

2025

BC WOMEN'S  
HEALTH  
FOUNDATION



# INVEST IN



**LIFE-CHANGING RESEARCH TO TRANSFORM  
WOMEN'S AND NEWBORN HEALTH**

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## IT'S TIME TO PRIORITIZE WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH

Despite the fact that women account for more than half the population, less than 6% of Canada's national health research funding is dedicated to studying their unique health needs. This is largely due to the fact that historically women have been overlooked in health research. Prior to the 1990s, women were rarely included in clinical trials and research studies. This disparity leaves critical gaps in understanding and advancing women's health.

There is a growing pressure to close this gender health gap and improve healthcare outcomes for women at all stages of life. You can be part of that change.

Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI) is working to create a world where women's and newborn health research is a priority, where planned and dedicated resources are directed towards scientific advancements, policies and innovations that address the full spectrum of women's and newborn health. Your support can help us realize this vision.

Fundamental knowledge through all pillars of research is critical to understand women's health across their lifespans because, when women are healthy, everyone benefits. When we invest in women's and newborn health, we drive innovation, save lives and create a healthier, more equitable world for all.

### THE RESEARCH DIVIDE

Women are **more likely to die prematurely** from preventable illnesses.

Women experience up to **75%** of adverse drug reactions, yet many medications prescribed to women have often been tested only on men.

Depression occurs **twice as often** in women as men, yet most mental health research is conducted on men.

**70%** of patients with "medically unexplained symptoms" are women and these symptoms are frequently and incorrectly linked to a psychological origin.

Though women live longer than men, they face a **25%** higher rate of poor health than men in the older years.



## ABOUT WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Women's Health Research Institute is the research arm of BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre and the face of women's and newborn health research for the Provincial Health Services Authority and the University of British Columbia. WHRI is focused on supporting research activities designed to improve the health and healthcare of women and newborns throughout British Columbia and globally.

Founded in 2006, WHRI is a leading academic research centre with over 650 member investigators embedded in post-secondary institutions and health authorities across the province, representing eight universities within BC, 34 academic departments within the University of British Columbia and 18 universities internationally.

WHRI is building a community of women's and newborn health researchers and providing its membership with research support services. It seeks to enable women's and newborn health researchers across the province to reach their highest potential in their critical work. Being one of only three research institutes in Canada dedicated to women's and newborn health, WHRI is a leader in this space, conducting groundbreaking research which is informing public policy locally, nationally and globally.

The mission of WHRI is to create new knowledge and evidence-based solutions that inform and transform the health and healthcare of women, newborns and their families.

## THE RESEARCH FUNDING GAP

Despite women making up half the population, **less than 6%** of Canada's national health research funding is dedicated to studying their unique health needs, leaving critical gaps in understanding and advancing women's health.

Just **5%** of scholarships and **9%** of fellowships are awarded to trainees researching women's health in BC.

Only **1.2%** of Canada Research Chairs are in women's health.

Women are **awarded fewer** CIHR Operating (29.5%) and Project (40%) grants compared to men.

Women receive **less funding** per grant than men (median difference \$103,275) in BC.



**"Research is the track on which healthcare runs."**

**DR. LORI BROTTA  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WHRI**

**WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH IS FUNDED LESS OFTEN, FOR SHORTER TERMS AND AT LOWER FUNDING AMOUNTS.**

# LET'S CORRECT THE INEQUITIES IN WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH

Improving women's health requires investment in research. We need visionary leaders – individuals like you – who can help our research community address the inequities of funding women's health research to ensure women's health is a priority. Philanthropy is needed in BC and Canada to address funding gaps, correct gender biases and drive transformational change.

Without understanding a problem, we can't address it. Conditions such as endometriosis, fertility and menopause, which primarily affect women, still have major knowledge gaps.

Thankfully, through our partnership with Women's Health Research Institute, which is the only provincial research institute dedicated to creating new knowledge and evidence-based solutions that inform and transform the health and health care of women, newborns and their families, we can address that gap. WHRI is home to over 650 researchers, trainees and specialized staff who, with your support, can move the dial on women's health through research. This is how:

