



Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Women's health involves their emotional, social and physical well-being and is determined by the social, political and economic context of their lives, as well as by biology.

U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women,  
Declaration and Platform for Action, Beijing, 1995



---

## WOMEN-CENTRED HEALTH RESEARCH

A Strategy for BC Women's



2004

---

*Women's*  
BC WOMEN'S HOSPITAL  
& HEALTH CENTRE  
*An Agency of the Provincial  
Health Services Authority*

**Women's Health Research @  
BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre**

**E311 – 4500 Oak Street  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
V6H 3N1**

**Tel 604-875-3459**

**Fax 604-875-3716**

**[www.bcwomens.ca/research](http://www.bcwomens.ca/research)**



*reprinted May 2006*

## About this Strategic Plan

---

This document describes the framework, philosophy and strategic priorities for developing women’s health research at British Columbia Women’s Hospital & Health Centre, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority. Reflecting our province-wide mandate, this Strategy is of interest to all who are involved in women’s health research in British Columbia. If you are a woman, a clinical, community or academic researcher, a health care provider, a health policy maker, a funder of research or an advocate for women’s health, this document will assist you in participating in the future development of women’s health research in British Columbia.

## Contributions

---

This plan was developed as part of the Women’s Health Research Initiative at BC Women’s Hospital & Health Centre. The Initiative was established in 2001 to coordinate and plan the future development of women’s health research at BC Women’s and across British Columbia via the structures of the Provincial Health Services Authority. The Initiative is coordinated through BC Women’s and has benefited from the efforts of the following:

Elizabeth Whynot	President, BC Women’s Hospital & Health Centre
Lorraine Greaves	Director, Women’s Health Research Development, BC Women’s Hospital & Health Centre
Yasmin Miller	Research Facilitator
Jim Mactier	Evaluation Consultant
Barbara Berry	Research and Education Coordinator
Nancy Poole	Research Network Developer
Megha Sehdev	Research Assistant

In particular, we thank the many groups and individuals at BC Women’s, the Women’s Health Centre, the BC Centre of Excellence for Women’s Health and across the Province of British Columbia who have contributed time and effort in the development of *Women-Centred Health Research: A Strategy for BC Women’s*, and for their support of the Women’s Health Research Initiative.

## Contents

---

<b>GREETINGS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE CONTEXT FOR WOMEN’S HEALTH RESEARCH IN BC.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I. BECOMING STRATEGIC ABOUT WOMEN’S HEALTH RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>5</b>
The Vision .....	5
The Mission .....	5
The Goals .....	5
Guiding Principles .....	6
<b>II. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPING WOMEN-CENTRED HEALTH RESEARCH.....</b>	<b>8</b>
1. Confirming research themes relevant to women’s lives and women’s health .....	9
2. Creating a Provincial Women’s Health Research Network .....	12
3. Brokering knowledge to improve care, programs and policy.....	12
4. Building capacity for women’s health research across sectors.....	12
5. Enhancing the resources to support clinician-researchers in women’s health .....	12
6. Securing resources for conducting women’s health research.....	13
7. Establishing a sustainable organization to advance the strategic priorities .....	13
<b>III. ACTIONS FOR GROWTH.....</b>	<b>14</b>
Development of the Women’s Health Research Institute .....	14
Partnership with the Child & Family Research Institute .....	15
Funding Development .....	15
Recruitment Strategy .....	15
Strategic Planning .....	15
Program Evaluation and Research Agenda Setting.....	16
Electronic Research Development .....	16
Research Support and Education .....	16
Knowledge Brokerage.....	16
<b>IV. MEASURING ACHIEVEMENT .....</b>	<b>17</b>

## Greetings

---

On behalf of the Women's Health Research Initiative at BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, I am pleased to present the *Women-Centred Health Research Strategy for BC Women's*. The vision and priorities for women's health research articulated in this plan complement the innovative and sensitive approach to women's health care for which BC Women's is known.

Key to our plan is a commitment to accelerating the process of conceiving and delivering much needed evidence to clinicians, policy makers, health planners, women's groups and women across British Columbia. Our commitment to relevance and applicability demands a strategic approach to identifying research themes that will make a difference in the lives of women in BC.

We believe partnerships, collaboration, consultation and involvement are central to achieving a women's health research agenda that is comprehensive and change-oriented. As an affiliated teaching hospital of The University of British Columbia, we look forward to strengthening our existing affiliations and building new relationships to achieve our priorities over the coming years.

