BC Women’s Health Foundation
Urgent Funding Priorities

COVID-19 RESPONSE FUNDS

May 2020
BC WOMEN’S HEALTH FOUNDATION
COVID-19 RESPONSE

The health, safety, and well-being of employees, donors, partners, community members, and the patients who are seeking care at BC Women’s Hospital are the Foundation’s top priorities.

BC Women’s Health Foundation has established three COVID-19 Response Funds* to respond quickly and effectively to the emerging financial needs of BC Women’s Hospital staff, women and their communities during this time.

**BC Women's Health Foundation COVID-19 Response Funds:**

- COVID-19 Response Fund: Hospital + Staff
- COVID-19 Response Fund: Women + Families
- COVID-19 Response: Women’s Health Research

BC Women’s Health Foundation is also working with our partners in health and community to facilitate the investments that are needed to support the most vulnerable women in our communities during this time of change and uncertainty.

**COVID-19 RESPONSE: Non-monetary Donations**

- Non-monetary Community Donations
- Non-monetary Hospital Donations

BC Women’s Health Foundation’s mission – to advance the full spectrum of women’s health – is as relevant today as it was three months ago. We invite you to join us by supporting any one or more of these urgent priorities.

We have a unique opportunity to be at the forefront in demonstrating our unified commitment to our community, the women and families in British Columbia, and beyond. If one thing has set this crisis apart from predicaments in the past, it is our sense of togetherness.

In the words of Dr. Bonnie Henry – “This is our time to be kind, to be calm, and to be safe.”

*Please note that the priority needs described here are subject to change as the situation evolves.*
COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND: HOSPITAL + STAFF  

Goal $160,000

This Fund will support healthcare workers and help to meet the emergency needs of BC Women’s Hospital. Staff wellness is a priority need during a time when healthcare workers are rising to meet unprecedented challenges.

- **Virtual Health Technology** ($100,000 of $200,000 Total)
  
  BC Women’s Health Foundation and BC Children’s Hospital Foundation are joining forces to raise funds for critically needed Virtual Health Technology. This new state-of-the-art audio equipment will enable patients with pressing health needs—including expectant mothers, and infants and children with complex or underlying health conditions—to continue receiving exceptional care from the safety of their own homes, without having to come to the hospital.

- **Emergency Medical Equipment**
  - **Ultrasound Training System** ($40,000)
    
    This is a novel education device for training in bedside ultrasound relevant to anesthesia and obstetrical medicine practice. Training and learning critical competencies related to cardiac and lung ultrasound and vascular access are even more important now than ever before. Clinicians must now master these complex skills with bulky PPE gear in place.

- **Staff Vouchers for Meals and Essentials** ($20,000)
  
  We’ve witnessed the ways staff members at BC Women’s Hospital have put in long hours, worked tirelessly, and gone above and beyond their call of duty to ensure the health and protection of the patients they serve.

  Even though it is a small gesture, we want to do what we can to help lighten their load—which is why we are raising funds to provide each of the 400 BC Women’s Hospital staff members with a monthly voucher to use in the cafeteria, or at the newly created “essentials” store so that they don’t have to make another stop on their way home from work to pick up groceries or other daily needs. Your support will help us care for the carers for the next three months.
COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND: WOMEN + FAMILIES  Goal $405,000

This Fund will support the health and wellbeing of women and families served by BC Women’s Hospital and our community partners, who are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

- **Maternity Emergency Support Fund** (normally $50,000/year, NOW $150,000/year)

  When women experiencing high-risk medical challenges during pregnancy must travel from their home communities to attend appointments at BC Women’s Hospital their relocation can last days, weeks, even months. Now that the usual low-cost accommodation options have been severely curtailed, more funding is needed than ever before to give women the opportunity to access the medical care they need. The impacts are profound for the mental health of the women, and the physical health of both the women and their unborn babies.

- **NICU Family Support** ($100,000)

  Families can struggle to make ends meet financially when their critically ill baby is being cared for in BC Women’s Hospital’s Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). And now families are in isolation within the NICU – restricted from leaving to access food services and communal family spaces. Your support will mean that low-income NICU families get the financial aid they need for regular meal delivery and other supports to get them through this challenging period. With some families living in the NICU for many months at a time, your donation will provide immense relief to parents and allow them to be fully present to support the care of their babies.

- **Indigenous Women + Families** ($25,000)

  During troubled times the wisdom of Elders has never been more important. You can support virtual counselling sessions where Elders provide emotional + cultural guidance to Indigenous families receiving care at BC Women’s Hospital. Other needs for this program include the traditional medicines for patient cultural care packages, as well as direct aid to families in the form of gift cards for emergency food and clothing.

- **Community Support for Women Experiencing Violence** ($100,000)

  BC Women’s Health Foundation is working collaboratively with the Ending Violence Association of BC to provide much needed resources to women’s shelters, transition houses, and organizations serving women across British Columbia who are experiencing violence. Women are in need of emergency financial support to escape violent situations. There is also an urgent need to establish a safe, virtual communications platform for anti-violence organizations to allow women in dangerous situations to connect safely with anti-violence support staff.

- **Community Support for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** ($50,000)

  BC Women’s Health Foundation is working collaboratively with a downtown eastside women’s taskforce to get women’s organizations the masks, gloves and goggles they need to ensure their safety, and the safety of the vulnerable women they serve.
COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND: Women’s Health Research $545,000

BC Women’s Health Foundation is collaborating with our partners in the Women’s Health Research Institute to respond rapidly to the new questions posed by the COVID-19.

