

# **2006/07 ANNUAL REPORT Vancouver Women's Health Collective**

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## **Year in Review**

April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007

It was a productive and challenging year at the VWHC. The year saw us concentrate our energy on women's health advocacy, self-advocacy and delivering health workshops for women in the community.

As in every other year since 2004, when the provincial government cut our funding, we struggled financially. On the revenue side, our City of Vancouver funding for 2006 was approved upon appeal to city council. However, the city grant was reduced by \$10,000.

Although we continue to confront financial challenges, we have managed to accomplish a great deal this year on the programming and advocacy fronts.

## **Advocating for Women's Health**

Our priority advocacy work in 2006/07 included calling for the reinstatement of de-listed complementary services under the Medical Services Plan (MSP), exposing barriers to routine, comprehensive health care for all women, and speaking out about the quality of health care and availability of services for women in the Downtown Eastside.

The VWHC advocated for appropriate, quality health care for women through the media, by meeting with decision-makers, and participating in Downtown Eastside community networks.

The City of Vancouver's Gender Equality Strategy, developed by the Women's Task Force of which the VWHC was a member, was shelved in 2006 by the current council. The recommendation to establish a City of Vancouver Women's Advisory Committee was also disregarded by council.

The VWHC spent the summer meeting with community organizations in order to establish the Women's Health Community Advisory Committee. The WHCAC's

foundings meeting was hosted by the VWHC in October 2006 and included:

- BC Coalition of People with Disabilities
- Pacific Association of First Nations Women
- Pacific Immigrant Resources Society
- Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users
- Women Against Violence Against Women.

In early 2007 VANDU lost its federal women's funding and was unable to continue to participate with the committee. The remaining members spent the winter organizing a day-long Conversation on Women's Health for May 28, 2007 – The International Day of Action for Women's Health.

In 2006/07, the VWHC advocated for women through the media – television, radio, and print – by commenting on an array of issues:

- Privacy issues and BC Cancer Agency mammogram test results
- The VWHC's City of Vancouver grant and the impact its reduction will have on the women who use VWHC services
- 2006 International Day of Action for Women's Health
- Microbicides, HIV/AIDS and women
- City of Vancouver Women's Committee
- The role of the media and the Picton trial

The VWHC pursued a number of meetings with politicians. George Abbott, the Minister of Health, refused to meet with us for a second year in a row. We did meet with the Official Opposition's women's issues critic, Claire Trevena. Ida Goodereau, the head of Vancouver Coastal Health, also met with us. Although Ida Chong, the provincial women's issues minister would not meet with us, her assistant deputy minister did. The VWHC also presented to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, in September 2006.

## **A Women's Pharmacy**

The VWHC has embarked on an exciting new project. We are investigating the opportunities that social enterprise – a women's pharmacy – may provide our organization and the women of Vancouver. As we undertook this work, we realized that a women's pharmacy, in many ways, represents a return to our roots.

The VWHC began in 1971 in response to the frustration felt by women whose health care needs were not being met by their doctors and the health care system in general. These original members gathered to share their stories in a supportive environment which led to the establishment of a VWHC clinic and counselling centre for women, run by lay staff and volunteers.

Today, we are ready to return to providing women with health care

services through our Downtown Eastside pharmacy information centre. Women will have access to their medication in a non-judgmental setting, we will provide women with health information and tell them about resources available in the community, and we will offer pap smear testing, sexually transmitted infections exams, blood pressure testing, and other primary care.

A dedicated group of women is birthing this project and we are hopeful to have Lu's: A Pharmacy for Women open in the next year.

## **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 810 in 2006/07 up from 770 in last year.

An outcome of our 2005 strategic planning was an expanded volunteer training program. In 2006/07, 7 women were recruited and spent 12 hours at 3 training sessions, a further 2 women joined us for a November streamlined 2-hour training session. In March 2007, 9 women were recruited and trained as volunteers. In 2006/07, we had a dozen women volunteers running the Information Centre. We are now able to assist women in the following languages: Farsi, Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Arabic, and English.

VWHC volunteers participated at the Women's Memorial March in February 2007, and the International Women's Day march, rally and information fair at the Vancouver Public Library. We also attended the Pacific Immigrant Resource Society anniversary celebration in June 2006 and the October 2006 Other Voices Forum hosted by the Canadian Council on Learning. In May 2006, we attended the BC Health Coalition Health Care Roundtable at the Vancouver Public Library. We also attended a focus group session for The Centre in October at which the future location of The LGTB Centre was discussed. The VWHC reviewed and provided feedback to the Canadian Health Network's Women Affiliate on their Q & A fact sheets about women's health.

