

2005/06 ANNUAL REPORT Vancouver Women's Health Collective

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Year in Review

April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006

It was a busy and challenging year at the VWHC. Volunteers and staff participated in further visioning and strategic planning in 2005. As a consequence, we developed an extensive set of organizational priorities and goals. One immediate result was re-prioritizing our work by placing even greater emphasis on advocacy and delivering health workshops for women in the community.

Once again, we struggled financially. On the revenue side, a month into the 2005/06 fiscal year, our application for City of Vancouver funding was approved upon appeal to city council. The VWHC was awarded a one-year grant through the City's Community Services Program, although the grant was almost \$5,000 less than in the previous year. We continue to receive no provincial core funding since the government cut our grant in April 2004.

We moved to a more modest and central location on June 1st, saving thousands of dollars in rental costs. Although we continue to confront financial challenges, we have managed to accomplish a great deal this year on the programming and advocacy fronts.

Health

Our priority advocacy work in 2005/06 included addressing the lack of women family doctors accepting new patients, Medical Service Plan premium increases and de-listing of services under MSP, the role of nurse practitioners in primary care, and barriers to routine, comprehensive health care for all women.

The VWHC advocated for appropriate, quality health care for women through the media, by meeting with elected officials, and speaking out at community consultations. We were also an active member of the:

- City of Vancouver, Women's Task Force;
- 52% Coalition; and
- International Women's Day Organizing Committee.

The VWHC played a leadership role in re-establishing the 52% Coalition to put women's issues on the agenda for the May 17, 2005, provincial election. The Coalition struck four working groups to carry out its work including the production of election-related material and organizing an April 29th candidates' forum on women's issues.

As a long-standing member of the BC Health Coalition, the VWHC wrapped up its co-chairing obligations in the spring of 2005 and withdrew its membership from the Coalition prior to the provincial election, due to the BCHC's resistance to strengthening its non-partisan policy.

The City of Vancouver Women's Task Force met throughout 2005 and 2006 to develop a Gender Equality Strategy for the City. The Strategy included a number of recommendations, among them the establishment of a City of Vancouver Women's Advisory Committee. In July 2005, City Council accepted the Task Force report and set aside a budget for the work to begin. Regrettably, City Council decided to cut the funding this spring.

International Women's Day in 2006 saw the VWHC involved in helping to organize the annual IWD rally and march. As well, the VWHC organized and hosted a March 4th IWD Celebration.

In 2005/06, the VWHC advocated for women through the media – television, radio, and print – by

commenting on an array of issues including:

- issues of concern to women during the 2005 provincial election
- the impact of funding cuts on the VWHC and the women we serve
- women's reproductive health
- access to abortion
- birth control
- emergency contraception
- HIV/AIDS vaccine testing on Vancouver women
- cosmetic surgery
- body image
- private clinics
- a gendered perspective of the 2005 civic election
- women's health care rights
- barriers to health care for immigrant and poor women
- lack of women family doctors accepting new patients
- nurse practitioners as primary care givers
- women's lower incomes and health care user fees and deductibles
- MSP premium increases and cuts to MSP services

The VWHC assisted the Women's Health Clinic in Winnipeg with its fight against cosmetic surgery at a Winnipeg private clinic. Like the VWHC, the Women's Health Clinic raised its concerns about cosmetic surgery with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba.

The VWHC corresponded with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC regarding sexual assault complaints against a doctor, and the

College's inadequate response to doctors who have had sexual assault allegations made against them.

The VWHC asked for meetings with politicians to advocate on behalf of women. Those who refused to meet with us include Carole Taylor, the Minister of Finance and George Abbott, Minister of Health. We did meet with City Councillors Heather Deal and Suzanne Anton to discuss our advocacy work and services, and city funding. The VWHC also corresponded with Carole James, Leader of the Official Opposition, regarding the appointment of a women's equality critic.