## INVEST IN EARLY-STAGE RESEARCH

Need	Description	# of initiatives	Philanthropic need	Total
Catalyst Grants	Fund early-stage cutting-edge pilot and proof of concept women's and newborn health research questions	6	\$35,000 each	<b>\$210,000</b>
Graduate + Fellowship Awards: Investing in Future Leaders	Inspire the next generation of trailblazing women's and newborn health scholars	1 1 1	\$35,000 Master \$45,000 PhD \$80,000 Post-Doctoral Fellow	<b>\$160,000</b>
Clinical Trials Superhub	Create infrastructure and services for BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre/ WHRI to become a centre of clinical trials in women's health		\$250,000 annually	<b>\$250,000 annually</b>
Clinician Scientist	Fund a clinician researcher to investigate and drive innovative advancements in women's and newborn health	1	\$120,000/year pledged over 4 years	<b>\$480,000</b>
Digital Health Accelerator Grants	Support digital health innovations that benefit women, children and families	2	\$60,000 each	<b>\$120,000</b>
Leveling Up: Women's and Newborn Health Research Vision Grants	Push forward larger-scale research projects and research ideas		\$125,000+/ project	<b>\$125,000+/ project</b>



## CATALYST GRANTS

**\$35,000 EACH; SIX FUNDED PER YEAR**

Supports pilot studies in women's and newborn health, aiming to generate "proof-of-concept" data that can be leveraged to obtain larger grant funding in the future. Catalyst Grants offer a unique opportunity in BC and provide a launchpad for cutting-edge research, propelling transformative ideas forward and championing emerging work.

## GRADUATE + FELLOWSHIP AWARDS: INVESTING IN FUTURE LEADERS AWARDS

**\$35,000; ONE MASTER'S STUDENT FUNDED PER YEAR**

**\$45,000; ONE PHD DOCTORAL STUDENT FUNDED PER YEAR**

**\$80,000; ONE POST-DOCTORAL FELLOW FUNDED PER YEAR**

Invest in the next generation of leaders and expand capacity for women's and newborn health research in BC by providing funding opportunities specific to the trainee community. These three awards provide salary support to WHRI affiliated master's, doctoral and post-doctoral fellows.

## DIGITAL HEALTH ACCELERATOR GRANTS

**\$60,000 EACH;**

**TWO FUNDED PER YEAR**

The digital revolution has unlimited potential to significantly improve access and the quality of health care for patients and their families. Invest in digital health solutions by supporting research to test feasibility and develop digital products and tools that will enhance access to health care, decrease costs and improve patient outcomes.

## LEVELING UP: WOMEN'S + NEWBORN HEALTH RESEARCH VISION GRANTS

**\$125,000+ PER PROJECT**

Invest in larger-scale research grant competitions with multi-year commitments to enable previous Catalyst Grant or other pilot-tested women's and newborn's health research projects to scale up and bring their research to the next level. This grant award will expand research funding opportunities for researchers dedicated to the advancement of women's and newborn health.

## CLINICAL TRIAL SUPERHUB

**\$250,000 PER YEAR**

BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre is a recognized leader in delivery of exceptional, specialized women's and newborn healthcare, alongside the Women's Health Research Institute who enables innovative research embedded within hospital programs. Capitalizing on a thriving biotech industry in BC, philanthropic support is needed to usher in the next level of excellence by investing in research infrastructure and services to bring clinical trials to BC Women's programs and clinics. With the ability to foster and facilitate the development, launch and implementation of innovative clinical research trials, we will bring new diagnostic and therapeutic options to BC Women's. In partnership with BC Children's Hospital, we are creating a Centre of Excellence in clinical trials by offering timely access to new drugs and treatments that will transform women's and children's health locally, nationally and globally.



## CLINICIAN SCIENTIST

**\$480,000; ONE CLINICIAN SCIENTIST FUNDED AT \$120,000/YEAR FOR 4 YEARS**

Bridge the gap between clinical expertise and cutting-edge research by ensuring clinician scientists have the resources they need to drive innovative advancements in healthcare. BC Women's physicians are the leaders in women's and newborn health in Canada, whose insights from daily practice are invaluable for identifying research questions and subsequent solutions that can create real-world improvements. Dedicated research time contributes to medical advancements, improved diagnostics, treatments and patient outcomes.



Dr. Gina Ogilvie  
Associate Director, Women's Health Research Institute  
BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre

Mahfuza Sreya  
Research Technician  
BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre

## RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP TRAINING – THE IMPORTANCE OF INVESTING IN SPECIALISTS



To bring about improvements in healthcare, it is critical to train doctors in the speciality areas of women's and newborn health that have the most severe outcomes: aging and menopause, rare diseases, contraception and abortion, reproductive infectious diseases and endometriosis. After residency, doctors seek advanced training in subspecialties to serve these populations. Fellowships that provide critical research skill development and integrate protected research time produce better trained fellows who are able to advance research within their subspecialty areas – the mandate of our academic health centre.

