

CANADIAN WOMEN'S HEART HEALTH ALLIANCE

INTRODUCTION | Cardiovascular disease (CVD) continues to be the leading cause of preventable death in Canadian women. Sex and gender differences and disparities with respect to CVD awareness, development, identification, and treatment persist in Canada.

In 2018, the **Canadian Women's Heart Health Alliance (CWHHA)** was established as a network of experts and advocates to develop and disseminate evidence-informed strategies to transform clinical practices and enhance collaborative action on women's cardiovascular health in Canada. It has grown to over 120 volunteer stakeholders, including clinicians, scientists, trainees and women living with cardiovascular disease, who work together on multiple strategic initiatives focused on policy, knowledge translation, training and education, and advocacy. The CWHHA is powered by the Canadian Women's Heart Health Centre (CWHHC) at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, and is funded by the University of Ottawa Heart Institute Foundation.

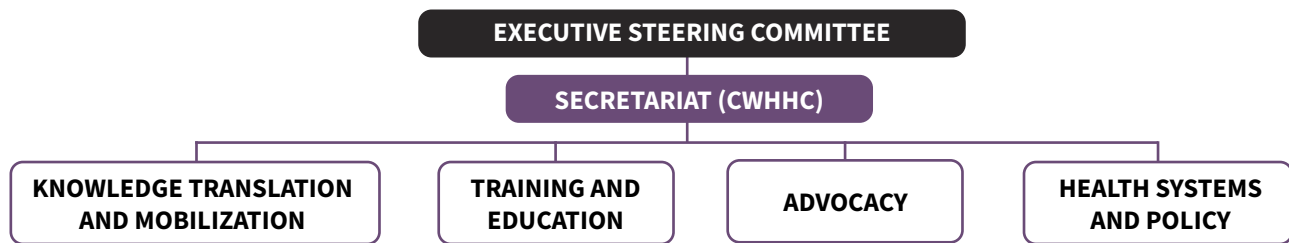


Vision: To improve women's cardiovascular health across the lifespan.



Mission: Clinicians, scientists, patients and decision makers work collaboratively to implement evidence, to transform clinical practice, and to impact public policy related to women's cardiovascular health.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE | The CWHHA governance structure consists of an Executive Steering Committee (ESC), a Secretariat body to provide operational and coordination support through the Canada Women's Heart Health Centre (CWHHC), and four Working Groups. CWHHA members take part in projects within each Working Group which is co-led by elected healthcare providers and patient advocates. Persons with lived experience are key contributors to the CWHHA and play critical roles in all projects, from conceptualization to development and implementation to evaluation.



PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION AND MOBILIZATION

CURRENT STATE OF CARDIOVASCULAR CARE PROVIDED TO WOMEN IN CANADA: A NATIONAL SURVEY | An environmental scan is being conducted in order to develop an understanding of the current landscape of women's heart health programs and services available across Canada. **This foundational work will inform future planning and guide targeted projects to improve the availability, access, and quality of women-specific cardiac care.**

CANADIAN CARDIOVASCULAR SOCIETY CLINICAL PRACTICE UPDATE: MINOCA | There are currently no consensus statements or guidelines on myocardial infarction with non-obstructive coronary artery disease (MINOCA) in Canada. Furthermore, there is a persistent gap in clinical care for these patients, who are most often women, including higher mortality following myocardial infarction in younger women in Canada, repeat emergency visits, and increased health care costs related to inaccurate diagnosis and suboptimal treatment. **A sub-team will create a MINOCA clinical practice update along with a plain language summary document.**

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE IN WOMEN IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT | A point of care emergency clinical summary is being created for Acute Coronary Syndromes (ACS) in women. This core document will be accompanied by additional documents/tools focusing on specific conditions that can cause MINOCA. The BC Emergency Medicine Network is our first dissemination point, with further dissemination on the horizon. The development of these women's heart health-specific tools, including checklists and flowcharts, will support front-line decision-making.



