



## VWHC WOMEN'S HEALTH INFORMATION CENTRE

---

219-1675 West 8th Ave., Vancouver, BC V6J 1V2  
ph# (604) 736-4234 fax# (604) 736-2152

### Interim Status Review of the Community Health Advocate Project

Submitted to : Vancouver/Richmond Health Board  
Submitted by : Brenda Kent, Project Coordinator  
Date : October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1998  
Regarding : Meeting with the VWHC Women's Health Information Centre and the  
Vancouver/Richmond Health Board about project status

---

We have received a copy of the report from the Women's PHAC about our project report dated July 31<sup>st</sup>, 1998.

We hear the concerns about the progress of the project and feel that many of these concerns can be eased with a meeting and a sharing of selected resources that better describe the progress of the project as it currently stands. A lot of work has been done and a great deal of progress has been made in the areas identified since the report was submitted in July.

Please find the following :

1. (Beige paper) CHA Application form including position description, selection criteria, and philosophy. Also is a brief plan of what we need back from the CHAs to improve this project for the next round of trainees.
2. (Pink paper) Training schedule arranged and planned
3. (Red paper) List of community contacts who have impacted the direction of project and helped us access volunteers. Also, a list of the current applicants. There are 9 strong applicants as of October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1998.
4. (Green paper) CHA Advisory Committee list and the topics that were discussed at the meeting on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1998
5. (Purple paper) Promotional posting for CHAs
6. (Yellow paper) Further promotion for CHAs
7. DRAFT Brochure to be used as a generic brochure for CHAs in all communities. Community-specific information will be in the form of a sticker or stamp on the back of each brochure
8. DRAFT CHA Manual. This is not complete, but is nearing completion and revision by an editing committee. Will be finalized and published before the training occurring on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

*Community Health Advocate*  
**APPLICATION**



Name :	Phone :
Address :	Fax :
	Email :

➤ How would you define the community of women you would be working with under this project ?  
(for example: 'Women with disabilities', 'South Asian women', etc) \_\_\_\_\_

➤ Do you currently have contact with women in this community at the grass roots level?

➤ Is there a community centre, neighbourhood house, women's centre, or organization that you are associated with?

➤ How did you hear about this project?

Please read the position description included with this contract.

➤ Are you comfortable with the one-year time commitment? YES NO

Please return this form if you are interested in being a Community Health Advocate!

**APPLICATION DEADLINE : OCTOBER 16<sup>TH</sup>, 1998**

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

### Community Health Advocates

The ultimate goals of this project are to provide information and support for women in accessing the health care system, and to find out what the main issues/problems are about the health care system for women in your community. To do this, you will :

- ☞ Talk with as many women as you can within your community about their experience in the health care system, offer information and support, and assist them with finding other resources for their health issues
- ☞ Attend three training sessions in early November, 1998 (The training will start the week of November 16<sup>th</sup>. Dates will be confirmed on October 9<sup>th</sup>)
- ☞ Work one-on-one with a trainer at the end of November to assist you in developing your own advocacy plan
- ☞ Meet regularly with the Vancouver Women's Health Collective and other Community Health Advocates to discuss the project (in person and over the phone)
- ☞ Attend other training opportunities as they arise and if they are appropriate to you
- ☞ Take part in an evaluation before the end of March, 1999
- ☞ Remain committed to this project for one year and hopefully beyond! (Flexible)

#### Please include the following :

- A letter outlining your interest in being a Community Health Advocate
- A description about yourself. (This may be in the form of a resume, or a letter)
- A completed Letter of Agreement

## Selection Criteria

### What are we looking for?

- ☞ Women who are passionate about helping women access safe health care
- ☞ Women who will work with women at the grass-roots level
- ☞ Women who are comfortable talking with women and open to helping in whatever way is appropriate
- ☞ Women who are representative of the community they are representing (for example, a woman with a disability will be the advocate for disabled women)

Notice that we are not asking for previous experience - we feel that all women have inner knowledge and so much to share. If the passion is there, and the interest in committing to the training, we will be thrilled to have you as a vital part of this program!

Since there are only 9 positions available for this project, we will be making a decision in mid-October. Our decisions will be based on the need to serve as many women as possible in this pilot year, and to identify advocates that will best represent community groups that have large barriers to accessing safe, respectful, and appropriate health care.

### The Vancouver Women's Health Collective believes that

- The issues of violence, disrespect and abuse in the health care system will be addressed when women's stories are heard.
- Women are experts in their own health if they are encouraged, supported, and have access to resources enabling them to take charge of their health.
- When we listen to women's stories about their experiences in the health care system, we learn a great deal. We will use this information to raise awareness of the needs that are identified by these women.

