

BC WOMEN'S HOSPITAL & HEALTH CENTRE STRATEGIC PLAN



September 2007



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August 31, 2007

The BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre Strategic Plan continues to act as a valuable guide for us as we focus on implementing our vision of better health for all women in B.C. and for their infants and families.

As we continue to move forward, our goals have been modified to reflect the strategic priorities of the Provincial Health Services Authority, i.e. Operational Excellence, Knowledge and Innovation, Systems Improvement and Population Health. However, our commitments to providing the best possible care for our patients, strengthening our research and knowledge translation capacity, and improving health and health services for women and their families across B.C. have not changed.

The past year has seen significant improvement in several areas of our work. We have implemented the BC Patient Safety Learning System in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), welcomed the UBC Centre for Reproductive Health, spearheaded the Maternity Care Enhancement and Provincial Specialized Neonatal Care projects, and made significant progress on the road to Baby-Friendly designation. Among many, many other achievements, BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre was named the recipient of the Carleton University Kroeger College Award for Management for maintaining a high level of quality care.

In the coming year, we will continue to improve the quality and safety of the care we provide, we will refine our vision of what BC Women's will be in the future, and we will advance along the road toward the increasing use of electronic technology to support our work, as well as continuing many of the important initiatives already begun. We will continue to support the improvements in the system and population health strategies needed to ensure the health of all women and their families, for example through an expanded aboriginal health program and the aboriginal maternity strategy.

The key constant for us in all of this is the tremendous dedication of our skilled staff—at all levels of the organization—even in the face of ever increasing demand. Developing our Strategic Plan gives us an opportunity to reflect on what we have achieved already and the quality of both front line staff and leaders who have enabled these positive changes.

I am excited about working together to achieve the next milestones in our vision.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth M. Whynot". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Elizabeth M. Whynot, MD
President
BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre

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Who We Are and What We Do

Vision

Improving the odds: better health for all women

Leading the way to best practice for women, infants and their families

BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), is the only facility in the province devoted primarily to the health of women, newborns and families. It is the busiest maternity centre in Canada and the cornerstone of the specialized maternity and neonatal services for British Columbia. We provide a broad range of specialized health services to address the health needs of women of all ages and backgrounds. BC Women's provides a combination of tertiary services for women throughout the province (through outreach and on-site in Vancouver) and primary and secondary services for women and families in the Lower Mainland. We also provide training for providers across the province.

The BC Women's mandate includes a variety of program areas addressing health issues not only of women but also the children, youth and men in their families. These programs include, among others, the Medical Genetics Program, the Oak Tree Clinic for Women and Children with HIV/AIDS, and the Provincial Aboriginal Health Program. In all of our work, we strive to provide excellence in care, research and teaching.

Mission

To lead the way to best practice for women, infants and their families

To move forward over the next five years, BC Women's must continue to strengthen its complete platform of programs, develop and foster new initiatives, and continue to define and implement, within the context of the strategic priorities of the PHSA, our provincial leadership role to improve women's health.

Our values

Women and family-centered approaches

Health is not simply about biological differences or reproductive health. Social differences have a profound effect on women's health. Women-centred and family-centred care incorporate issues that extend beyond traditional medical interventions, placing health in its broader context of social determinants. Our services need to be designed to meet patients' needs, striving to minimize fragmentation and simplify access to our services.

Accessibility/diversity/inclusiveness

We believe that all B.C. women and their families deserve high quality health services, appropriate to their needs and circumstances. Our patients and clients should benefit from health care and services that are respectful and address health needs in the social and cultural contexts of their experience.

Comprehensive and holistic approaches

We aim to provide a comprehensive service to our patients and clients and are committed to an inter-disciplinary approach to clinical care, teaching, and research.

Evidence-based quality

BC Women's aims to achieve excellence through research, evaluation, education, and innovation.

Accountability

We need to be accountable to our clients, funding providers, and communities in B.C. Demonstrating efficiency and effectiveness is the responsibility of everyone within BC Women's. We are committed to managing resources to optimize our capacity to fulfill our mandate.