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ADVOCACY

WEAR RED CANADA (FEBRUARY 13) - Wear Red Canada is celebrated annually across Canada on February 13th to raise awareness about women's heart health. Events are held online and across the country to serve as a reminder for everyone, especially women, to be mindful, curious, and proactive in the management of our heart health and wellness. **In 2022, there were over 9.7 million social media impressions, 45 proclamations from municipalities, provinces/territory, and doubled the Virtual 5K Event participation. Visit [WearRedCanada.ca](https://www.wearredcanada.ca) for details.**

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AWARENESS PROJECT | This project is developing focused messaging and educational materials in various languages to reach more women across Canada, particularly those in higher-risk, remote, and Indigenous communities. **To-date, the CWHHA has translated documents and created educational videos in 11 languages. View our growing list of multilingual resources.**

CANADIAN WOMEN'S PEER SUPPORT HEART HUB | This online directory has been developed to connect women with peer support programs and communities that are right for them. The intent is to increase awareness and connections for women living with heart and vascular disease with peer supports that meet their needs. **View the directory at [WomensHeartHub.ca](https://www.womenshearthub.ca).**

PEER SUPPORT REVIEW PROJECT | A broad search of the literature is being conducted describing peer support interventions used for women with cardiovascular disease to inform future program and service offerings. **Partially funded by a Canadian Institute of Health Research grant, this project will be completed by the end of 2023.**

EDUCATOR CURRICULUM FOR HIGHSCHOOL STUDENTS | The Heart of the Matter: Let's Talk About Women's Heart and Vascular Health - This online Lesson Plan and Educator Toolkit is easily accessible and targets grades 8-11 youth and is meant to spark conversation among students, staff, parents/guardians and the community about women's heart and vascular health. **In its first year, this pilot project reached over 25 high schools and 15 Girl Guide groups across Canada with plans to scale the program in future years. Learn more and access the lesson plan.**

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

CANADIAN WOMEN'S HEART HEALTH EDUCATION COURSE & TEACHING TOOLKIT | To address the need to increase awareness and knowledge regarding the incidence, prevalence, significance, and management of heart disease in women among Canadian clinicians, 9 bilingual educational modules have been created. These modules are free, accredited and target trainees and healthcare professionals within cardiology, general internal medicine, and emergency medicine. Users can access each module for individual learning, or faculty can download the tools to present at their institutions. **To-date, over 230 learners have completed the modules, and Module 8 "Cardiovascular Risk in Women with Gestational Diabetes & Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy" is now a requirement for the Nurse Practitioner program at the University of Toronto. Learn more and view the modules and toolkit.**

WOMEN'S HEART HEALTH CURRICULA IN TRAINING PROGRAMS | There is a lack of sex- and gender-specific education regarding cardiovascular disease in medical school curricula and clinical training programs in Canada. In response to this gap, the Training and Education Working Group is leveraging its 9 accredited education modules and approaching universities to incorporate women's heart health curriculum into medical schools, nursing, and other allied healthcare programs across Canada. **A number of programs have already confirmed their interest to collaborate.**

HEALTH SYSTEMS AND POLICY

THE CWHHA ATLAS ON THE EPIDEMIOLOGY, DIAGNOSIS, AND MANAGEMENT OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES IN WOMEN | Stemming from the "State of the Science in Women's Cardiovascular Disease: A Canadian Perspective on the Influence of Sex and Gender" publication in JAHA, this multi-chapter ATLAS is an in-depth, contemporary review of the epidemiology, diagnosis, and management of CVD in women across the lifespan. The goal of the ATLAS is to help readers recognize the unique aspects of women's heart health care and provide policy-makers with the information they need to ensure equitable care for women when it comes to cardiovascular health. **In a one year period, the JAHA paper has received over 14,000 downloads and has over 60 citations. The ATLAS chapter collection is highlighted on the CJC Open homepage and has the top rated downloads on their website. Learn more about the ATLAS and read published chapters and view past webinars.**

SYSTEMS LEVEL ASSESSMENT PROJECT | This project will identify systems-level barriers in access to women's specific cardiac care across Canada and differences across regions and levels of service provision to inform care and policy changes. More information coming soon.