Thank you to all who have participated in the planning to date and a warm welcome to those who will be working with us to advance women's health research in the coming years.

***Lorraine Greaves, PhD***

Director, Women's Health Research Development  
British Columbia Women's Hospital & Health Centre  
Vancouver, British Columbia

## The Context for Women's Health Research in British Columbia

---

In the last decade, considerable groundwork has been laid and expertise developed in advancing women's health in British Columbia. BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre was established in 1994 as a provincial resource providing a full range of health services to the women of British Columbia, reflecting the importance of a distinct and dedicated approach to women's health. BC Women's is now Canada's largest maternity hospital and the Women's Health Centre a vibrant service, seeing more than 20,000 women per year. Province-wide community consultations by BC Women's and several key reports initiated by the British Columbia Ministry of Health have helped to set the agenda for women's health in BC. For the past eight years, BC Women's has hosted the BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health (BCCEWH) and, in 2001, established the Women's Health Research Initiative to build and focus the research activities of BC Women's.

This Research Strategy is built upon the philosophy of *women-centred care*, which has been a goal at BC Women's. Women-centred care casts women as active partners in their care as opposed to passive recipients, and situates the care in the context of women's lives. Further, it incorporates ethical and women-sensitive practices that benefit women and their communities. Incorporating these values into the research process is the essence of this Strategy and will assist BC Women's in further developing its mandate for excellence in research, clinical care and education.

The Strategy represents a shift in approach to research at BC Women's. This long term commitment to strategic research growth is an opportunity for BC Women's and its many talented researchers to work together toward the vision of women-centred research. While it may take several years to achieve, the approach will be supported with key resources and training, and will result in a critical convergence between the approach to care and the approach to research. Our role as an affiliated teaching hospital of The University of British Columbia (UBC) represents both synergy and opportunity as we move forward.

In addition, this Strategy complements our role in health planning for women in British Columbia. The development of *Advancing the Health of Girls and Women: A Women's Health Strategy for British Columbia*, recently released by the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), engaged BC Women's and the BCCEWH in identifying priorities for women's health for the next decade. This partnership reflects the roles of policy, care and research in our common aim to improve health and health care for girls and women in BC. By advancing a complementary women's health research strategy for the Province, we are poised to accelerate our production of essential knowledge and support evidence-based improvements in the health and lives of BC women and their families.

The areas for action are being determined within a changing environment. Strategic planning for research is ongoing, based on consultations and data collection across BC Women's, the PHSA and with external individuals, institutions and groups. Therefore this plan is dynamic and evolving. As we grow, the Strategy will require the addition of new resources – so we pledge a commitment to seeking increased funding and opportunities for developing women's health research in British Columbia.

## I. Becoming Strategic about Women's Health Research

---

### The Vision

BC Women's is committed to improving women's health by:

- Developing research activities that *directly* improve health care, programs and policies.
- Leading an *inclusive* research program and process with women, academics, providers and policy makers from across British Columbia and Canada.

### The Mission

To serve girls and women in British Columbia and Canada by:

- Identifying and conducting women-centred research relevant to women's lives throughout the life cycle.
- Providing opportunities for multi-sectoral involvement in research.
- Linking and brokering research evidence directly to improve clinical practice, programming and policy making.
- Increasing accessibility by using technology to link researchers, women, policy makers and providers across the province.
- Developing authentic partnerships and collaborative research projects with universities, hospitals, Aboriginal communities, health authorities and all levels of government.
- Providing leadership in training, education and evaluation in gender-based approaches to women's health research.

### The Goals

- To strengthen linkages between research, clinical practice, policy development and the needs of women in British Columbia and Canada.
- To increase women's health research activity and funding in British Columbia.
- To develop and maintain strong partnerships in women's health research between all sectors and disciplines.
- To increase the recognition of BC Women's as a provincial, national and international leader in women's health research.

## Guiding Principles

The Women-Centred Health Research Strategy for BC Women's embraces and practises the following *guiding principles*:

### 1. Women's health has a comprehensive definition.

Underpinning this plan is a broad definition of women's health. We have adopted the definition from the U.N. Declaration and Platform for Action, Beijing, 1995, where women's health is defined as:

*...a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Women's health involves their emotional, social and physical well-being and is determined by the social, political and economic context of their lives, as well as by biology.<sup>1</sup>*

This definition of women's health reflects the complex interactions between sex differences (biological characteristics), gender influences (social and economic factors), diversity issues and life experiences. It forms the foundation for conducting women's health research which is equally comprehensive.

