontline workers across the province provide safe and enhanced support to victims and survivors of sexualized violence during COVID-19 and beyond. During this time of increased risk, that will include everything from buying laptops or tablets for workers to providing online training and secure and safe platforms for communicating with survivors of violence.”

– Tracy Porteous, Executive Director, EVA BC.



Dr. Deborah Money is leading the Canadian COVID-19 in Pregnancy Surveillance project.

RESEARCHING PREGNANCY + COVID-19

Thanks to early investments from donors like Industrial Alliance, leading researcher Dr. Deborah Money was able to leverage a grant from the **Canadian Institutes of Health Research** to launch a ground-breaking research program to fully understand the impacts of COVID-19 in pregnancy. This research team has established a national network to provide a picture of the Canada-wide health outcomes of pregnant women and newborns. The findings will impact future care recommendations for pregnant women locally, nationally, and beyond.

“When international bodies started to ask what the data was showing us about COVID-19 and pregnancy, we were proud to respond as a country rather than individual researchers all over the map.”

– Dr. Deborah Money, Professor, Depts. of Obstetrics + Gynecology, Medicine and School of Population and Public Health at UBC, and researcher with the WHRI.

TOGETHER WE ARE LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE



UNCOVERING THE TRUE IMPACTS OF COVID-19

While the initial impacts of COVID-19 on women are alarming, women's long-term health and societal repercussions are yet to be determined. Already we have seen inequity in data, research, and gender-responsive policies. A greater understanding of the realities of COVID-19 on women's health is needed to inform decisions now and prevent catastrophic gender disparities for women in the future. As part of our response to the pandemic, we are dedicated to investing in research to understand the immediate and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on women, with a focus on actionable recommendations and opportunities for improving women's health outcomes. By developing a more holistic picture of these impacts, donors are helping to ensure that the recovery from this pandemic brings everyone along and doesn't leave women behind.

PARTNERING TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S HEALTH ACROSS CANADA

Partnerships are essential in our ability to drive systemic change in the name of equality. The BC Women's Health Foundation inspired **Women's Health Collective Canada (WHCC)** is a historic coming together of Canada's three leading women's health and hospital foundations: BC Women's Health Foundation, Alberta Women's Health Foundation, and Toronto's Women's College Hospital Foundation. It also includes the leadership of all three corresponding women's health research institutes.

The WHCC is dedicated to engaging people and organizations across Canada to raise funds and awareness for women's health initiatives. We have a collective mission to close healthcare gaps for women by funding gender-inclusive medical research, equipment, treatment, and advancing knowledge about women's health needs.

The Women's Health Collective Canada leadership (pictured left to right): Jennifer Bernard, Women's College Hospital Foundation; Genesa Greening, BC Women's Health Foundation; and Sharlene Rutherford, Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation. They are pictured with the moderator of their WHCC Summit panel that took place in Toronto.



PRIORITIZING MATURE WOMEN'S HEALTH

We know there is a serious gap in integrated and comprehensive care for women over the age of 45. We are excited about the forthcoming **Mature Women's Health Program's** potential to improve the quality of life of mature women through women-centered care, education, and research. Thanks to a leading investment from an anonymous donor, we are working with BC Women's Hospital and the University of British Columbia (UBC) to recruit a Clinician-Scientist as the new Medical Director of this program. This research leader will have an immense impact on developing research and clinical support that will address the gaps in mature women's healthcare in BC.



ELIMINATING CERVICAL CANCER

A significant achievement occurred when BC Women's Health Foundation secured a federal **\$10 million cervical cancer investment** — the single largest government investment in cervical cancer research. While this research funding was monumental, greater investment is needed to end this entirely preventable cancer. In partnership with our donors, we are dedicated to raising a matching \$10 million to develop the tools and knowledge to eliminate this deadly cancer through vaccines, screening, and treatment. To the 1,550 Canadian women annually diagnosed with cervical cancer and the 45 million women worldwide who will be similarly diagnosed over the next half-century, this is impact.

ENSURING ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

Pregnancy and childbirth are expected to be a joyful time for a family — but the reality can be very different; many women face mental health issues that can be debilitating. And now, COVID-19 is exacerbating mental health challenges and increasing barriers to treatment for women during and after pregnancy. In partnership with the BC Reproductive Mental Health Program, BC Women's Hospital, and the WHRI, we have launched the **\$4.5 million Her Mind, Her Health** Campaign. With our donor community's support, *Her Mind, Her Health* will fund innovative projects to ensure women's reproductive mental health needs are met through research and accessible programming. Now is the time to break down barriers and provide women with the resources that will support them where they are.



YOU ARE BUILDING A WORLD WITH HEALTHY WOMEN EVERYWHERE, CAPABLE OF ANYTHING.

Thank you for helping to ensure all women, at all life stages, have access to the highest quality healthcare, when, where, and how they need it.

For more information please visit bcwomensfoundation.org/hereforher

BC WOMEN'S
HEALTH
FOUNDATION



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We acknowledge that we carry out our work on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the sḵw̓x̱ wú7mesh (Squamish), seíł witulh (Tsleil-Waututh), and x̱məθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) nations