

WOMEN'S NOW

GENEROSITY AT WORK. REVOLUTION IN ACTION.



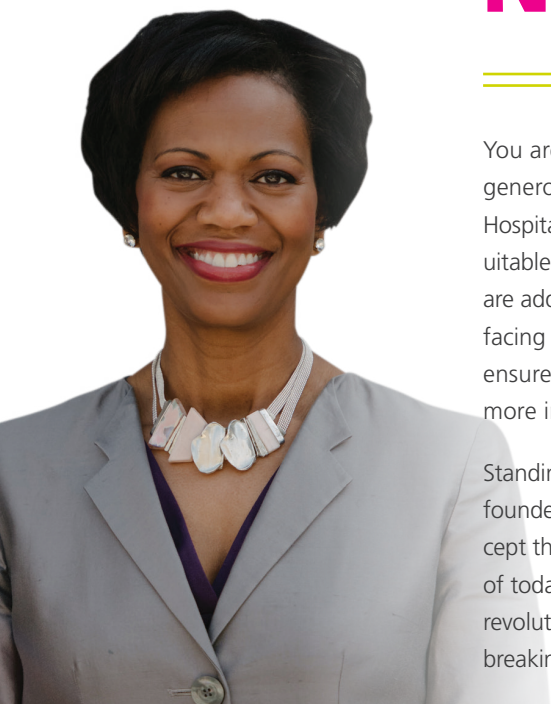
INSIDE

History, hope and
health equity

Culturally safe care
begins here

Jennifer Bernard,
President & CEO, Women's
College Hospital Foundation

WOMEN'S NOW



You are part of an extraordinary community of generous individuals who share Women's College Hospital's bold vision to create a healthier, more equitable world for everyone. With your support, we are addressing the most pressing health challenges facing Canadians today and working together to ensure that healthcare becomes more accessible, more inclusive and more effective for everyone.

Standing on the shoulders of our courageous founders—trailblazing women who refused to accept the status quo—the Women's College Hospital of today is at the very forefront of the healthcare revolution, embracing innovation, driving groundbreaking research and leveraging virtual technology

to create impact for people across Canada and around the world. Both relevant and necessary, Women's College Hospital's founding spirit of courage, grit and determination continues to drive and guide everything we do.

That's why, with this issue, we are proud to relaunch our Heart & Soul donor newsletter with a name that represents Women's College Hospital in the 21st century—and that's as powerful as the community that stands beside us: **Women's Now.**

Through this publication, we will share the real-world examples of your generosity at work and the healthcare revolution in action—the world-class medical leaders whose research and clinical care is reimagining what a hospital should be; the philanthropists and changemakers whose generosity is fueling programs and services that are improving access to equitable care for all; and the stories of patients whose health and well-being has been improved or restored thanks to your incredible generosity.

CULTURALLY SAFE CARE BEGINS HERE

Equitable healthcare is something we all believe in. Unfortunately, this is not something that exists for an important segment of our population—Indigenous Peoples.

Women's College Hospital, with its community of donors and supporters, aims to change this by creating culturally safe spaces, services and programs for patients and staff while working to increase the enrolment of Indigenous students in medical programs.

This spring, in response to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's calls-to-action, WCH established the **Indigenous Health Education Group (IHEG)** to work in collaboration with departments across the hospital to kindly disrupt the ways in which we think about and deliver care (Indigenous patients) and higher learning (Indigenous students).

For many Indigenous patients, experiences of stigma and discrimination steeped in a deeply rooted history of colonization make institutions like hospitals and clinics inaccessible. A lack of understanding sometimes of the sophistication of Indigenous philosophies, governance frameworks, worldviews, sciences, healing practices and in some communities the ongoing forced sterilization of Indigenous women all contribute to making modern healthcare services and education challenging and/or culturally unsafe for many Indigenous Peoples today.

IHEG will work to incorporate Indigenous approaches for inclusive healthcare under the co-led guidance of an exterior Decision-Making Council (comprised of traditional practitioners, and elders) that directly reports to Women's College Hospital's president and CEO and the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto.