### 2. An inclusive process of doing research is key to developing a comprehensive and respectful research agenda.

BC Women's has co-led, with the BCCEWH, the development of an involvement model for conducting women's health research. The *Fusion*<sup>ii</sup> model identifies a process for integrating all research perspectives (biomedical, clinical, health services and population health) with policy research in an interactive and reflexive manner. It also embeds this process in a setting where providers, women, communities and policy makers have equal opportunity to define and contribute to the research. The model incorporates into every research project a sex and gender analysis and stresses the importance of returning the research results to diverse communities to make change.

### 3. Women-centred health research is relevant and change-making.

Women-centred health research reflects the values of BC Women's and complements our commitment to women-centred care. When we plan our research, we place importance on the process of doing research, and value the inclusion and involvement of women, providers, policy makers and academic researchers. We place importance on relevance to policy, program and women's needs in health and health care when we plan our research. Women-centred health research also includes a gendered analysis of data to determine the effects of biological, social, economic and cultural factors on women's health and women's lives. Thus, doing women-centred health research requires a comprehensive, integrated and transdisciplinary approach to the study of women's health. As positive change or action is the goal of women-centred research, we rely on BC Women's and its partners to use research results to directly improve clinical practices and health and social policies.

#### **4. Women’s health research is interdisciplinary.**

*Women’s health research is “a process that involves placing biological factors in a broad social and cultural framework that addresses the impact of the circumstances of women’s lives on their health status. It includes investigating how sex interacts with gender to create health conditions, situations and problems that are unique, more prevalent, more serious, or have different risk factors or interventions for women.”<sup>iii</sup>*

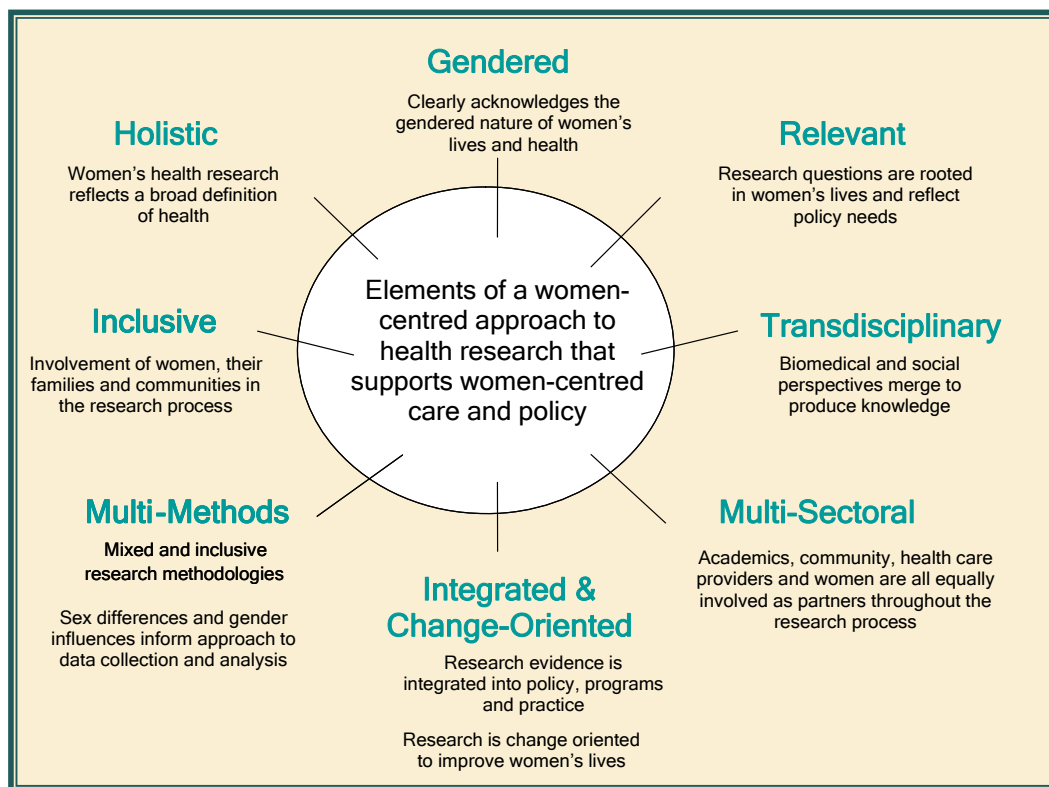
Women’s health research uses biological, clinical, social and economic data and requires a process to assess the interactions between sex differences and gender influences that affect women’s health. A comprehensive approach to women’s health research seeks to be inclusive of all disciplinary perspectives, to include women’s experiences and participation, and to deliver knowledge back to women, clinicians, health planners and policy makers.

