

*Vancouver
Women's
Health
Collective*



*Annual Report
2001/2002*

Vancouver Women's Health Collective

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Our Purpose

We have all been taught that only medical experts know about good health care. In fact, health information has been passed down from one generation of women to the next for centuries. Since our founding in 1972, the Vancouver Women's Health Collective (VWHC) has promoted and supported women helping women help themselves.

Our Mission Statement

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective provides information, resources and other support for women to empower themselves to take charge of their own health care.

Our Members

We are a charitable, non-profit women's organization, funded primarily by donations, membership fees, grants, and fundraising initiatives. Volunteer members are an essential part of the VWHC — without them we could not offer our services to the women of British Columbia.

VWHC Goals

- actively work on racism, ageism, heterosexism, classism and discrimination against people with disabilities, within and outside the collective
- create an environment that increases participation in, and use of, the collective, and ensure that both reflect the diversity of our society
- work in a healthy way on issues of power and conflict within the collective
- support and actively practice taking care of ourselves within the collective
- strive to be a self-sufficient structure while remaining autonomous and not compromised by funding sources
- actively participate in information exchange and support with individuals and groups locally and globally who share our perspective
- support every woman's right to continue or terminate a pregnancy
- engage in education and consciousness-raising around issues of reproductive choice
- create an active and representative women's health lobby to foster change in the health care system by exposing the roots of economic corruption and power imbalances in the established health care industry
- value and promote knowledge about health based on women's tradition and experience
- promote the vision that women are more than the sum of their reproductive parts
- provide a broad range of health-related resources and a critical analysis of the established health care system, thereby offering options by which women can make their own health care decisions

- inspire, support the development of, and engage in an ongoing exchange with issue-specific self-help, support and educational groups which, although functioning independently of the collective, share our philosophy and values
- continue to develop our understanding of health and healing through the critique of the "disease model" of health, and promote a model based on the mind/body/spirit that addresses women-identified health problems
- actively respond to, and expose, the ways that the health care system perpetuates violence against women

Source: VWHC Policy Manual, October 2001

Thanks to our 2001/2002 Funders

Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and
Women's Services (formerly the Ministry
of Women's Equality)

Vancouver Coastal Health Authority
(formerly the Vancouver/Richmond Health
Board)

Vancouver Foundation

BC Gaming Commission

Summer Career Placement Program, HRDC

VWHC Members and Donors

VWHC Members and Donors

April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002

Anita Alam • Megan Arundel • Karen Barber
Irene Barr • Cora Beitel • Barbara Bell
Elizabeth Bennett • Margi Blamey
BC Teachers' Federation • BC Voice of Women
Kathy Bruggencate • Laura Bucci • Judith Burke
Elizabeth Burrell • Diane Burton • Aidan Cameron
Cathy Chabot • Children's Hospital Psychiatry Fund
Arlene Churchill-Rubin • Gail Clement
Sharon Coates • Mary Ann Code • Barbara Cohen
Melanie Conn • Lara Coutts
Cranbrook Women's Resource Centre
Naznin Dawoodi • Diane Desroches • Karen Dias
Stephanie Docherty • Jocelyne Dodier
Patricia Dubberley • Caren Durante
Rachel Dykerman • Lehe Elarar • Renée Fernandes
Pam Fichtner • Rebecca Frame • Rose Marie Gayle
Melissa Gilmour • Jacqueline Gingras
Lucette Hansen • Coreen Hanson • Muriel Harris
Health Sciences Association • Terrie Hendrickson
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Brenda Knight • Anita Komonski • Ima Krayenhoff
Helen Lane • Carol Latter • Margaret Leitner
Barb Little • Veronica MacIntyre
L. Whitney McMillan • Mary Anne McWaters
Faiza Majeed • Memorial University of Newfoundland
Sara Menzel • Jane Munro • Silvia Musholt
Rhodea Omler • OPEIU Local 378
Pacific Post Partum Support Society • Terri Padavell
Janet Parkes • Penticton & Area Women's Centre
Trisha Phillips • Maureen Picone • Christine Pilkington
Candace Plattor • Jerilynn Prior • Ruth Rauld
Lynn Redenbach • Janet Riehm • Joan Robillard
Sunita Romeder • Frances Ross • Adrienne Ross
Bettina Rothe • Winona Rowat • Jane Rule
Danielle Savasta • Debra Seaboyer
SFU Women's Centre • Rolly Sidher • Marion Smith
Rupinder Sohal • Kaleigh Starritt • Frances Suski
Ellen Tallmann • Tanya Thiessen
Angelica Torres • Diane Trovato
Vancouver/Richmond Mental Health Network
Laurie Verchomin • Kim Versfeld • Linda Ward
Susan Wendell • E. M. Wheele
Anne-Marie Whittaker • Women's Contact Society