Mutual Respect

We value the contributions of all our staff and our partners across B.C. as we work to implement our vision.

Our programs

BC Women's is a complex organization, with a varied mandate over several areas of work. We are the lead agency for women's health in B.C., addressing a broad range of women's health issues across the province.

Our extensive clinical responsibilities both support and are supported by our academic responsibilities in the teaching of health professionals and in research. Our academic responsibilities are implemented through a variety of partnerships with research bodies both internal and external, and universities and colleges throughout B.C.

BC Women's is the busiest maternity hospital in Canada, supporting more than 7,500 women in 2006 in giving birth, and caring for several hundred very high-risk newborns every year in our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). In our (Perinatal) Diagnostic and Ambulatory Program, we provide essential prenatal consultation, as well as diagnostic and interventional services to women with complex pregnancies. We are the lead tertiary perinatal provider in the province and are responsible for the BC Perinatal Health Program (formerly BC Reproductive Care Program), which provides leadership for many provincial perinatal initiatives such as the Provincial Specialized Perinatal Services program and the Aboriginal Maternity Project.

Mandate

To serve the population of B.C. by:

Providing tertiary maternal/fetal/newborn and specialized women's health services for B.C..

Providing primary and secondary services for women and infants residing in Vancouver and other regions when BC Women's is the most appropriate service provider.

Providing medical genetics services for those families across B.C. who are at risk for genetic disorders.

Working in partnership with aboriginal communities, other health authorities and the Ministry of Health to improve the health of aboriginal people in B.C.

Providing provincial leadership in developing, maintaining and participating in effective networks of partners who share the goal of better health for women and their families.

Serving as a catalyst to identify key issues and to contribute to developing public policies aimed at improving the health of B.C.'s population, especially girls and women.

Developing, disseminating and translating new knowledge in the areas of basic science, clinical health services, health policy and population health research to improve health.

Partnering with UBC, SFU and other academic centres to provide training opportunities for Canadian and international students across all the health disciplines and other related sectors for clinical, educational, and research activities.

Leading, participating in, and partnering with national and international clinical, research and education networks to advance the goal of better health for women and their families.

BC Women's is the home of the provincial Medical Genetics Program, offering a full range of clinical genetics services for families.

Our Ambulatory and Provincial Health Programs are offered to women of all ages who live in B.C. They encompass service delivery and provincial outreach activities. Each program integrates health promotion principles and works in partnership with a number of community agencies and institutions. These programs include the Access Clinic, Asian Women's Clinic, Aurora Residential Treatment, Aboriginal Health, Maternity Ambulatory Clinic, Reproductive Medicine, Reproductive Mental Health, Comprehensive Abortion and Reproductive Education (CARE), Breast Assessment and Diagnosis, Osteoporosis, Continence, Sexual Assault Services, Women Abuse Response, Provincial Violence and Health Initiative, and the Oak Tree Clinic for Women and Children with HIV/AIDS. The UBC Centre for Reproductive Health has recently relocated to BC Women's and is an important partner program.

BC Women's is committed to providing full choice for women especially with respect to the management of their reproductive lives. We support a full range of reproductive care options, working in partnership with community agencies such as Options for Sexual Health (formerly Planned Parenthood Association of BC). We have been a strong supporter of the Provincial Emergency Contraception Program, and through our CARE program we support access to abortion services for women across B.C.

Some BC Women's programs, including the Neonatal Care Program (intensive care nurseries) and the Oak Tree Clinic for Women and Children with HIV/AIDS are essentially integrated with BC Children's Hospital, and our Medical Genetics Program provides significant services within the Children's clinical areas. This close partnership with Children's is integral to the work of BC Women's.

As an academic health centre, BC Women's is affiliated with the University of British Columbia (UBC) and Simon Fraser University (SFU) and is partnered with many other post-secondary institutions across the province. BC Women's plays a unique role in undergraduate, post-graduate and continuing education of a wide range of health-care professionals in maternity and newborn care, and specialized women's health.