The VWHC summer student undertook the important project of dramatically overhauling our web site. The VWHC web site is now a much more inviting, visual and informative tool for communicating with women about our advocacy work and services.

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

- BC Teachers' Federation, May
- Granville Island, June
- Riley park Farmers' Market, August
- Self-Help Resource Association's Information Fair, September
- Sistahood Celebration, March

## **VWHC Workshops**

With greater emphasis on workshop delivery, and training and support for VWHC volunteers to co-facilitate workshops, we saw a steady increase in the number and variety of workshops offered to Lower Mainland women in 2006/07.

The VWHC facilitated 33 workshops including 22 Patient's Rights workshops involving 231 women, 5 menopause workshops for 45 women, and 63 women attended 6 depression workshops. This was up from the 23 workshops in the previous year.

Host partners totaled 16 community organizations, up from 11 in the previous year, and included:

- Pacific Immigrant Resources Society
- MOSAIC
- Collingwood Neighbourhood House
- Immigrant Services Society
- West Coast Domestic Workers
- North Shore Multicultural Society
- Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
- Multicultural Family Support Services
- Multicultural Family Centre
- Mount Pleasant Family Centre
- YWCA Single Mothers' Program
- Youth Parenting and Pregnancy Program
- Triage Housing
- VANDU
- Futuras Mamas Latina group
- Britannia Community Services Centre

VWHC volunteers and staff also continued to develop Go Figure! A workshop on body image for women. The workshop will be piloted in the spring of 2007 and then added to the VWHC's workshop roster for the coming year.

The VWHC also provided 3 individualized workshops involving 58 women at Capilano and Langara community colleges and for professional development training for ESL instructors.

## **VWHC Titbits**

In addition to updating the VWHC's Titbit, Finding a New Doctor, the following new Titbits were created:

- Women's Heart Health
- Rural Women and Health
- Facts on Aboriginal Women's Health
- Women, Poverty, and Health
- Taking Charge of Your Health

## **HER VOICE Newsletter**

The Spring 2007 issue of HER VOICE focused on the VWHC's women's pharmacy as well as promoting our services and advocacy.

## VWHC Members and Donors

Many thanks to all individual, community, and donor members! You make the work of the Vancouver Women's Health Collective possible.

### Steering Committee Members

- Sonya Parmar
- Farnaz Houshmand
- Beth Pentney
- Mina Taheri
- April English (resigned 10/06)
- Belinda Shelton (resigned 10/06)

### Employees

- Caryn Duncan
- Lisa Moore (resigned 12/06)
- Patrice Allen (joined us 03/07)

### Summer Student

- Beth Pentney

### Thanks to Our 2006/07 Funders:

- Community Services Grant, City of Vancouver
- Gambling Revenue, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
- Enterprising Non-Profit Grant
- Women's Hospital
- Summer Career Placement Program, HRSDC
- VWHC Members and Donors

## Statement of Revenue and Expenses

For the year ended March 31, 2007, Unaudited, with comparative 2006 figures.

REVENUE	2007	2006
Grants	46,208	47,114
Gaming	41,569	39,563
Donations	6,558	7,114
Fundraising	845	1,544
Membership Fees	530	927
Office Services	400	928
Other	1,428	1,181
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>97,538</b>	<b>98,371</b>

EXPENSES		
Accounting	2,211	2,070
Amortization	245	324
Conference Fees	0	45
Consulting Fees	5,234	0
Equipment	2,199	3,053
Event Expense	548	0
Insurance	682	671
Supplies	1,190	1,671
Miscellaneous	27	131
Moving Expense	0	1,034
Postage	342	227
Pharmacy – Soc. Ent.	450	0
Printing, Newsletter	469	3,413
Rent & Utilities	15,345	16,228
Resource Materials	276	225
Salaries & Benefits	69,279	68,505
Telephone & Internet	2,481	2,684
Travel	136	109
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>101,113</b>	<b>100,390</b>

Deficit	(3,575)	(2,019)
Surplus, beginning of year	19,714	21,733
Surplus, end of year	16,139	19,714

Note: Irene Sternitzke, C.G.A, completed the VWHC's 2006 & 2007 Notice to Reader Statements.