2001/2002

Steering Committee Members

Lucette Hansen, President
Aidan Cameron, Vice-president
Terrie Hendrickson, Treasurer
Tanya Thiessen, Secretary (resigned December 2001)
Kim Versfeld, Member-at-large
Kaleigh Starritt, Member-at-large

Employees

Anna-Lisa Boye, Information Centre Coordinator
Caryn Duncan, Administrator

CHA Employee

Angela Gray, Community Health Advocate Coordinator

Summer Student

Eng Sengsavang

Year In Review

April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002

Throughout 2001/2002, the Vancouver Women's Health Collective continued to provide health information for women through our health information line, health resource library, our newsletter, HER VOICE, and our Community Health Advocate project. On July 1, 2001, we also launched our new communication tool our VWHC web site. Please check it out at www.womenshealthcollective.ca. As a new and active member of the BC Health Coalition, the VWHC participated in a number of community-based events to oppose Medical Services Plan premium increases and cuts to Pharmacare, to highlight the effects of the health care cuts on women, and to object to the loss of health care jobs – 90% of these jobs are held by women.

The collective responded to at least 1,500 women's queries by telephone, e-mail, and by assisting women who visited the Information Centre. As well, women's organizations, community groups, health practitioners, and individual women held meetings, training sessions, and support groups among other events at the Information Centre. Women's and community organizations wishing to co-host the Patient's Rights workshop for women in their community again enthusiastically supported the Community Health Advocate project.

In February 2002, the Vancouver Women's Health Collective was informed by the new Liberal government that we, along with all other women's centres in the province, will have our provincial grant cut in March 2004. This \$47,000 grant has enabled the VWHC to pay our only two employees who both work part-time. If we fail to secure alternative core funding in the coming years, the collective will have to make some difficult decisions about staffing, the affordability of our present location, and other day-to-day expenses.

The many changes to health care in the province along with the collective's funding challenges will keep us busier than ever in the coming year.

Health Information Centre

As usual, it was a busy year at the Information Centre. We welcomed new volunteers and wished others farewell. We continue to strive to make our Information Centre a vital and exciting place to visit and with which to be involved. Staffed predominantly by volunteers, in 2001/2002 the Information Centre was open 20 hours per week, which translates into more than one thousand volunteer hours. As well, two practicum students, Terri Padavell, from the UBC Women's Studies Program and Rose Marie Gayle, from UVIC School of Nursing, assisted with the work of the Information Centre.

The VWHC maintained its presence in the community by attending various events and workshops throughout the Lower Mainland. In addition to the daily business of the Information Centre, new ideas were brought to fruition:

- we launched our VWHC web site July 1, 2001
- health files were expanded to include health-related topics such as environmental and occupational health hazards, medical ethics, global health, and cuts to the health care system
- we expanded our directory to include questionnaire and evaluation forms for midwives and doulas
- work is underway to update our resource library book collection

Again in 2001/2002, we focused on recruitment and retention of volunteers, and adequate and consistent staffing of the Information Centre. Through the initiative, commitment and hard work of volunteers and staff, the VWHC Information Centre will continue to promote informed, women-centred, self-determined health care for the women of British Columbia.

HER VOICE Newsletter

HER VOICE, the Vancouver Women's Health Collective newsletter, provides a forum to connect the collective with its members and donors, and the community at-large around women's health issues and activities taking place at the collective. The Fall 2001 issue of HER VOICE promoted the services available at the VWHC and included the VWHC's Practitioner Evaluation Form and Therapist Evaluation Form. Thank you to the many women who continue to complete these forms and help us expand our directories. In the Spring 2002 issue, the "Health Care Under Attack in BC" article on provincial government cuts to health care and women's services precipitated the largest reader response in the last five years!

