

# BC WOMEN'S HEALTH FOUNDATION

IMPACT REPORT  
2022-2023

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## REIMAGINING THE FUTURE

Bold breakthroughs  
in women's health  
research

## TRANSFORMING WOMEN'S + NEWBORN HEALTH

## DR. WENDY NORMAN

paves the way for  
free contraception

## BRIGHT BEGINNINGS

for our NICU babies



# THE IMPACT OF YOUR GENEROSITY HAS BEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL

For BC Women’s Health Foundation, 2023 was a pivotal year – and 2024 has even more exciting initiatives on the horizon to advance healthcare for women and newborns across BC.

What can be more exciting and rewarding than having an up-front seat to so many important and transformational initiatives that we are embarking upon here at BC Women’s Health Foundation? From life-saving and life-changing advances in equipment and research, to critical education and training for our dedicated doctors and nurses, to essential advocacy for our patients, especially those most vulnerable, we’re delighted to share many important and engaging stories about all the excellent work that’s happening at BC Women’s Hospital + Health Centre and the Women’s Health Research Institute.

We’re so very proud of the great work we’re doing to bring brighter futures to women’s and newborn healthcare in our province. We’re invested in working with our community of donors and supporters to advancing the full spectrum of women’s and newborn health, ensuring women have equitable access to the highest quality healthcare when, where and how they need it.

Throughout the course of 2023, we made many significant strides with important advancements in such programs as the first-ever Women’s Health Research Month in March 2023 and funding for the significant first phase of the Midlife + Mature Women’s Health Program health program. And we have even bigger and more impactful plans for 2024. The Foundation is committed to continue making BC Women’s Hospital + Health Centre the leader in healthier and brighter futures for women and newborns.

On behalf of all of us at the Foundation and of those on our Board of Directors, we want to thank you for your ongoing support. We are all so very grateful for the generous backing, the continuous reinforcement and the ongoing encouragement from those who share our dreams and our vision for the future of healthcare for women throughout every stage of life.



Jennifer Randall Nelson, Board Chair



Cally Wesson, President + CEO

Cally Wesson  
President + CEO

Jennifer Randall Nelson  
Board Chair

# THIS WORK IS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO THE LEADERSHIP OF OUR PARTNERS



BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre (BCWH) is the only women's hospital in British Columbia, serving approximately 80,000 patients annually through over 60 specialized clinics and programs devoted to the health of women and newborns. It is a national leader in educating doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals in all aspects of women's and newborn health, the provincial centre for the highest risk maternity and neonatal care, and home to the largest Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) in BC.



The Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI) is the only one of its kind in British Columbia, with over 550 researchers dedicated to improving women's and newborn health, through research. The WHRI's mission to create new evidence-based solutions that inform and transform health and healthcare is led through knowledge experts who enable research findings and connect them to make real-world impact. The WHRI members are comprised of researchers, trainees, policy makers, clinicians, and other research partners, including community.

## 2022 IMPACT OVERVIEW

# 70,500

BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre served 70,500 patients in over 60 specialized clinics and programs devoted to the health of women and newborns.

# 6,131

Babies born

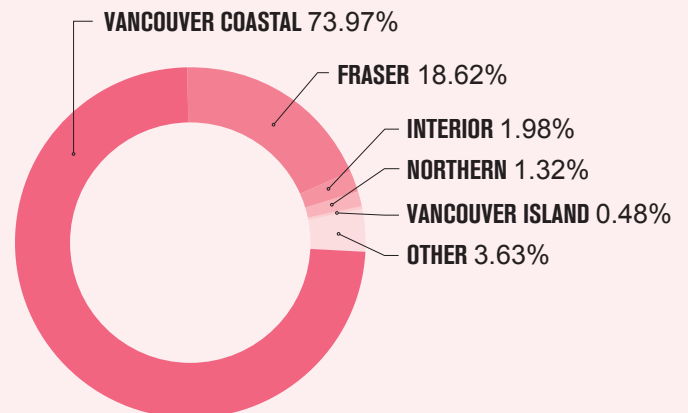
# 7,512

Surgical cases

# 35,984

Visits to the maternity department

## BC PATIENT LOCATIONS



# FAMILIES LIKE THE CAMPBELLS RECEIVE LIFESAVING CARE IN OUR NICU

When Maria Kim was pregnant with her twins, blood flow issues in utero meant that one twin was not receiving enough nutrients and was noticeably smaller than her sister.

