



## Canadian Women's Heart Health Alliance

### Member Profile



**Catherine Goodenough. Retired R.N., CGN ( C )**

Woman with Lived Experience

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Alliance member since 2021

#### Biography

The previous several years had been busy and sometimes stressful. I enjoyed walking, cycling and Dragon boating, but over the previous year, I noticed a decline in exercise tolerance and exertional Shortness of breath.

At age 59, while grocery shopping, I developed chest discomfort which got worse, moving into my back, shoulder, left arm, and jaw. I also experienced nausea and shortness of breath. I had had two episodes the previous week, but not quite as bad. I went to the E.R. where initial testing showed “nothing wrong.” Upon requesting my own records, I found out I had ischemia with 2 mm ST depression, then post angiogram - 30% tortuous stenosis in the mid LAD (left anterior descending artery).

I had to keep ADVOCATING for myself. I would go on to have further testing and I saw four different cardiologist. I was misdiagnosed with G.I. issues and told, “No idea what is wrong with you.” I retired from my Registered Nursing job in the middle of this journey.

Over two years later, I was diagnosed with “Coronary Microvascular Dysfunction.” Upon discharge from the recovery room post procedure (Provocative Challenge Angiogram), I hugged the nurses – I had a diagnosis – it was not in my head. I still have some of the above type of episodes (NITRO is my best friend) but I also know what it is and how to manage episodes. I am still a UNIQUE PATIENT – something new shows up at the yearly stress test and consult appointment where new medication is added to my daily cocktail of medication. I also developed glaucoma due to this cardiac issue. This cardiac issue can affect all parts of the body.

I have discovered WORLD WIDE groups of women on social media (Facebook, Twitter) who have become my PEER SUPPORT group. I also attend webinars, podcasts, conferences, summits, and meetings (in person or virtual). “KNOWLEDGE is POWER.” I also discovered some coping mechanisms – mindfulness, meditation and journaling. I became a member of the Canadian Women's Heart Health Alliance (CWHHA) – Advocacy group. I volunteer on several projects. I am also involved in research groups as a woman /



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person with lived experience and recently as a patient partner. I joined Global Heart Hub and was sponsored to attend the 1<sup>st</sup> "Patient Impact" meeting in Milan, Italy in Dec. 2022. I joined Heartlife, Canadian Heart Function Alliance, Transform HF and I have been sponsored to attend the 1<sup>st</sup> "Masterclass" for patient partners engaging in cardiovascular research at the Vascular 2023 conference. I am also involved with the CWHHA workshop at Vascular 2023 (Patient Perspective – video).

I have been involved in research of the design of Holter Monitors and a study involving Apple Watch. I decided to embrace winter (COLD is a trigger for chest pain). I took up snowshoeing and took up paddleboard in the summer (it is a work in progress, harder than it looks – balance and core). I still walk 5 km five days a week and discovered I need to do at least 20 min. of dynamic stretches upon rising daily.

Please include family in your journey (they are a part of the story!!). Family conversations are important (Listen and be aware of their behaviour because they are scared too).

IT IS YOUR BODY – YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE who knows if something does not feel right (document it).  
KEEP ADVOCATING FOR YOURSELF. Ask questions, keep learning, and also reach out for PEER SUPPORT.  
#HERHEARTMATTERS – We are "Heart Sisters" – ADVOCACY and PEER SUPPORT MATTER.  
Every day is a new day. "EMBRACE IT." Life is a journey!!