The goal of these initiatives is to learn about our shared history of colonization, and to identify which practices are steeped in bias, discrimination and the specific power dynamics that exist in the relationship between a healthcare provider and a patient. Through this work, Women's College Hospital is becoming a safe space and is leading by example to revolutionize healthcare, with future goals that include Indigenous-led research initiatives, virtual care for northern communities, and pilot projects that have the potential to scale well beyond our walls.



Indigenous Health Education Group team and allies



Dr. Lisa Richardson,
Strategic Lead, Indigenous
Health Education Group

GUIDING WISE PRACTICES

We are thrilled to have Dr. Lisa Richardson, an Anishinaabe physician and the strategic lead in Indigenous health at Women's College Hospital, working with the IHEG to foster a non-linear, collaborative approach to care and education with IHEG members and the Decision Making Council.

Dr. Richardson is co-author of the national report "Bringing Reconciliation to Healthcare in Canada: Wise Practices for Healthcare Leaders," published by HealthcareCAN, which provides a set of ten wise practices to guide health leaders in their work to advance reconciliation and close gaps in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. This, as well as the Indigenous Health Primer from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, are two distinct frameworks the hospital is deeply vested in operating from.

Dr. Richardson is also a strategic advisor for Indigenous health within the Office of Indigenous Medical Education at the University of Toronto. Beginning in fall 2019, the department will be housed at WCH—a significant recognition of the hospital's leadership in Indigenous health practices and education.

PLANTING THE SEEDS OF REPRESENTATION

One of the ways the IHEG is planting the seeds of representation is through the installation of Indigenous art throughout the hospital. The selected artworks were all created by Indigenous women with a thematic focus on healing. Through the installation of these works, Women's College Hospital is creating a welcoming environment for Indigenous patients, their families, staff and students.

The hospital's resource library has also recently acquired a collection of texts and literature by Indigenous healers, traditional practitioners, scientists, cultural warriors, oral historians, and ethnobotanists—items that are not typically found in Western healthcare institutions. By creating access to this wealth of traditional knowledge, we are lifting up the shared contributions, perspectives, rights and healing practices that are central to Indigenous healing.

TRUSTED PARTNERSHIPS

Community-building guided by the IHEG is transforming cancer care for Indigenous women through the Indigenous Cancer Screening Program at Women's College Hospital.

Indigenous women with breast cancer are more likely to be diagnosed at a later stage of disease and experience higher rates of mortality. Through partnerships established between trusted community members and allies, patient navigators from the screening program are able to reach women in this high-risk population sooner, helping to ensure they can receive the timely screening and potentially life-saving treatment they need.

For patient Jean, who participated in the screening program last December, she was happy that her experience included a smudging ceremony. Knowing she was surrounded by members of her own community made the process much more comfortable.

"We connect to our ancestors every time we smudge, and get our strength for the day and for whatever we're going through," says Jean. "The mere fact that it was all Indigenous was a real comfort for me."



Jean undergoes a mammogram as part of the Indigenous Cancer Screening Program.

Harmonizing Indigenous, traditional and Western healthcare practices will signal our hospital as a culturally safe space for Indigenous patients to navigate their healthcare journey grounded in rematriation – the reclaiming of Indigenous spirituality, culture, knowledge and resources. Your generosity helps make such institutional change a reality.

Chi-Miigwetch. Thank you.



JANET'S STORY: LIFE-CHANGING ACCESS TO EQUITABLE CARE

The first thing Janet Macbeth wants people to know about her is that she is a loving and dedicated wife and mother. She and her family care deeply for their Southwestern Ontario community. She is passionate about her career. And she is trans.

“The fact that so many people care so deeply about this issue and then, in turn, cared for me has been so inspiring.

Janet Macbeth,
grateful transition-related
surgery patient

For Janet, being trans hasn't always been an aspect of her identity that she has been open about. For many years, shame, fear and anger prevented her from coming out to those around her. “I was dealing with a lot of dysphoria and unhealthy coping tendencies,” says Janet. “Eventually, it got to the point where I just couldn't take it anymore. I realized I wasn't living my healthiest life.”