**The Vancouver Women's Health Collective is committed to supporting this project, and providing resources so Advocates can help women help themselves.**

*Please contact Brenda at the Vancouver Women's Health Collective with any questions. She works only part-time, so please leave a message for her and she will return your call as soon as possible.*

## Planning - what does VWHC need from CHAs?

1. Five hours per week in direct contact with women in the community
2. Meet each month following the training with phone contact every two weeks
3. Three more training sessions before March 1999 which will be community-specific (as identified by the advocates)
4. By March, 1999, a list of "NEEDS" from each CHA based on her discussions with the women in her community. Needs directly expressed by each woman the CHA has contacted. The CHA will compile this and deliver it to VWHC.
5. Each woman consulted will be counted and a brief overview of her issues will be documented
6. We will be recording 'where people heard about us' at the InfoCentre so we can track how the CHA has enhanced our visibility in the community
7. We will get input from CHAs in terms of education sessions for the future of the VWHC
8. We will get information from the CHAs about the resources in their communities that have helped them. (Support groups, etc.)



## VWHC WOMEN'S HEALTH INFORMATION CENTRE

219-1675 West 8th Ave., Vancouver, BC V6J 1V2  
ph# (604) 736-4234 fax# (604) 736-2152

### Community Health Advocate Application Status and Training Schedule

#### Application Status

We are still receiving applications for the Community Health Advocate (CHA) Program. For the first round (now until March 31st, 1999), we will be training 2 women as CHAs.

We will be informing candidates on their application status by October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

#### Training Schedule

The training will start in mid-November. Please see the schedule below ....

Training Day #1	Wednesday, November 18 <sup>th</sup> , 1998	4:30pm - 8:30pm
Training Day #2	Saturday, November 21 <sup>st</sup> , 1998	10:00am - 3:00pm
Training Day #3	To be decided collectively on Nov 16 <sup>th</sup> 28 <sup>th</sup>	

Please contact me with any questions!

Brenda  
736-4234



## **Training Schedule**

These training sessions will be held in November. Once the advocates are working in their communities, we know that other issues will arise that will need further training opportunities and resources. This will be monitored by regular meetings/contact with CHAs and further training and resources will be provided as needed.

### **Training Session #1 (4 hours)**

- General Introduction (Who is the VWHC? What is this project about?)
- Discussion about "What is Health"
- Sharing Stories About Access to Health Care
- Goals of Project ("List of Needs")
- *Ask them to make contacts in community before next training session*

### **Training Session #2 (6 hours)**

- BC Health Care System
- Core Health Issues and Resources
- Dealing with abuse and harassment in the health care system
- How to empower women to take control of her health
- Empathetic listening - how to give advice

### **Training Session #3 (6 hours)**

- Advocacy - What is it?
- Community Advocacy case studies and examples
- Brainstorm techniques that CHAs could use
- Parameters/liability
- Promotion of the project in each community

## Community Contacts For CHA Project

*These meetings have taken place between mid-July and present. The purpose of these site-visits was to gain insight into the community groups we want to serve in this project. We got a better idea of the health issues, the barriers to health care, and the way in which their community operates. We needed to build these partnerships with the community groups so that they would support the project and assist in finding volunteers within their community. It was a vital step that helped us shape the project in a way that best serves the communities.*

The CENTRE (formerly the Gay and Lesbian Centre)  
Sadie Kuehn

Mount Pleasant Family Centre  
Jean Woodcock

REACH Community Health Centre  
John Silver

Multicultural Family Centre  
Pat Dabiri

Vancouver/Richmond Mental Health Network  
Helen Turbette

BC Coalition of People with Disabilities  
Margaret Birrell

Pacific DAWN  
Carol Bast

Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House  
Sharon Babu

Richmond Women's Resource Centre  
Louise Hudson

South Asian Women's Centre  
Sonia Bilkhu

Centre of Excellence for Women's Health  
Celeste Wincapaw

Downtown Eastside Women Centre  
Deepa (Violence Counselor)

Westend Seniors Network  
Heidi Andrei

Vancouver Status of Women  
Ema Oropeza



## Advocates who have applied for CHA position

1. Somali woman who can work out of the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House
2. The CENTRE (formerly the Gay and Lesbian Centre)
3. South Asian Women's Centre (two women from this organization working with a varied group of South Asian women)
4. Pacific DAWN - Women with Disabilities Health Action Network
5. Pacific DAWN - Women with Disabilities Health Action Network (second woman)
6. African Immigrant Women - Multi-Cultural Family Centre
7. Women with experience in the mental health system - Van/Rich Mental Health Network
8. A woman who has supported mental health patients. Would work from our InfoCentre

These applications have been received thus far. There are about 10 other women who have the application forms and have expressed interest. The selection will be made on October 30<sup>th</sup>. *The initial proposal stated that we will be training 9 advocates in this pilot year, so that is what we are aiming for.*

## Community Health Advocate Advisory Committee



Sadie Kuehn (The CENTRE)

Phone : 684-5307

Fax :684-5309

Anne Dauphinee (Richmond Health Department)

Phone : 276-4179

Fax : 276-4198

Kathy Hydamaka (Sheway)

Phone : 254-9951

Fax : 254-9948

Hilary Randall (Richmond Women's Resource Centre)

Phone : 275-5541

Fax : 279-7069

Helen Turbette (Vancouver/Richmond Mental Health Network)

Phone : 733-5570

Fax : 730-1015

Celeste Wincapaw (BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health)

Phone : 875-2633

Fax : 875-3716

Brenda Kent (Vancouver Women's Health Collective)

Phone : 736-4234

Fax : 736-2152



## Community Health Advocacy Advisory Committee (CHAAC)

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective is seeking community input, suggestions and guidance into the Community Health Advocate Project. The purpose of this committee is to provide guidance and suggestions to the CHA Coordinator about the project.