#### **5. Accessibility to research processes and results is essential to support a growing network of researchers, women, providers and policy makers.**

Training, technology and multi-format products are key tools in increasing accessibility. We use telehealth outlets and are developing web casting, linked communities of practice and video conferencing processes to extend our reach to interested parties across British Columbia and Canada. We are committed to adopting technology-based techniques to engage individuals, groups, universities, colleges and other hospitals across BC and Canada in the research and knowledge brokering processes. Creating paths for using knowledge occurs in face-to-face and online discussion groups, policy action groups and via structured briefings and presentations.

#### **6. Accountability to women and their communities is a critical aspect of women’s health research.**

Ethical practices and sensitivity to women, their families and communities informs our research practice. We recognize that issues of research direction and control over research projects are key aspects of knowledge production that affect us all. We are committed to addressing issues such as power differentials between participants in the research process and the potential for harm, as well as community control of data and samples. Creating transparent mechanisms for approving and reporting on research and examining and monitoring the impact of funding sources on research projects and practices are ongoing commitments of BC Women’s in conjunction with UBC, our key university partner.



*Key elements of a women-centred approach to health research.*

## II. Strategic Priorities for Developing Women-Centred Health Research

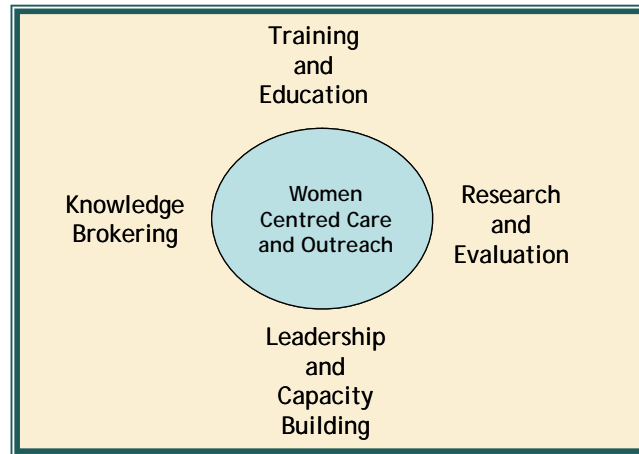
---

The strategic research priorities are key areas that build on our strengths and those of our partners. BC Women’s has a proud history of providing care to many marginalized and disadvantaged girls and women in BC as well as providing specialty care in reproductive and maternal health.

These priorities have emerged from ongoing consultation processes with researchers and clinicians at BC Women’s and UBC, and with researchers, policy makers, women and providers associated with the Women’s Health Centre, BCCEWH, Health Canada, British Columbia Ministry of Health, PHSA and numerous BC and Canadian universities and health research organizations.

Our priorities also reflect approaches that need more comprehensive development in BC, such as health promotion and prevention in women’s health, healthy aging and a focused approach to women’s health services provision. Finally, our priorities reflect our obligation to coordinate and extend our national and international networks and expertise and to learn from out-of-province partners.

There are four components to the Strategy: research and evaluation; training and education; knowledge brokering; and leadership and capacity building. All of these elements complement the care and outreach that is central to BC Women's.



*Four components of the Women-Centred Health Research Strategy.*

### 1. Confirming research themes relevant to women's lives and women's health.

At BC Women's we are concerned with a woman's whole life. A life cycle approach, from pregnancy to birth to death, is embedded in all of the following research themes. In addition, the research priorities will enhance health and health care for girls and women from all social, cultural and geographic locations, in both urban and rural settings, in remote locations, and within Aboriginal communities across British Columbia. BC Women's researchers are especially interested in disease prevention and health promotion as key aspects of the delivery of care to girls and women.