In 2017, with her health and well-being at stake, and with the support of her immediate family, Janet decided to begin the long and often onerous process of openly transitioning. Due to a lack of accessible, timely and compassionate care, Janet had to drive nearly two

hours to attend medical appointments with the nearest doctor capable of guiding her transition—just one example of the glaring gaps that exist in healthcare for many trans Canadians.

After coming out to family, friends and the community around her, as well as over a year of hormonal therapy mandated by the Ontario government, Janet finally received approval for the life-changing vaginoplasty—a surgery that constructs a vagina for trans patients—she had long been awaiting.

At the time of her approval in spring 2018, a private clinic in Montreal was the only place performing these complex surgeries in Canada, requiring expensive and time-consuming travel. Hoping to find a surgeon closer to home—where she could be closer to her support network of friends and family and have easier access to the follow-up care she would need—Janet began searching for other options.

Soon she heard that Women's College Hospital had recently launched its Transition-Related Surgery (TRS) Program—the first at a Canadian public hospital. Janet reached out for more information and while the program was still in development, the team kept her up-to-date when they could.

Finally, at the end of 2018, after months of patiently waiting, Janet received the news she had been waiting for: she was being scheduled for surgery. “When I finally received a date, it was magical,” she says. “I had been waiting with this hope of something on the horizon for so long because it was so important to me and all of sudden it became a reality.”

In June, the TRS team, working alongside Dr. Marci Bowers, world-renowned transition-related surgeon, performed Janet's vaginoplasty—the first in Ontario in more than two decades.

“This surgery has been such a gift. It's inspired me to start thinking ‘How can I be healthier? How can I be a better mother and wife?’” says Janet. “I'm so grateful for the level of care I received. The fact that so many people care so deeply about this issue and then, in turn, cared for me has been so inspiring.”

Your generosity is making it possible for Women's College Hospital to provide equitable access to healthcare for all Canadians. Thank you!



Grateful patient Francis Ddembe and Dr. Praseedha Janakiram.

CHANGEMAKER: FRANCIS DDEMBE

For Francis Ddembe, becoming a monthly donor to Women's College Hospital is a meaningful way to give back to the place that helped him regain his health after arriving in Canada as a refugee.

“I feel like I need to give back to Women's College Hospital for what they have done for me. This is my way of saying ‘thank you.’”

Francis Ddembe, grateful Crossroads Clinic patient and monthly donor

Searching for a safe and secure future for himself and his family, Francis left his home country of Uganda in 2018 to start a new life in Canada. After arriving as a refugee, Francis was connected with Sojourn House in Toronto—a community shelter and transitional housing program that assists newcomers with their integration into Canadian society.

Refugees arriving in Canada must deal with the stressors of their refugee status, the immediacy of finding housing and employment, cultural and language barriers to be overcome, and the journey of resettlement in new communities. As a result, healthcare can easily slip down the priority list—a reality Francis experienced first-hand during his transition. Knowing he had an underlying heart condition, but preoccupied with settling in Toronto, it was six months before he could turn his attention to his health.

After meeting with a resident physician at the shelter, Francis was connected to Women's College Hospital's Crossroads Clinic—Toronto's first hospital-based refugee health clinic—to begin addressing his health concerns. “When I first arrived, I didn't know what would lie ahead of me,” he says. “Not until I came to Women's College Hospital. Before that, I was worried about finding care but the hospital has been so helpful.”

Through community partnerships with Sojourn House and other refugee support programs in the city, the Crossroads Clinic is helping to improve access to healthcare for newcomers to Canada by providing comprehensive care and support for those who need it most.

Dr. Praseedha Janakiram, Francis' physician at the Crossroads Clinic, says that offering a dedicated clinic specific to the needs of refugees is an important part of helping them settle in Canada. “Our patients are arriving from countries and regions of conflict and persecution. Many have spent months or years without healthcare access,” she says. “Others may have experienced stigma during previous healthcare experiences in their home settings. Having a sensitive, dedicated clinic that serves the refugee community and is compassionate to their unique needs is essential to supporting our patients as they rebuild their lives.”