Consultations, Presentations and Community Events

The VWHC built community alliances through its participation at 29 events in 2005/06 including:

- Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC) Convention, April 2005
- BC Coalition for Health Promotion, May 2005
- Canadian Council on Learning Conference to Develop a Knowledge Centre on Health & Learning, June 2005
- Organizing for Change – Post-Election Debrief, June 2005
- Presentation to Capilano College's Women and Perspectives on Health Class, July 2005
- Launch of the Canadian Council on Learning's Health & Learning Knowledge Centre, August 2005
- Canadian Health Network Women Affiliate Consultation, October 2005
- Imagining Public Policy to Meet Women's Economic Security Needs, October 2005
- Ad Hoc Meeting of BC Women's Groups as a follow-up to Status of Women Canada Consultations, October 2005
- Health and Poverty Forum in the Downtown Eastside, November 2005
- Ethics, Public Policy & the Pharmaceutical Industry Forum, November 2005
- Impacting Women: Provincial Government Cuts to Health Care Presentation at Langara College, November 2005
- National Action Committee (NAC) on the Status of Women BC Consultation, November 2005
- Canada Social Transfer Consultation and Dialogue, November 2005
- Voluntary Sector Awareness Project Consultation, November 2005
- Vancouver Mayoral Forum, November 2005
- Framing Symposium, December 2005
- Canadian National Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence against Women, Dialogue between Feminists and Activists regarding HIV/AIDS Vaccine Testing on Vancouver Women, December 2005
- Presentation to City Council regarding the Women's Advisory Committee, December 2005
- VANDU Women's Health and Harm Reduction Forum, December 2005

- Vigil at the Picton Pre-trial, January 2006
- Women's Memorial March, February 2006
- Healing Our Families Conference, February 2006
- Ontario Hospital Associations' Nurse Practitioner Forum, February 2006
- Downtown Eastside Women's Leadership Network, February 2006
- IWD Celebrations at Vancouver's City Hall, March 2006
- WISH, PACE, and PEERS IWD Open House, Remembering Our Sisters, March 2006
- VDLC Women's Committee IWD Women's Dinner, March 2006
- Presentation to Multicultural Family Support Services staff, March 2006

VWHC Workshops

With greater emphasis on workshop delivery, and training and support for VWHC volunteers to co-facilitate workshops, we saw a huge jump in the number of workshops offered to Lower Mainland women in 2005/06.

The VWHC facilitated twenty-two Patient's Rights workshops involving 223 women and 11 host organizations. Some of the host organizations included Pacific Immigrant Resources Society, MOSAIC, Helping Spirit Lodge, SUCCESS, Aboriginal Mothers' Centre, ASIA, and Little Mountain Neighbourhood House. The Patient's Rights workshop was also refined, and new material was

developed and incorporated regarding Aboriginal health benefits.

Sixteen women attended a VWHC Menopause workshop offered in May 2005. Over the winter, the Menopause workshop and the VWHC's Menopause kit were reworked and the kit was made available on the VWHC's web site free of charge. We are now promoting this workshop to women in the community.

Volunteers and staff also developed a workshop dealing with the issues of young women's body image, Go Figure! The workshop will be piloted in the fall of 2006 and then added to the VWHC's workshop roster.

In order to build relationships, talk about health access barriers and discuss content for future workshops, the VWHC made contact with 7 additional organizations including Pacific Association of First Nations Women, Britannia Community Services Centre, Collingwood Neighbourhood House, Immigrant Services Society, West Coast Domestic Workers, North Shore Multicultural Society, and the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre.

HER VOICE Newsletter

The Spring 2006 issue of HER VOICE was dedicated to promoting the services and advocacy of the VWHC.

VWHC Members and Donors

April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006

Greta Airhart-Lucy Anaya-Nancy Arbuah-Joyce Arthur-Irene Barr-Elizabeth Bennett-Sarah Berry-Margi Blamey-Anita Braha-B.C.G.E.U.-BC Nurses' Union-BC Voice of Women-Michelle Bujan-Judith Burke-Canadian Office & Professional Employees' Union-C.U.P.E. B.C.-Astrid Castaneda-Gail Clement-Barbara Cohen-Holly Cole-Melanie Conn-Sharon Costello-Cranbrook Women's Resource Society-Sylvia Cust-Douglas College Women's Centre-Nancy Drewitt-Janis Drozdiak-Iona Elgabry-Elizabeth Bagshaw Women's Clinic-April English-Valerie Farina-Fernie Women's Resource Centre-Sacha Fink-Laura Friesan-Danielle Fung-Angela Ginorio-Tamara Gorin-Ali Grant-Lucette Hansen-Jane Harper-Jody Hawley-H.S.A.B.C.-Terrie Hendrickson-Lesia Hnatiw-Darby Honeyman-Hospital Employees' Union-Farnaz Houshmand-Catherine Jacobsen-Saph Jheeta-Meredith Kimball-Htin Kyaw-Langara Women's Centre-Carol Latter-Margaret Leitner-Linda Light-Barbara Little-Sue Lutz-Cheli MacNeil-Kiran Manhas-Pacific Post Partum Support Society-Angela Page-Sonya Parmar-Danielle Peacock-Pender Harbour & District Health Centre-Maureen Picone-Positive Women's Network-Jerilynn Prior-proMOTION plus-P.S.A.C.B.C. Regional Council-Hillary Quinn-Joan Robillard-Adrienne Ross-Shirley Ross-Winona Rowat-Jane Rule-Belinda Shelton-SFU Women's Centre-Irene Sternitzke-Cara Steward-Skye Stuart-Frances Suski-Mina Taheri-Diane Trovato-Melissa Tupper-Judy de Vries-Susan Wendell-West Coast Women's Resource Centre-Barbara Weston-E.M.Wheeler-Saba Zabetian