- **The Prevalence + Gendered Aspects of Covid-19 in British Columbia** ($330,000)

There is a critical need for population level data related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, while no one is untouched by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that the lasting effects will disproportionately affect women.

The Women’s Health Research Institute is poised to answer the questions of “how many people actually did have COVID-19 in BC?” + “who is most impacted and how do we support them?”

The research infrastructure is already in place to send out, and then analyze, ~100,000 blood spot surveys to a random sample of British Columbian adults. This project is supported by a highly mobilized research team and leadership working hand-in-hand with partners at the Vaccine Evaluation Centre of BC Children’s Hospital Research Institute.

The outcomes of this work will directly inform the overall public health plan and decision-making for the province and will identify subpopulations in BC requiring additional supports after the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only that, this project will go the extra mile to mobilize outreach efforts to address the needs of those who are most impacted by COVID-19. The sooner we have a clear picture of these impacts, the more swiftly we can intervene to ensure the pandemic does not exacerbate inequities already faced by women in British Columbia.

- **Surveillance of Pregnancy Outcomes of Women with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 in British Columbia** ($215,000)

This project responds to a critical gap in knowledge surrounding the impact of COVID-19 on pregnant women, their pregnancies, and infants. Given that pneumonia is a significant cause of maternal morbidity and the leading cause of fatal non-obstetric infection in pregnant women, the spread of COVID-19 raises significant concerns for the health of pregnant women and infants.

Dr. Deborah Money and her team are primed to initiate a British Columbia surveillance program to fully understand the impacts of COVID-19 in pregnancy and provide critical data to inform recommendations for pregnant women and their infants. They have established a Canadian network so other provinces will track outcomes with the same variables – allowing them to collate these to report on Canadian perinatal outcomes.

This project will be highly impactful as it will be Canada’s national surveillance project. The findings will have significant impact by enabling development of evidence-based recommendations for pregnant women and their health care providers locally, nationally, and beyond.
COVID-19 RESPONSE: Non-monetary Donations

Non-monetary Community Donations
There is an urgent need for Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to meet the needs of women-serving organizations on the downtown eastside of Vancouver. From anti-violence organizations to women’s shelters to food banks, women and the community workers supporting them are at a high level of risk for COVID-19 without adequate PPE protection.

BC Women’s Health Foundation is working with a downtown eastside women’s taskforce to get our partner organizations the masks, gloves and goggles they need to ensure their safety, and the safety of the women they serve.

We are facilitating direct PPE donations for distribution to our community partners. Please contact aimee.nygaard@bcwomensfoundation.org if you have supplies you can donate. We are also collaborating with a Health Canada certified vendor of medical supplies who has access to PPE. But we are in need of ~$100,000 in funding to make the purchases happen.

Non-monetary Hospital Donations
BC Women’s Health Foundation is collaborating with the Patient Experience program at BC Women’s Hospital to distribute non-monetary donations where they are needed most for the patients and staff of BC Women’s Hospital.

In light of these global health circumstances, the Patient Experience Non-Monetary Donations Program is now welcoming donations including:

- **Art kits and toiletries:** To support families in isolation

- **Non-perishable food items:** Commercially and individually packaged food (e.g., granola/energy bars) and sealed beverages (e.g., bottled water, Gatorade/energy drinks, coffee pods, hot chocolate pouches)

- **Perishable food:** Restaurants and perishable food distributors who would like to donate individually packaged perishable meals or snacks please contact: PerishableFoodDonationCW@cw.bc.ca

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** If you are offering to sell or donate medical supply items in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit Province’s COVID-19 Supply Hub. Here you will be asked to complete an intake form. This site has been established by the Government of BC to centralize all COVID-19 pandemic supply opportunities.

Whether you are a small business or a larger corporation, we are here to help facilitate your contribution.

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About BC Women’s Health Foundation

BC Women’s Health Foundation is one-of-a-kind in BC, solely dedicated to advancing the full spectrum of women’s health. Our mission is to ensure exemplary healthcare for women by providing solutions-focused philanthropy that delivers tangible social impact.

Our vision is “healthy women everywhere, capable of anything.”

When we look to the future, we see a world in which women are seen, heard, and understood by the healthcare system.

Stronger with our partners in health and community, we improve the quality of life and potential of all women. We strive to close the health gap to unleash the untapped potential of over half the population.

About BC Women’s Hospital + Health Centre

BC Women’s Hospital + Health Centre is the provincial hospital for women’s health, a teaching hospital for the University of British Columbia, and the provincial centre for high risk maternity and neonatal care. It serves more than 80,000 patients a year and operates over 60 specialized clinics, programs, and services to support the health and wellbeing of women and newborns in our province. It is the only women’s hospital in British Columbia, and one of only three dedicated women’s hospital’s in Canada.

BC Women’s Hospital is a unique facility that allows women’s health issues to receive the specialized attention they need and deserve. Operating under the umbrella of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), the hospital has a provincial mandate to act as a resource for women and healthcare providers across BC.

As a teaching hospital and research facility, BC Women’s Hospital is able to provide the highest-quality training support for providers. Their reputation for excellence and innovation ensures the ability to attract the best healthcare providers and researchers to develop and implement improvements in women’s health.