Francis says the care he receives is helping get his health back on track. “They've made it so easy for me to attend my appointments and keep on top of my heart condition,” he says. “My health is really improving since I've been coming to the hospital and the doctors have taken such good care of me.”

Grateful for the care he received at the Crossroads Clinic, Francis was inspired to give back by becoming a monthly donor to Women's College Hospital Foundation.

“I feel like I need to give back to Women's College Hospital for what they have done for me,” he says. “I am in much better shape and I am so grateful for the care I received. This is my way of saying ‘thank you.’”

You can join Francis in supporting Women's College Hospital by donating today. To make a one-time gift or become a monthly donor, visit www.wchf.ca or call 416-323-6323.

ON THE COVER: The Indigenous Health Education Group team and allies. L-R: **Theresa Kay**, Health Disciplines Practice Leader; **Senator Constance Simmonds**, Elder-in-Residence; **Selena Mills**, Indigenous Communications & Partnerships Lead; **Cathy Fournier**, PhD (c), Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Evaluation Lead; **Dr. Lisa Richardson**, Strategic Lead, Indigenous Health Education Group and Co-Lead in Indigenous Medical Education at the University of Toronto; **Dr. Cynthia Whitehead**, Vice-President, Education; **Tina Kinnee-Brown**, Indigenous Peoples' Health Education Coordinator.

Dr. Marci Bowers with Dr. Yonah Krakowsky, Transition-Related Surgery Program Lead, and TRS patient advisor, Kiera.

HISTORY, HOPE AND HEALTH EQUITY: WCH LAUNCHES TRANSITION- RELATED SURGERY PROGRAM



On June 18, 2019, Women's College Hospital hosted the official launch of its Transition-Related Surgery (TRS) Program—the first of its kind at a Canadian public hospital. A historic milestone in the hospital's vision to build a healthier and more equitable world for everyone, the TRS program was launched to increase access to urgently-needed care options for the trans community—a population that has faced many disadvantages in seeking compassionate, equitable healthcare.

As part of the program's official launch, the hospital welcomed Dr. Marci Bowers—a world-renowned surgeon who specializes in transition-related surgery—to work alongside the TRS team to perform the first vaginoplasties at a Canadian public hospital.

This historic moment for health equity was generously supported by our incredible Equity Partner, Deloitte—a company with a purpose: to make an impact that matters.

Thank you, Deloitte!

My hope for Deloitte's support of Women's College Hospital is to change the lives of every trans Canadian. As a proud trans man, it means the world to play such a pivotal role in health equity. By partnering with Women's on such an important initiative, Deloitte is making an impact that matters and I'm making an impact that matters.

Michael Cherny,
Chief of Staff,
Deloitte Canada



WCH
WOMEN'S COLLEGE
HOSPITAL FOUNDATION
Healthcare | REVOLUTIONIZED

76 Grenville Street
Toronto, ON M5S 1B2

416.323.6323

foundation@wchospital.ca
www.wchf.ca

**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR SUPPORT!**

WCHF is fully accredited under Imagine Canada's Standards Program. The Standards Program awards accreditation to charities and nonprofits that demonstrate excellence in five areas of operations: board, governance, financial accountability, fundraising, staff management and volunteer involvement.



**Join the movement
to revolutionize
healthcare.
Donate today!**

Giving is easy

- Call the Foundation at **416-323-6323**
- Visit www.wchf.ca and click on **Ways to Give** or **Donate**
- Visit us on the fourth floor of Women's College Hospital (76 Grenville St., Toronto)

We love hearing from you!

If you have any feedback about this issue of Women's Now, questions about donating or simply want to connect with a member of your Foundation staff team, please contact **Alex Cheesman** at alex.cheesman@wchospital.ca or **416-323-6323 ext. 2319**.

Let's stay in touch!

Follow us on:

@wchf

@wchf

facebook.com/wchfdn

Sign up for monthly e-news updates by emailing foundation@wchospital.ca