Canada has neither a funding source nor a regulatory mechanism to support the advanced training of women's health specialists. Advanced training programs are between one to three years in duration and provide physicians the opportunity to work at BC Women's Hospital and train under the top Canadian experts, while also leading their own program of research to address knowledge gaps in these areas.

# CLINICAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

**FUNDING NEEDS FOR FELLOWSHIPS ARE DEPENDENT ON DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM AND START AT \$200,000 PER YEAR**

Department/Program	Description
Menopause + Midlife Women's Health	In 2025, BC Women's will significantly expand knowledge and expertise in menopause + midlife health in Canada by offering two new fellowships a year – one of which will be dedicated to research.
Medical Genetics	The Provincial Medical Genetics Program located at BC Women's is renowned in precision diagnostics for rare disease. Funding for a fellowship will position this program to lead BC in development and training as we enter the era of gene therapies and precision medicine.
Family Planning	Located at the CARE Program at BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre, the Fellowship in Family Planning is Canada's only formalized training program providing post-graduate obstetricians and gynecologists the opportunity to focus on comprehensive family planning training, advanced abortion care and complex contraception. This program aims to populate each province in Canada with at least one expert that can provide this care.
Reproductive Infectious Disease	BC Women's is the only fellowship program in Canada that provides internationally recognized training endorsed by the Infectious Diseases Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology. This is a burgeoning area that is urgently needed as responses to outbreaks such as the COVID-19 pandemic influenza, Zika and Ebola virus diseases have had serious implications in pregnancy and have required responses from obstetrician/gynecologists with infectious diseases expertise globally.
Endometriosis, Pelvic Pain and Advanced Laparoscopic Surgery	BC Women's is one of only a few Centres of Excellence in Canada offering specialized care for the management of endometriosis and pelvic pain using a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach. Our advanced trainee fellowship program develops highly skilled leaders in clinical management, teaching and research related to chronic pelvic pain, endometriosis and advanced laparoscopic surgery.

**By offering these subspecialties, we will attract the best and the brightest minds to shape the future of care for women in the West and across Canada.**



Advanced Training Programs are crucial in advancing medical knowledge, improving patient care and fostering the development of future leaders in health care across Canada. Your philanthropy is helping to ensure that Canadians have access to advanced and specialized treatments, reduced wait times and improved overall health outcomes.

## GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS AT BC WOMEN'S THAT HAS LED TO POLICY CHANGE IN BC AND CANADA:



### Dr. Gina Ogilvie

Initial seed funding of \$5,000 to Dr. Ogilvie's team in 2005 by BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre led to decades of research, landmark large clinical trials for HPV screening, plus years of dedication and innovation. BC has become the first province in Canada to offer free provincewide cervix self-screening kits, now the primary screening tool for cervical cancer.



### Dr. Wendy Norman

In 2023, BC became the first province in Canada to offer free prescription contraception because of groundbreaking research that all started with Dr. Norman's simple question: "Could contraception be free?" The impactful results of this study have led to transformational change in government policy.



### Dr. Deb Money

A pioneer in Reproductive Infectious Diseases in Canada, Dr. Money lead the charge on a trailblazing research project to understand the effects of COVID-19 on pregnancy. The findings informed public health policy in Canada and internationally and prioritized pregnant women for the COVID-19 vaccine, saving the lives of mothers and newborns around the world.

With limited funding and resources, research conducted in partnership with WHRI and BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre has fundamentally impacted the daily lives of women and newborns in BC, nationally and internationally.

# IMAGINE HOW MUCH MORE WE CAN ACCOMPLISH WITH YOUR SUPPORT!





## THE TIME IS NOW...

For far too long, women's health has taken a back seat and has been taken for granted. Despite significant progress in recent years, many critical gaps remain in research, care delivery and access to services for women.

Your support is urgently needed to address this historical underfunding, to tackle health inequities and to accelerate innovation. When women receive the care, attention and support necessary for their overall well-being, all of society benefits.

## GOOD THINGS TO COME

Join us as we reimagine the future of women's and newborn healthcare and shape a new vision where possibilities are limitless. Your contribution can fuel advancements that transform healthcare and health outcomes, ensuring that more funding is directed towards vital women's and newborn health research.



## DONATE NOW

[GIVING@BCWOMENSFUNDATION.ORG](mailto:giving@bcwomensfoundation.org)  
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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 Salilwata?/Seilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations. When we refer to "women," we include women in all their diversity inclusive of the LGBTQ2SIA+ community.

\*Consistent with our fiscal sustainability policy, a contribution from all designated donations will be directed to support the work of BCWHF in fulfilling its mandate to ensure women in BC have equitable access to quality healthcare.