We are strongly committed to research. In 2005, the Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI) was established with the purpose of supporting research specific to the BC Women's mandate. The WHRI will work in partnership with the Child & Family Research Institute (CFRI) to provide optimal support for researchers at this site. We also host the BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, an important partner of BC Women's and the WHRI in research and action initiatives, such as the Provincial Women's Health Plan and the ActNow Healthy Choices in Pregnancy Project.

Connections

BC Women's works with numerous public sector, private sector and not-for-profit disease-specific and general health advocacy organizations



throughout the province to support the delivery of health services in all areas of the province. The partnerships vary in their formality and the respective roles played by BC Women's and the partner organization. Examples of some of our community partners are the Pacific Association of First Nations Women, the Sheway Program, and the BC Association of Specialized Victim's Assistance Programs

Within the PHSA, we have working partnerships with the BC Cancer Agency (Breast Health Initiative), BC Mental Health & Addiction Services (BC Women's Reproductive Mental Health Program), BC Centre for Disease Control (HIV Services Plan for Women and Children, Chee Ma Muk Health outreach, pandemic planning), and, of course, BC Children's Hospital. We will be developing additional partnerships with PHSA Cardiac Services and will be supported by PHSA Corporate Services in the continued development of our website, human resources planning, development and implementation of a clinical information system, and education plans to support provincial initiatives and programs.

Looking Forward: Opportunities and Pressures

Internal and External Influences

External drivers and trends for the PHSA have been updated in the recently summarized PHSA environmental scan document. Many of those identified are relevant to BC Women's and the populations we serve.

The provision of safe and high quality health care for patients is a priority nationally, provincially and of course, locally. Accreditation standards have changed to reflect this reality, and the PHSA as a whole is now committed to changing the way we work by implementing imPROVE—PHSA's program to focus on patients and empower staff—into everything we do. BC Women's will be an enthusiastic partner in this PHSA transformation initiative aimed at ensuring high quality, safe patient care through optimal work design.

Increases in the number of births at BC Women's are of particular concern because of our size and our position as a leader in maternity and newborn care. Over the last few years, our staff have continually risen to the challenge of ensuring safe care for more patients than planned, a challenge which continues and which must be addressed. Therefore, the support and development of capacity to ensure women's access to maternity services provincially as well as locally is a very high priority for BC Women's.

Recent provincial health-care reform initiatives will certainly enhance our ability to appropriately address issues related to both demographic shifts and changes in the workforce. We are committed to understanding and taking advantage of these opportunities. The provincial government has affirmed its support for province-wide initiatives to improve maternity and neonatal care, and to improve the well-being of aboriginal communities. BC Women's has an important continuing role to play in both of these areas. BC Women's will lead the Aboriginal Maternity Project on behalf of the PHSA and will participate with other PHSA agencies in supporting improved services and better health for aboriginal peoples.

The explosion of scientific knowledge will have an impact on the work we do and the way we do it. For example, the rapid developments in genetics research will put pressure on our clinical genetics program to advise both the system and our patients about these advances, at the same time as presenting ethical and economic challenges as new treatment modalities become available. BC Women's will work with the support of PHSA to develop provincial support for a comprehensive Provincial Medical Genetics Strategy. We must continue to improve our ability both to generate knowledge in all our areas of expertise and to use it to improve the health of the people we serve.

The Women's Health Research Institute is an important emerging resource for enquiry and translation of knowledge required to address health issues effectively. Along with the Child & Family Research Institute, the WHRI will enable research across the whole range of factors affecting our target population's health. BC Women's will support the further development of the WHRI and confirm a strong working relationship with both the WHRI and CFRI to ensure our researchers have the maximum support possible.

Technological advances such as web-enabled systems and Telehealth have greatly improved our capacity to disseminate information, communicate, plan, network and learn at a distance. Our challenge is to reduce the gap between available technology and the ability of health-care providers to use it effectively. Public awareness and sensitivity about the health system is very high, and consumers have many information sources, both reliable and unreliable, about what they should expect. BC Women's will work to increase capacity to develop and disseminate accurate information helpful to women and their families as they make choices about their care.