This committee will consist of individuals in the community who have a keen interest in women's health, particularly around violence/abuse/disrespect in the health care system.

We respect the busy schedules of all committee members, so we are not asking for a large time commitment. This Committee will meet 2 to 3 times before March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1999.

The first meeting will take place in early October, 1998 at the Vancouver Women's Health Collective Information Centre, suite #219 - 1675 West 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, Vancouver (one block east of Burrard and one block north of Broadway)

### AGENDA for October Meeting

- ∞ General Overview of Project
- ∞ Input on how to recruit CHAs
- ∞ Discuss of Table of Contents for the Manual
- ∞ Promotion of CHA project in Communities
- ∞ Review of draft CHA promotional brochure
- ∞ Future Projections
- ∞ Next Meeting



## Community Health Advocacy Advisory Committee

I look forward to our meeting on Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1998 from 2:00 - 4:00.

Please find this package if Information about the Community Health Advocate Project. I will be asking for input and suggestions on the following issues :

- Suggestions for additions/clarifications for manual
- Please bring any thoughts about resources that should be Included in the manual. Specifically, where women in your community can go for health information (like the VWHC Women's Health Information Centre).
- Suggestions for training schedule - does this seem to flow effectively?
- How do we promote this project in communities where CHAs are working? How do the CHAs encourage women to come and talk with them. There is a trust-factor that has to be developed.

### MEETING AGENDA

- ∞ General Overview of Project
- ∞ Discuss of Table of Contents for the Manual
- ∞ Promotion of CHA project In Communities
- ∞ Review of draft CHA promotional brochure
- ∞ Future Projections
- ∞ Next Meeting

Brenda Kent, Community Health Advocate Coordinator  
Ph : 736-4234



## **General Overview**

The Community Health Advocate (CHA) Program is designed to provide women in the Van/Rich region with a consistent means to deal with violence/abuse/disrespect they may experience in the health care system. The means by which this program will satisfy this overall goal is through the training and supporting of advocates for women's health in different communities across the region.

The CHAs will :

- 1) They help empower women in their community to know their rights in the health care system and support them in overcoming 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 advocacy strategies
- 3) They will be contacts for the women in their community to share stories about their experiences in the health care system. The type of advocacy they do will depend on the comfort level of the CHA, and what the women in that community need (e.g. One-on-one advocacy, lobbying for policy change, raising awareness in the community, etc)

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 to decrease the reality of violence against women in the health care system.

## **Concrete Structure of Project**

1. Right after the training in November, a trainer will visit them all in their communities and help them set up advocacy plan and overall goals. They will set personal goals (how many hours, how many women they plan to reach, where they will work, etc).
2. We will provide the training that we think is important in November. As we get feedback from the advocates and communities, we will add more training as needed. (For example, if they want more training on advocacy techniques, we will respond to that need)
3. Based on the needs identified by women in their community, each advocate will produce a "List of Needs" by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1999. This will be a tool used to raise awareness in a broader sense (media, policy-makers, physicians, universities/colleges, etc), as well as within the specific communities. These will go into the final report to the Van/Rich Health Board.
4. Future :
  - Use these "List of Needs" as indicated above
  - Will focus on future physician education in the areas identified
  - Will access media promotion for project, highlighting all advocates and communities
  - Will continue to provide support and overall promotion for project. Hopefully, this will become a model for Community groups to take advantage of themselves. We provide the template, and materials. We hope that communities across BC can take this model and go for it!
  - Continue to promote networking of like-minded women and community groups

# 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.)

# Be An Advocate !

## Speak Out About Women's Health Issues

The Community Health  
Advocate Project



A Project of the  
VWHC Women's Health  
Information Centre

Women deserve access to safe, respectful and appropriate health care.  
Volunteer a few hours a week to speak out for women in your  
community!

As a Community Health Advocate, you will:

- ⊗ have regular contact with women in your community
- ⊗ learn about the health issues of the women in your community
- ⊗ hear the difficulties women have in accessing safe health care
- ⊗ raise awareness in your community about these issues
- ⊗ nurture women to be experts in their own health

**We ask for a one year commitment.**

- ↵ Training will be on-going, starting in November, 1998.
- ↵ Advocates will be given an honorarium for this project
- ↵ Number of hours per week is flexible
- ↵ Type of advocacy will depend on what your community needs - you will form your plan with the assistance of trainers
- ↵ *Minimal* budget for transportation costs (unfortunately, we can not provide funding for childcare)

To get involved, contact Brenda at the VWHC Women's Health Information Centre  
#219-1675 West 8th, Vancouver, V6J 1V2 (ph)736-4234

*In partnership with the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board*