“

I'm so grateful to the phenomenal doctors and nurses in the BCWH NICU, and to those who cared for me, who were also wonderful.

Maria Kim, Grateful Patient

”

Maria was admitted to BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre almost 30 weeks into her pregnancy. A couple of weeks later, doctors told Maria that the placenta could no longer sustain her two babies. The twins were born by C-section on February 10, 2023.

At birth, the smaller twin weighed only 904 grams and required surgery for a duodenal atresia blockage in the intestine. However, they had to get the baby up to an appropriate surgical weight before they could operate. Both babies were admitted to the NICU for care. The BC Women's NICU is the largest quaternary NICU in the province, caring for the most critically ill newborns with complex medical needs.

The operation was a success, and today, both twins are happy and healthy. "The entire experience was very stressful and I felt a real sense of relief when I was admitted to BC Women's Hospital because I knew we would all get the best care possible," explains Maria. "Being admitted took a lot of the stress and worry off of our shoulders." Thanks to donor support and the amazing care by the teams at BCWH, families like the Campbells can thrive.



The Campbell Family



Dr. Michael Castaldo, MB, BCh, BAO, FAAP, FRCPC

State-of-the-art equipment is essential to the provision of the highest level of critical care provided at BC Women's Hospital NICU to ensure agile, immediate responses to clinical changes in our province's most critically ill and premature newborns, and to ensure that they are thriving.

Annually, close to 1,000 of the most critically ill infants born in BC and Yukon are cared for by the committed team of the BC Women's NICU. These babies require continuous monitoring using the most up-to-date and sophisticated technology possible. We are thankful for the generous donations that make it possible to deliver the highest level of care that reduces the need for transfers to other hospitals, particularly ICUs, and ensuring that moms and babies are cared for together.

## BRIGHT BEGINNINGS FOR OUR YOUNGEST PATIENTS

In 2023, The BC Women's Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) became ChildKind certified for standardization of practices that demonstrate excellence in assessing, preventing and treating pain in our pediatric patients. BCWH is only one of three hospitals in Canada and 15 worldwide with this designation.

“

We are sincerely grateful for your generous support towards building for the future and ensuring every baby today can be cared for with the best quality equipment and provider care possible.

”

Dr. Michael Castaldo, MB, BCh, BAO, FAAP, FRCPC  
Neonatologist, BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre  
Clinical Assistant Professor, University of British Columbia  
Director, Targeted Neonatal Echocardiography (TnECHO)  
Director, Neonatal Transport

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# RESEARCH INITIATIVES THAT ARE TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE OF WOMEN'S AND NEWBORN HEALTH

March 2023 marked the inaugural Women's Health Research Month at BC Women's Health Foundation. This important initiative was developed to amplify, highlight and showcase the importance of funding innovative and groundbreaking research projects, with the goal of transforming healthcare to meet the unique needs of women.

The success of Women's Health Research Month 2023 was enormous, and through the generosity of our donors, more than \$300,000 was raised. The money was strategically distributed to a variety of projects, including seven Catalyst Grants.

Representing a partnership between BC Women's Health Foundation and the Women's Health Research Institute, these one-of-a-kind Catalyst Grants kickstart some of our province's most cutting-edge research on women's and newborn health that otherwise would likely not be funded.



Since 2016, this seed funding has allowed researchers to test ideas and ask new questions that are fundamentally changing the landscape of women's and newborn health. Catalyst Grants have an astronomical impact — prior recipients have gone on to receive hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional funding and have changed how care is provided locally, nationally and even internationally. We're excited for an even bigger campaign in 2024.



Women's Health Research Month includes the annual Illuminations Luncheon presented by RBC Wealth Management. This event brings together community, corporate, government and medical research leaders to support and learn from extraordinary women's and newborn health researchers. Attendees have the opportunity to invest in financial research awards that provide a launchpad for the brightest minds and most cutting-edge ideas, impacting women's and newborn healthcare and changing lives for decades to come.



