

Community Health Advocate Project

*Project of the VWHC Women's Health
Information Centre, sponsored by the
Vancouver/Richmond Health Board.*



Confronting the barriers that women experience in accessing SAFE, RESPECTFUL and APPROPRIATE Health Care.

A Network of Community Health Advocates (CHA) will be trained to advocate for the health issues of the women in their communities. The CHA's role is three-fold :

- 1) They will educate women in their community about their rights in the health care system and ways to overcome the barriers that prevent them from receiving safe health care.
- 2) They will meet regularly with the CHA Coordinator and the other CHAs to discuss various barriers to safe health care that they have discovered in their community and their plans to confront these systemic barriers. They will also collect stories from women about the violence they have experienced in the health care system.
- 3) They will be the advocates for their community to do the type of work that is suitable for the women in that community in order for them to have access to safe and appropriate health care.

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective has committed to selecting, training and supporting these advocates in their role, as well as steering the overall vision for ways in which to decrease the reality of violence against women in the health care system.

- ∞ The CHAs will be women who are willing to act as advocates to women's health in their community. This is a volunteer position with a training honorarium.
- ∞ The CHAs will become known to the women in their community as a contact for health information and assistance. They will work out of a centre where they have regular contact with women in the community
- ∞ The time commitment is currently until the end of March, 1999, with a review and potential for continuation.
- ∞ CHAs are trained extensively on advocacy, the health care system in BC, some women's health issues, and women's rights in the health care system. (Additional training could include community-specific advocacy, conflict-resolution, communication skills, and workshop facilitation.)