

16th International Day of Action for Women's Health
Public Health Care: A Right for All Women
Wednesday, May 28, 2003
Report by Caryn Duncan, VWHC (A member of the BCHC)

The *Public Health Care: A Right for All Women* event was organized by the BCHC's women's working group: Terrie, BCHC; Marguerite, BCGEU; Sharon, CoC; Candace, BCNU; Bev, NAC/BC; Margi, HEU; Florence & Josie, WE*ACT; and Caryn, VWHC.

Documents available about this International Day of Action:

- (1) Governments: Take Responsibility for Women's Health; and
- (2) Backgrounder on the Campaign on Women's Access to Health.

Some of the events that happened around the globe on May 28th:

1. In Amsterdam, the Netherlands, the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights – a co-sponsor of the International Day of Action for Women's Health along with the People's Health Network - launched a new 3-year campaign on Women's Access to Health.
2. Dhaka, Bangladesh – women launched a journal on "Globalization, Reproductive Rights and Health."
3. Sangmelima, Cameroon – women hosted a workshop for government policy makers on women's access to health care and the government's responsibility for women's health.
4. The Women Empowerment and Reproductive Rights Centre in Nigeria organized a state-wide symposium on Distributive Justice and Women's Access to Reproductive Health Care.
5. In Andhra Pradesh, India – village women organized a mass meeting to discuss Governments' Taking Responsibility for Women's Health.

6. In Uruguay, Lolapress sponsored a workshop to promote health as a right for women.

7. Matagalpa, Nicaragua – the women’s collective of Matagalpa focused their activities around the theme “A woman’s right to Decide” including a report and debate on maternal mortality in Nicaragua.

8. Women in Black, in Serbia-Montenegro hosted a workshop on Health and Education for All! Nothing for Defence.

At the May 28th event, the women’s working group of the BCHC put forward the following demand:

We demand the BC government create a Reproductive Rights Fund for the women of BC. The purpose of this fund is to ensure that all women across BC have equal access to the full range of reproductive services now available to women in major centres.

Further, we demand the BC government allocate money from the recently announced Health Accord - federal government transfer of monies to the provinces for health care – to this Reproductive Rights Fund. The Health Accord provides for the funding of new initiatives for Primary Health Care and the BCHC wants monies specifically targeted at women’s primary health care.

Speakers at the 16th International Day of Action for Women’s Health Event:

**Ellen Woodsworth, City of Vancouver Councillor
Elsie Dean, WE*ACT
Joyce Arthur, Pro-Choice Action Network
Katalina Hernandez, Inland Refugee Society
Joan Meister, Pacific DAWN – Dis Abled Women’s Network
Shelagh Day, BC CEDAW Group
Kelly Finlayson, Health Sciences Association
Rose Henry, BC Government and Service Employees’ Union
Dyan Seigle, A nurse from the Downtown Eastside
Jackie Adams, Hospital Employees’ Union**