Steering Committee Members

Sonya Parmar - Belinda Shelton - Farnaz Houshmand - Valerie Farina

Employees

Brenda Belak (until July 2005) - Caryn Duncan
- Lisa Moore (started October 2005)

Summer Student

Andrina Perry

Health Information Centre

It was a busy year at the Information Centre. VWHC volunteers are now solely responsible for responding to all women's health inquiries and for the day-to-day operations of our Information Centre, which is open three days per week for a total of 12 hours. Women's telephone, e-mail, and in-person queries totaled 770 in 2005/06.

Volunteers and staff participated in further visioning and strategic planning sessions in 2005. An outcome of that process was the decision to expand our volunteer training. Volunteers and staff developed new training materials and an extensive training program.

A number of new volunteers were recruited and interviewed for our May 2006 training sessions. By early summer 2006, we had 15 women volunteering at the Information Centre. We are now able to assist women in the following languages: Farsi, Spanish, Punjabi, Hindi, Turkish, French, Dutch, Russian and Ukrainian.

Volunteers organized an evening of live music, poetry, and comedy, as well as the promotion of the VWHC's advocacy work and services in November 2005.

VWHC volunteers also participated at the Women's Memorial March in February 2006 and the International Women's Day march and rally. As well, we took part in a cross-cultural workshop in March 2006 involving

VWHC volunteers and staff and the Pacific Association of First Nations Women.

The VWHC hosted tables at the following events in order to distribute VWHC material, recruit new volunteers, and encourage women to visit the Information Centre:

- 52% Coalition Networking Event, April 2005
- Langara Social Justice Bazaar, June 2005
- Under the Volcano, August 2005
- Making Connections – Building Community: A Networking Opportunity for Groups Involved in Women’s Health, October 2005
- BC Teachers' Federation AGM, March 2006

The VWHC also launched its Out on the Street community outreach initiative in the Spring of 2005. Volunteers promoted the VWHC’s services and advocacy work, distributed health information to women and solicited donations on 6 Saturdays in 2005/06.

Thanks to Our 2005/06 Funders:

- Community Services Grant, City of Vancouver
- Gaming, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
- Summer Career Placement Program, HRDC
- VWHC Members and Donors

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

For the year ended March 31, 2006
Unaudited, with comparative 2005 figures

REVENUE	2006	2005
Grants	47,114	53,141
Gaming	39,563	45,214
Donations	7,114	5,847
Fundraising	1,544	0
Membership Fees	927	820
Office Services	928	2,576
Other	1,181	2,070
TOTAL	98,371	109,668

EXPENSES	2006	2005
Accounting	2,070	2,124
Amortization	324	1,253
Conference Fees	45	35
Equipment	3,053	2,754
Insurance	671	698
Supplies	1,671	2,611
Miscellaneous	131	77
Moving Expense	1,034	0
Postage	227	415
Printing	3,413	3,052
Rent & Utilities	16,228	21,722
Resource Materials	225	520
Salaries & Benefits	68,505	79,322
Telephone & Internet	2,684	2,187
Travel	109	39
TOTAL	100,390	116,809

Deficit (2,019) (7,141)

Surplus, beginning of year 21,733 28,874

Surplus, end of year 19,714 21,733

Note: Irene Sternitzke, C.G.A, completed the VWHC’s 2005 & 2006 Notice to Reader Statements.