# BC WOMEN'S LEADS THE WAY AS BC BECOMES FIRST IN CANADA TO OFFER FREE PRESCRIPTION CONTRACEPTION

This remarkable feat was spearheaded by Dr. Wendy Norman, MD, CCFP, FCFP, DTM&H, MHSc, Founder + Co-Director of Canada's Contraception + Abortion Research Team (CART) and the Family Planning Principal Investigator at the Women's Health Research Institute based at BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre.

It all started with a simple question: “**Could contraception be free?**” The interest of the BC government was sparked, and with that, the formation of a women's health stakeholder group, including BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre, CART and Options for Sexual Health. Dr. Norman and her colleagues ran a provincewide survey where they uncovered shocking facts.

“We learned that 40 per cent of pregnancies in BC are unintended, and the most common outcome is birth,” says Dr. Norman. “In fact, a third of all births were not planned conceptions. This has a huge impact on society, not just because they are less likely to access prenatal care, but the person or family unit may not be ready or able to raise a child at that time.” Further, government costs tend to be higher for unintended pregnancies as they have an increased incidence of admission to neonatal ICU. Dr. Norman and her team analyzed the data and created a health-economics model to show what the government was paying to manage unintended pregnancy and how that compares to savings if contraception was made free for everyone.

## THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF FREE CONTRACEPTION

**Through the research conducted, Dr. Norman predicts that by the fourth year, the government will be saving \$27 million annually in the health budget.**



Dr. Wendy Norman, MD, CCFP, FCFP, DTM&H, MHSc

Through support of BC Women's Health Foundation, this transformational study was conducted and the impactful results led to a groundbreaking change in government policy. Free access to contraception improves access to care and supports people and their choices, but there's more. “It helps with everything: food safety, adequate shelter, appropriate education, workforce training and impact on the community,” says Dr. Norman. “Families that have planned children are better able to participate in the community, in volunteer activities, for example, outside of economics. This is helping our communities be healthy.”

# THANK YOU FOR CHAMPIONING WOMEN'S AND NEWBORN HEALTH WITH YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS

Your contributions have made the acquisition of these life-changing services and equipment for patients at BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre possible. With your support, we helped provide BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre with:



**04**  
BUNNEL JET  
VENTILATORS

**03**  
SERVO-N  
VENTILATORS

**02**  
FETAL  
MONITORS

**02**  
HOLOGIC 3D  
MAMMOGRAPHY  
MACHINES

**01**  
CARDIORESPIRATORY  
MONITOR

**01**  
JIRA  
VENTILATOR

**01**  
BREVARA BREAST  
IMAGING SYSTEM



Your generous donations have made it possible for us to purchase the Servo-N ventilators, the latest technology to support breathing in premature babies with underdeveloped lungs. Thanks to donors like you, the ventilators will support hundreds or even thousands of babies in the BCWH NICU in the coming years.



Mark Zaremba, Respiratory Therapist + Program Manager, NICU,  
BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre







Dr. Marie-Josée Cloutier, MD, FRCPC

# TOGETHER WE MADE A DIFFERENCE BY SUPPORTING ESSENTIAL NEW TECHNOLOGY TO DETECT BREAST CANCER



State-of-the-art diagnostic equipment is absolutely critical. It allows our team to identify breast cancer when it is most treatable, saving lives and helping women to avoid invasive treatments.

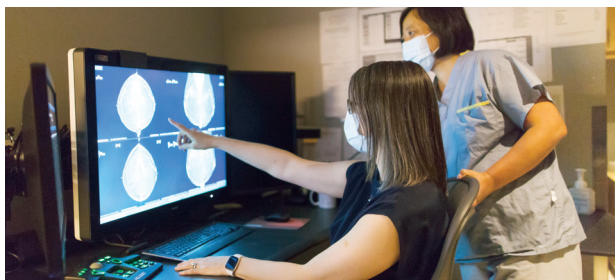


Dr. Marie-Josée Cloutier, MD, FRCPC  
Radiologist + Medical Director,  
Sadie Diamond Breast Health Imaging Centre,  
BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre

The Sadie Diamond Breast Health Imaging Centre in the BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre is the provincial leader in early breast cancer diagnosis and prevention. Funded by our donor community, including transformational support by the Diamond Foundation, the Centre diagnoses more than 6,000 people in British Columbia each year.