The implementation of electronic clinical information services will ultimately enhance our ability to provide high quality patient care. However, the complexity of the planning, design and implementation required to introduce these systems into our clinical areas will place a significant pressure on all our resources.

The population we serve is increasingly diverse and we must continue to enhance our ability to work well with all population groups. Some population groups face special challenges for socioeconomic, historic or other reasons. These issues can best be addressed by enhancing partnerships with the relevant communities and other levels of government to develop effective, coordinated strategies.

Various social and political trends may also have an impact on our work. BC Women's will continue to be committed to providing a full range of reproductive health choices for women. We must continue to strengthen our understanding of societal and social factors affecting the health of the girls, women and families we serve, so that we can target our work effectively to meet their needs today and into the future.

In the coming years, BC Women's will continue to enhance our areas of excellence and our provincial mandate for women's health. At the same time, we will redesign aspects of service delivery to help us to achieve our strategic goals. BC Women's values and respects all of our staff. Our success will depend on their skills and dedication. BC Women's will renew its commitment to sustaining and developing the human resources we need to fulfill our mandate and to the development of strategies to ensure appropriate education of our staff.

Our Strategic Directions

Operational Excellence

1. Women, infants and their families always receive the best and safest care

- Create, with intent, a total quality and safety culture that supports learning and innovation focused on improving patient care and safety
- Complete a Data Management Strategy to identify performance gaps and support improvement
- Develop and implement best practices initiatives in both Perinatal Acute and Ambulatory programs
- Ensure Perinatal Acute Program capacity and volumes are optimized
- Ensure appropriate capacity and skill mix to address important women's health issues
- Complete BC Women's diagnostic imaging strategy

Knowledge and Innovation

2. BC Women's develops and integrates knowledge to improve the health of women, infants and their families

- Create new knowledge within in each service unit
- Integrate new knowledge about best practice into patient care services
- Coordinate databases on site and with partners
- Ensure high quality education for students and for staff development
- Develop an internal and external communications plan to share new knowledge
- Increase financial support for the Women's Health Research Institute

System-wide Improvements

3. Women, infants and their families have access to appropriate health services across B.C.

- Continue roll-out of Maternity Care Enhancement Report recommendations
- Implement Aboriginal Maternity Strategy
- Continue roll-out of Provincial Specialized Perinatal Services Program
- Ensure appropriate use of and coordination among hospitals providing maternity services in the Vancouver Coastal Health region
- Implement Provincial Prenatal Genetic Screening Program
- Advance models to reduce risk in maternity care provision
- Complete BC Genetics Strategy

Prevention, Promotion, Protection

4. BC Women's works with partners to improve the health of all women, infants and their families across B.C.

- Ensure public access to information about women's and infants' health
- Working in partnership with aboriginal communities, community-based agencies, other health authorities and all governments (including federal), improve the health of aboriginal women and their families
- Complete Provincial Women's Heart Health Strategy
- Update Abortion Access and Reproductive Health Strategy

Enabling Strategies

1. BC Women's provides women-centred care

- Enhance organizational capacity to provide and support women-centred care
- Involve women in decision-making about services and programs

2. BC Women's is an effective organization

- Complete comprehensive physician leadership and recruitment strategy
- Continue development of leadership plan for nursing and other allied professions
- Develop capacity to incorporate imPROVE principles and skills into everyday work
- Prioritize areas for applying imPROVE as part of the overall quality and safety plan at BC Women's
- Implement Clinical Information Systems in BC Women's programs, such as the Patient Access and Scheduling modules
- Complete internal communication strategy for BC Women's staff
- Incorporate comprehensive vision for BC Women's into site redevelopment plans

3. BC Women's will support the growth of the BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre Foundation

- Increase number of staff volunteering in support of BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre Foundation
- Complete development of 2008 capital campaign