- ✓ **Aboriginal Women's Health:** BC Women's provides on-site and outreach programs to improve the health of Aboriginal women. We are expanding our Aboriginal women's health clinics, running Pap smear clinics for Aboriginal women, and also utilize the services of a First Nations Patient Advocate. We provide assistance with planning Aboriginal women's regional conferences, health promotion activities, and development and provision of culturally-sensitive resource communities. Research on better practices in community development, non-traditional tobacco use, Aboriginal maternity care services, provision of community health services, and appropriate planning and research methods is central to the Strategy. Throughout, we are creating training opportunities for community-based and Aboriginal researchers across BC. We are implementing a partnership with the CIHR-funded BC ACADRE program at UBC to develop a community of Aboriginal health researchers to respond to the health needs of Aboriginal women and men in BC.

- ✓ **Addictions:** Our care for women using substances takes place in residential and day treatment programs for women in recovery, and in specialized units for substance-using pregnant women. In partnership with BC Children's, we provide care for infants and children exposed to drugs and alcohol. Our research encompasses Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder as both a women's health and children's health issue; the links between substance use and mental health and violence; better practices in treating pregnant women using substances, including tobacco; and the effects of community programs on reducing the harm of a wide variety of substances. We support IMPART, a national CIHR training program for addictions researchers, and we are working to change knowledge into effective policy to improve the health and lives of women who use substances.
- ✓ **Conception and Pregnancy:** Clinical investigators at BC Women's are engaged in research on many aspects of reproductive medical issues important to women. These include fertility and infertility issues, pregnancy loss, and genetic conditions that threaten both women's and fetal health. Women who experience unexpected or unwanted pregnancy, or who need emergency contraception or termination services, are also served by the care, outreach and ongoing research at BC Women's. Women who have disabilities and are considering or experiencing pregnancy receive specialized care at BC Women's, as are women whose pregnancies are complicated by substance use, mental health issues or HIV/AIDS.
- ✓ **Health through the Life Cycle** (bone, breast, heart and mid-life health, continence): A multi-disciplinary research program investigating life-long bone health and osteoporosis interventions to reduce fractures supports a large osteoporosis clinic and an outreach program of Osteofit classes to improve health and reduce disability in women. Research on mid-life challenges for women around peri-menopause and menopause, effective and inclusive cancer screening and diagnosis, and innovative continence clinics and training all contribute to healthy aging for BC women. Our research on life-long aging will also focus on healthy heart promotion. Research on the reduction of physical inactivity, chronic diseases such as diabetes, and ways to avoid obesity and cardiovascular disease will limit health care costs and increase quality of life.
- ✓ **High Risk and Complex Pregnancy:** BC Women's provides specialized medical care to all high risk pregnant women and newborns in the province. To support this care, extensive research is done on complications, such as hypertension in pregnancy or issues of viral infection and transmission during pregnancy. The population determinants of perinatal health are of overriding interest to BC Women's researchers, as are efforts to identify prenatal markers of fetal outcomes. Emerging research issues include creating greater understanding of pregnancy and birth in women with disabilities and/or with chronic diseases.
- ✓ **HIV/AIDS:** We provide innovative clinical care for pregnant women with HIV/AIDS and their infants, children and partners. Research on transmission and treatment of HIV/AIDS and the links with intravenous drug use, violence and other STDs is ongoing, and forms the basis of our research program. Ongoing research with women with HIV/AIDS and their children guides our clinical care.

Issues such as the varied effects of antiretroviral therapies on both women and their children are key research themes.

- ✓ **International Women's Health:** Clinicians and researchers at BC Women's engage in a wide variety of projects and organizations across the world on themes such as maternity care, addictions, tobacco use, family practice, HIV/AIDS, health and human rights, and health systems and services development. A key step forward will be the consolidation of these efforts in an international women's health program that will create greater interaction between projects and institutions within and beyond Canada. Strengthened international links in both research and training will enhance the care provided to BC women, as well as foster global leadership of BC Women's researchers and clinicians.
- ✓ **Maternity Care and Birth:** BC Women's is the largest maternity hospital in Canada, serving high risk women from across BC and low risk women in the Lower Mainland. Its leadership in maternity care, midwifery and outreach maternity care is exemplary. We are consolidating our research on midwifery, community-based maternity care, obstetrical anesthesia and decision making about caesareans, in collaboration with departments at UBC, the Child & Family Research Institute (CFRI) and community partners. Of equal importance is our emphasis on improving rural maternity care services and influencing policies and practices surrounding the management of normal and low risk birth.
- ✓ **Mental Health:** BC Women's is poised to lead the consolidation of women's and gender-based mental health research in British Columbia. This will consolidate clinical, policy, and health services and systems research on women's mental health in partnership with Specialized Mental Health Services at the PHSA. The Reproductive Mental Health Program's focus on clinical research, along with data from its strong outreach program, will be melded with policy and health services and systems research led by the BCCEWH. In conjunction with the Mental Health Evaluation and Community Consultation Unit, PHSA Specialized Mental Health Services and the Ministry of Health, BC Women's will develop and expand this area to include interdisciplinary mental health research for girls and women across the lifespan.
- ✓ **Violence and Sexual Assault:** BC Women's is a leader in providing sensitive care to women experiencing relationship violence or sexual assault and offers outreach services and training on violence services across BC. Research on the health effects of violence and assault, appropriate health system and legal system responses, and the effectiveness of interventions are key research areas. BC Women's will work with provincial partners in communities and academic institutions across Canada from all sectors – health, justice, housing and social – to investigate and develop better practices, services and policies for girls and women experiencing violence.