In spring 2023, the Invest in Breasts Campaign resulted in the purchase of two new Hologic 3D mammography machines, featuring higher quality 3D images, lower mammographic doses and more comfortable paddles for better patient experience.

The Centre's mission for 2024 is to introduce Breast MRI services, to answer the need due to current lengthy waitlists for these important assessments.



## PATIENT OUTCOMES IN BREAST SCREENING

- Highly sensitive technology detects small tumors that may be invisible using other imaging techniques
- More accurate results are possible for women with dense breast tissue that may obscure abnormalities
- To confirm or rule out abnormalities detected by other screening methods to reduce the need for unnecessary biopsies
- An important screening tool for individuals at high risk to detect cancer earlier when it's more treatable or to assess the effectiveness of breast cancer treatment

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# AN ENDURING WAY TO GIVE

## BC Women's Health Foundation Board Chair Jennifer Randall Nelson's story

Giving back was inspired by Jennifer's own experience at BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre. In 2010, Jennifer's daughter Lily was born prematurely at 31 weeks and was immediately rushed to the NICU where she stayed for nine weeks receiving life-saving care.

"Knowing that the best doctors and nurses were there managing her care gave us such peace of mind." said Jennifer. "It was a stressful time for our family, but I felt fortunate to live 15 minutes away, which made it easier for us to come and spend time with her each day."



Jennifer Randall Nelson, BCWHF Board Chair and daughter Lily

**“ It struck me that we have really good healthcare in BC, but for some patient families, circumstances were disheartening. I thought surely we can do better. ”**

Jennifer Randall Nelson  
BCWHF Board Chair

to leave a legacy gift to the Foundation. "There is an enormous list of health issues and challenges women can face in their lifetime, many of which happened during their most vulnerable moments in pregnancy and postpartum. And that's why I felt it was important to invest in women's healthcare by leaving a legacy gift."

During that critical time, Jennifer got to know other families with babies in the BCWH NICU, including one family facing incredibly difficult circumstances. The family lived far outside the Metro Vancouver area and Jennifer was stunned to learn that due to the financial hardship of travel and accommodation, the mom was forced to live in a camper van in the parking lot of the hospital.

The experience has inspired Jennifer's donations to BC Women's Health Foundation over the years, and ultimately prompted her

A legacy gift left through your will or estate plan (cash, securities, life insurance or other assets) creates a lasting impact for generations to come for the women across our province, ensuring that women will continue to receive the highest quality healthcare.

# FINANCIAL MEASURES

## 2022-2023

### YOUR IMPACT

**\$5,286,705**  
**CONTRIBUTED**  
**BY DONORS**

**2,598 DONORS**

**6,186 GIFTS RECEIVED**

**59 PROJECTS FUNDED**

### FUNDING SOURCES

**39%**  
**PHILANTHROPY**

**25%**  
**GOVERNMENT**  
**CONTRIBUTIONS**

**25%**  
**EVENTS**

**11%**  
**OTHER**

### DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

**54%**

Research

**35%**

Patient Care  
Enhancement + Programs

**9%**

Equipment

**2%**

Other

# EVERY DONATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Your support empowers us to deliver next-level, state-of-the-art care through cutting-edge technology, innovative research and exceptional treatment. Together, we ensure that all women and newborns receive the best quality care.



**DONATE NOW [BCWOMENSFOUNDATION.ORG](https://bcwomensfoundation.org)**

Contact us to find out how you/your organization can make a difference!  
604.875.2270 | [giving@bcwomensfoundation.org](mailto:giving@bcwomensfoundation.org)

**BC WOMEN'S  
HEALTH  
FOUNDATION**



Charity Number: 890267537 RR001. We acknowledge that we carry out our work on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples – xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səlilwətaʔ/Səlilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations. When we refer to "women", we include women in all their diversity inclusive of the LGBTQ2SIA+ community.