

OUR MANDATE

People come to the [University of Ottawa Heart Institute](#) to be treated for heart disease. But our mandate goes beyond ECGs, stents and surgery: we aim to be the providers for the heart in all respects. Through a broad range of programs, we help people learn about management and treatments, cope with the trauma and psychological effects of being ill, take on new lifestyles to prevent or mitigate the disease, and much more.

But to become even more effective, our prevention and rehabilitation programs need to reach further into the community, beyond ill, recovering and at-risk people. We need more face-to-face time with community members, including the young and the healthy, bringing education and screening where they live. We need to provide online resources and communities where they can connect with others going through the same thing. We need to keep in touch with people through social media as they go about their everyday lives. We need to expand the reach of health care to include other partners such as fitness centres and workplaces, helping them increase their capacity to encourage heart health. What we hope to accomplish through this endeavour is nothing short of massive social change, not just in our community, but throughout Canada and the world. The new Canadian Women's Heart Health Centre™ (CWHHC) is a big part of this effort.

WHERE OUR FOCUS SHOULD BE

While heart disease is the leading cause of death in both men and women worldwide, **heart attacks are more likely to be fatal for women**. At the same time, major risk factors such as smoking, obesity, sedentary lifestyles and stress are on the rise in the female population. Every year in Ontario, this disease kills about 20,000 women and costs the healthcare system \$2.8 billion. But despite these serious statistics, public and professional awareness of women's coronary risk is low. As a result, women are under-diagnosed and under-treated as compared to men.

DIFFERENCE IN MEN AND WOMEN...

In addition to low awareness, we still have too little knowledge about heart disease in women. **Up until now, research has been largely based on male subjects**. So questions remain. Why do women tend to have less obvious symptoms such as back pain, anxiety and nausea rather than chest pain? Why are women relatively protected from heart disease until after menopause? How could we apply that protection to others? Do

genetic factors play out differently in women? Insight into these questions and others can help inform both specialists and patients in prevention and diagnosis.

THE GOOD NEWS!

Research shows that up to 80 per cent of heart disease can be avoided altogether. Think of the impact that greater awareness, knowledge and behavior change could have on our community's women and those who love them: longer lives, healthier families, reduced public costs. Through programs and research, the new Canadian Women's Heart Health Centre (CWHHC) will eliminate the inequities between men and women, build awareness of risk factors, fill knowledge gaps and keep women healthier through better screening, care, and behavior change.

AND SO HERE WE ARE...

In 2013, the University of Ottawa Heart Institute launched the CWHHC. The CWHHC will be a multi-level, women- and healthcare provider-focused centre to increase the delivery of interventions to improve the perceptions, understandings, care and outcomes related to cardiovascular health and disease in women.

Within our own region, women-focused centres do exist, however, these services are targeted towards breast cancer, and obstetrics and gynecology. A centre dedicated to women and cardiovascular health and disease is needed as cardiovascular disease is a woman's biggest health threat and the most costly chronic disease for our health system.

OUR PURPOSE

The Centre will be designed to serve women with innovative education and evidence-based programmes and services aimed at cardiovascular disease prevention, community outreach, and disease management. The Centre will contribute to new knowledge and excellence in preventative cardiovascular medicine and population health.

With the support of private sector partners, benefactors, and government, we can transform and save women's lives through research, awareness and evidence-based care.

VISION

To provide leadership in the development, implementation and evaluation of cardiovascular prevention and management strategies to improve women's cardiovascular health.

GOALS

- For women in the Champlain Region to be the most heart healthy in Canada; and
- To develop an exemplary model of excellence in cardiovascular prevention and management for women... to serve our region, our province and our nation.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Evidence-based – The CWHHC will deliver best practices for the prevention and management of CVD in women.

Needs-based – CWHHC activities will be tailored to the needs and wants of woman and healthcare providers.

Technology-based – The CWHHC will develop and test new technology-based self-management and disease-management applications to support the educational and programmatic needs of women and healthcare providers.

Community outreach – The CWHHC will work in collaboration with local communities and their members to drive engagement for women's cardiovascular health.

Empower women – The CWHHC will support women to take control of their cardiovascular health in an effort to reduce sex disparities in the identification, treatment and outcomes of CVD in women.

Increased visibility – The CWHHC will increase the visibility of the University of Ottawa Heart Institute locally, regionally, provincially, and nationally.

New knowledge and excellence in care – The CWHHC will add new knowledge to the field of cardiovascular prevention and management for women through explorative research and program evaluation.