## **2. Creating a Provincial Women’s Health Research Network.**

Technology will support the development of an accessible, linked, inclusive and effective Women’s Health Research Network (WHRN) for BC. This will interact with existing networks enhancing care, training and outreach serving women in BC. This WHRN will complement and interact with the Provincial Women’s Health Network, which supports the Health Authorities and the PHSA in meeting the goals of *Advancing the Health of Girls and Women: a Women’s Health Strategy for British Columbia*, the provincial women’s health strategy. In addition, it will help to support researchers interested in women’s health and gender and health in BC, and will interact with the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research Networks, the Canadian Women’s Health Network, the Institute of Gender and Health at the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and other national funding bodies interested in women’s health research.

## **3. Brokering knowledge to improve care, programs and policy.**

A key activity at BC Women’s will be to create the links and pathways for uptake between research results and clinical practice, program development and policy work. Brokering will ensure that links between research and the users will be created and fostered in a proactive and creative manner. Knowledge will be synthesized and marketed to users and decision makers in clinical care at BC Women’s and elsewhere, in prevention and health promotion programs, as well as health authorities, government ministries and departments. Knowledge brokering is the critical method for bringing evidence to practice to improve women’s health and health care in BC and to improve the functioning and efficiency of the health care system.

## **4. Building capacity for women’s health research across sectors.**

BC Women’s will pursue a multi-pronged strategy to build research skills, increase research activity and extend research training among academic researchers, care providers, policy makers, women’s groups and women in British Columbia. We will increase the number of training programs in key research theme areas and create a community-based researcher training process. We will recruit researchers and clinician researchers to ensure development of the key research priorities. Finally, we shall use *Fusion*, our model for ensuring optimal involvement, as one approach to developing research priorities and engaging the eventual users of research from the outset. This approach guarantees more knowledge uptake and greater education for all parties involved in the research process.

## **5. Enhancing the resources to support clinician-researchers in women’s health.**

BC Women’s will take a concentrated approach to enhancing the opportunities for clinicians to do and use research. This will involve the development of training, funding and research supports to assist with collecting, analyzing and translating clinical data. In conjunction with key recruitments of scientists to lead the strategic themes and

priorities, clinical research will be strengthened. In areas of maternal-fetal health, perinatal research and obstetrics, these programs will be co-developed with our on site partner, the CFRI.