Community Health Advocate Project

In 2001/2002 the CHA project expanded its reach from offering women in the Vancouver/Richmond area the Patient's Rights workshop to include women throughout the Lower Mainland. The Patient's Rights workshop Information Kit was completed. As well, the VWHC's Menopause Kit was translated from English into Chinese. The VWHC website also provided information about CHA in English, Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, Punjabi and Chinese.

The community co-hosts in 2001/2002 were:

- Women of the Downtown Eastside in partnership with the V/RHB, April 2001
- The Centre, Queer Women's Health Series, April 2001
- Traditions Program, Burnaby Family Life Institute, May 2001
- Raycam Community Centre, May 2001
- Leads Group I, Pacific Immigration Resource Society, October 2001
- Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services, October 2001

- Vietnamese Women, Multilingual Orientation Services Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC), November 2001
- Sex trade workers, Prostitution Alternatives Counselling Education, November 2001
- Leads Group II, Pacific Immigration Resources Society (PIRS), November 2001
- Youth and Adults, Gathering Place Education Centre, November 2001
- Gab Youth Services, The Centre, December 2001
- Byng Satellite School, December 2001
- Douglas College Women's Centre, January 2002
- Burnaby Family Life Institute, Traditions Program, February 2002
- Raycam Community Centre, ESL Program, February 2002
- Leads Group III, Pacific Immigration Resource Society, March 2002

Patient's Rights workshop participants learned about their right to access safe, respectful, and appropriate health care. The workshop included a range of information including: an introduction to the services provided at the VWHC; self advocacy skills; things to think about when choosing a doctor; informed consent; commonly asked doctor's questions; routine examinations; self-care; and resources and information sharing amongst workshop participants.

The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (formerly the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board) provided core funding for the CHA project for 2001/2002 and the Vancouver Foundation matched this funding for 2001.

Afterword: The Vancouver Coastal Health Authority cut the funding for this project effective June 30, 2002. Four workshops were carried out in May — Leads Group IV, Pacific Immigration Resource Society; Inform' Elles Réseau-Femmes Columbie Britannique; Mount Pleasant Family Place; and Crossroads Community Reach — before the close of the project. The VWHC is no longer able to offer the Patient's Rights workshop.

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

for the year ended March 31, 2002, Unaudited
(with comparative figures for 2001)

REVENUE	2002	2001
Grants	90,682	68,483
Gaming	43,882	42,232
Donations	4,792	5,353
Information Services	120	530
Membership fees	985	990
Office Services	2,627	5,028
Other	659	285
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	143,748	122,901
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EXPENSES		
Accounting & bookkeeping	2,611	2,711
Advertising & promotion	1,933	2,674
Amortization & depreciation	1,439	4,154
Conference fees & training	465	848
Equipment rent & service	9,010	7,632
GST expense	1,606	1,708
Insurance	560	805
Materials & office supplies	4,413	4,253
Miscellaneous	1,099	212
Moving charges	0	1,683
Postage expenses	1,357	873
Printing & production	1,489	2,947
Rent & utilities	20,767	20,579
Resource materials	638	774
Salaries & benefits	92,085	68,989
Special project costs	1,982	0
Telephone & fax	2,334	2,677
Translation	1,347	0
Travel	91	120
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	145,227	123,641
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Deficit for the year	(1,479)	(739)
Gain (loss) on disposition of assets	0	86
Surplus, beginning of year	32,320	32,974
Surplus, end of year	30,841	32,320

Note: the VWHC's 2001 and 2002 reviews were conducted by
Certified General Accountants, Loren & Company.

Vancouver Women's Health Collective Information Centre

Offers all Women:

- health information line — information on health issues and resources available in your community
- women's health resource library
- health information files
- practitioner & therapist directory — from surgeons to naturopaths — includes evaluations completed by women who wish to share their experiences with other women, and questionnaires completed by practitioners & therapists about their services
- videos on women's health
- VWHC Menopause Kit in English and Chinese, for sale
- reusable cloth menstrual pads for sale
- information on our website

Staffed predominantly by volunteers
please call the
Information Centre
for our hours of operation:
604-736-5262

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