## **6. Securing resources for conducting women’s health research.**

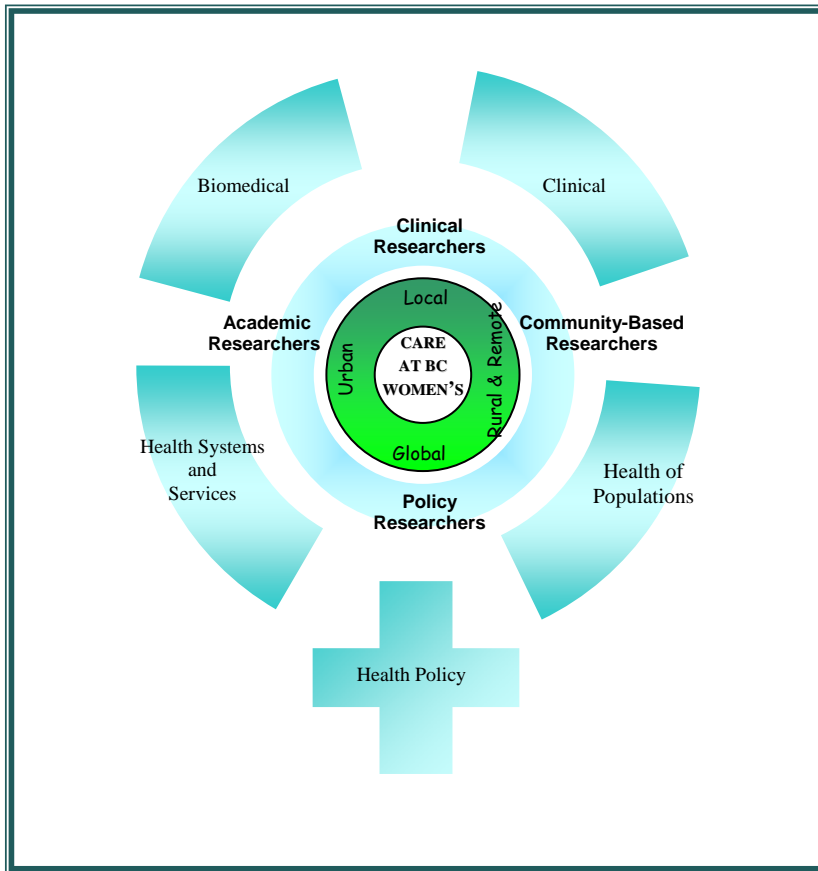
BC Women’s will focus on the development of proposals for infrastructure, research units and program funds that will enhance our ability to develop our key theme areas for the benefit of BC women, their families and communities. We will increase our success rate for funded research and contracts through utilizing dedicated grant facilitation services and business analysts. We will use the Provincial Women’s Health Research Network and other emerging networks as a tool for developing and increasing the number of collaborative teams, coordinating interdisciplinary research and identifying expertise in universities, hospitals and communities in British Columbia and elsewhere. As leaders of the Network, BC Women’s will advocate on behalf of women’s health researchers in BC for funding and infrastructure support from provincial and national funders.

## **7. Establishing a sustainable province-wide organization to advance the strategic priorities.**

BC Women’s and the PHSA are dedicated to developing women’s health research in the Province of British Columbia to enhance the operation of the health care system and to improve the health of girls and women across BC. The Women’s Health Research Initiative will continue to be supported to develop real time and electronic networks, increase research capacity, support evaluation and data management, and provide knowledge brokering.

The themes and priorities outlined in this Strategy will be developed in partnership with our key partners across the Province. The Health Authorities and PHSA agencies, such as the BC Cancer Agency, BC Children’s Hospital, BC Centre for Disease Control and Specialized Mental Health Services, are critical to the success of this Strategy. The Provincial Government, its ministries and agencies are key supports in advancing the health of girls and women in BC.

Our key research partners are UBC and other research institutes with which we share researchers or common interests, including the CFRI, the Institute for Health Research and Education at Simon Fraser University, the Centre for Addiction Research at the University of Victoria, the BC Centre of Excellence in HIV/AIDS, the Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute and the Mental Health Evaluation and Consultation Unit at UBC. Alliances for specialized areas of research include, the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, the YWCA, ProMotion Plus and Legacies Now.



*The strategy links researchers across disciplines and communities, integrating knowledge to improve women's health, services and policy.*

### III. Actions for Growth

---

#### Development of the Women's Health Research Institute

In keeping with our provincial responsibility to advance care, education and research in women's health, BC Women's is committed to developing a dedicated Women's Health Research Institute to achieve the vision of expanding *Women-Centred Health Research*. The Institute will work in close collaboration with our key partners in research institutes and training programs across BC and Canada. BC Women's researchers will be encouraged to develop multiple affiliations to facilitate collaborative and interdisciplinary research. The Institute will provide leadership and vision to a growing network of women's health researchers, policy makers, providers and women in BC who are interested and invested in health research.

## **Development of our Partnership with the Child & Family Research Institute**

The close relationships between researchers at BC Children's and BC Women's Hospitals will be further developed and supported. Clinician-researchers will benefit from mutually sponsored research support and networking systems, and all trainees will benefit from specialized research support and education provided on site at the Children's and Women's campus in Vancouver. Maternal and perinatal researchers will be affiliated with both Institutes and receive support accordingly. The Women's Health Research Institute will forge a full spectrum of women's health research, building on the existing strengths of researchers at both Children's and Women's Hospitals and at UBC.

## **Funding Development**

The BC Women's Foundation is committed to raising funds to support women's health research and the Women's Health Research Institute based on the vision in this Strategy. A comprehensive, high quality research agenda that reflects the mission and mandate of BC Women's as an agency of the PHSA is critical to attracting donor support for women's health in BC. This funding will support recruitment of researchers, the development of technology, infrastructure, community capacity building and knowledge brokerage. All BC girls and women will benefit from this commitment to build research strength at BC Women's.

## **Recruitment Strategy**

Targeted recruitment strategies will be developed in partnership with UBC and other universities in BC to accelerate the growth of research leadership in the key theme areas. Funds will be accessed to support new investigators, health professionals interested in enhancing their research skills, knowledge brokers and policy research personnel.

## **Strategic Planning**

A detailed planning process is in place at BC Women's, which standardizes research planning across units and areas, identifies gaps and potential areas where in-patient, outreach and ambulatory programs might actively develop research and infrastructure. Strategic planning is goal oriented, so that research development at BC Women's is deliberate and in keeping with the four overall goals and research themes outlined above. Selected research areas will be chosen for detailed planning and growth in the operational plans to be made over the next few years. Strategic planning is also outcome driven, using a Program Logic Model to identify outcomes and indicators of success, and to link outcomes of research, program evaluation, service delivery and policy impact. Strategic planning for research helps to form consensus and collaboration on research needs, proactively determines directions for research growth, and monitors our effectiveness.

## **Program Evaluation and Research Agenda Setting**

Ongoing evaluation of our women's health programs not only monitors health service delivery but also gives rise to research questions that are directly relevant to the needs of BC Women's and the needs of women in BC and Canada. An online system (*HOMES – Hull Outcomes Monitoring and Evaluation System*) designed by the Canadian Outcomes Research Institute ([www.bmrp.net/CanadianOutcomesInstitute](http://www.bmrp.net/CanadianOutcomesInstitute)) is currently being used to evaluate the ambulatory programs at BC Women's. These data interact with our evolving research priorities as well as with accreditation, patient monitoring and quality assurance systems. This system not only measures progress on the indicators in the strategic plan, but also contributes to program reporting and planning for the PHSA. HOMES allows us to move the research process online, by facilitating the online collection of both quantitative and qualitative research data from women across the province on any health related question.

## **Electronic Research Development**

BC Women's is committed to more effectively and efficiently bringing its multi-sectoral partners to the research table through innovative technologies. Our commitment to women-centred research and our involvement model means that accessibility to the research process must be enhanced. This will be supported by web-based video conferencing, interactive and multi-site data collection and analysis activities, research training and knowledge brokering.

## **Research Support and Education**

In order to support the development of increased research funding, online resources, research information seminars and training sessions will assist researchers with the development and preparation of grant proposals and to identify potential sources of funding. In conjunction with the CFRI, a research program facilitation service will be further developed to help multi-sector researchers with grant development, website and resource development and training.

## **Knowledge Brokerage**

In order to “close the loop” between research, practice, policy and women's experiences, a dedicated resource will be established to synthesize results and create pathways to transmit and utilize information. This system will ensure timely and constant response to the emerging needs and data that support research in key areas of women's lives, and will implement a variety of mechanisms to continuously confirm evolving research needs.

## IV. Measuring Achievement

---

All of the Strategic Priorities and Actions for Growth will be monitored and tracked according to established and emerging indicators. Ensuring successful achievement of goals requires ongoing reflection and modification to fit with emerging issues and environmental developments. Evaluation processes will utilize the HOMES system, ensuring a close link between developments in care, evaluation, research and training at BC Women's and across the province.

---

- i The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, September 1995, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Strategic Directions and Actions, Women and Health, Section C.89 (<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform>).
- ii Greaves, L. and Ballem, P. *Fusion: A model for integrated health research*, 2001. British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women's Health (<http://www.bccewh.bc.ca>).
- iii Greaves, L., Hankivsky, O., Amaratunga, C., Ballem, P., Chow, D., De Koninck, M., Grant, K., Lippman, A., Maclean, H., Maher, J., Messing, K., and Vissandjée, B. *CIHR 2000: Sex, Gender and Women's Health*, 1999. British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women's Health (<http://www.bccewh.bc.ca>).



---

*Women's*  
BC WOMEN'S HOSPITAL  
& HEALTH CENTRE  
*An Agency of the Provincial  
Health Services Authority*

*Women's*  
**HEALTH  
research**

@  
B.C. WOMEN'S HOSPITAL  
& HEALTH CENTRE

*Women's health  
Women's lives*

---