



# IMPACT REPORT

2025-2026

## The Partnership for Women’s Health Research Canada (PWHR)

The Partnership for Women’s Health Research Canada (PWHR) advances a shared national vision of better health for all women, transgender, and non-binary people through research excellence and collaboration. As a pan-Canadian partnership, PWHR brings together four leading women’s health research institutions: the Women’s Health Research Institute (WHRI; British Columbia), the Women and Children’s Health Research Institute (WCHRI; Alberta), the Research and Innovation Institute at Women’s College Hospital (WCRI; Ontario), and IWK Health (Nova Scotia, with a mandate to serve the Maritimes). Together, these institutions form a coordinated network that is strengthening women’s health research through support and mentorship for the next generation of women’s health researchers, collaborative research and knowledge mobilization, and national leadership.

Over the past year, growing momentum has reinforced both the urgency and opportunity of investing in women’s health research. From advancing national advocacy and supporting research excellence to fostering more inclusive and equitable approaches to knowledge creation, PWHR has continued to shape a stronger, more coordinated women’s health research ecosystem.

Grounded in collaboration and guided by a commitment to inclusion, PWHR works to advance research that values diverse lived experiences, knowledge systems, and community priorities, particularly those of people who have been historically and systemically excluded in health research and health care. This report highlights the progress, partnerships, and collective impact achieved in 2025–2026 as we continue working toward a future where women’s health research drives better health for all.

# VISION

Better health for all women, transgender and non-binary people through research equity, excellence, and inclusion.

# MISSION

Enable knowledge creation and mobilization to benefit the health of women, transgender and non-binary people across the lifespan.



In 2025-2026, the PWHR partners brought together more than **1,000** women's health researchers who mentored **1,400** trainees.

PWHR hosted **7** women's health research events with **1,146** participants, and generated over **149,300** social media impressions.

# KEY INITIATIVES AND HIGHLIGHTS

## Refreshed PWHR Strategic Framework

In 2025, PWHR completed a refresh of its Strategic Framework for 2026-2029, establishing a renewed roadmap to guide collective action in strengthening women’s health research in Canada.

Informed by consultation with the broad PWHR community, including researchers across the country from within and beyond the PWHR partners, community experts, and the Women’s Health Collective Canada, the framework reaffirms PWHR’s mission, goals, and strategic priorities. It outlines concrete actions to advance women’s health research across Canada.

The refreshed framework reflects PWHR’s commitment to advancing knowledge creation and mobilization that improves health across the lifespan while centring diversity, equity, and inclusivity in all aspects of research and collaboration.



# A NATIONAL PLATFORM TO SHARE WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH

## Inaugural Mid-Career Excellence in Women's Health Research Award

The PWHR Mid-Career Excellence in Women's Health Research Award was established to honour outstanding mid-career researchers who are leading ground-breaking research, translating their research to improve health, and mentoring the next generation of researchers.



**Dr. Nichole Fairbrother**

Clinical Associate Professor,  
University of British Columbia



A national leader in perinatal anxiety research, Dr. Nichole Fairbrother is exploring the links between harm thoughts, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and maternal mental health.



**Dr. Stephanie Montesanti**

Professor, University of Alberta  
Canada Research Chair in Health System Integration



Dr. Stephanie Montesanti is advancing equity-focused health systems research rooted in Indigenous and community-led approaches.



**Dr. Natalie Rosen**

Professor, Dalhousie University



Dr. Natalie Rosen is a global expert in sexual health, whose research on couples-based interventions is transforming care for women's sexual dysfunctions.



**Dr. Lihi Eder**

Associate Professor, University of Toronto  
Canada Research Chair in Inflammatory Rheumatic Diseases



Dr. Lihi Eder has been recognized globally for work in psoriatic arthritis and cardio-rheumatology, with a focus on understanding sex and gender differences in treatment and outcomes.

Each awardee gave a virtual seminar that showcased how their research is advancing women's, transgender, and non-binary health in Canada and beyond.

Learn more at [pwhr.org/seminar-series](https://pwhr.org/seminar-series).

## Convening a National Women’s Health Research Community

PWHR continued to strengthen its role as a national convener of women’s health research through seminars, virtual mentoring sessions, and knowledge exchange activities that connect researchers, trainees, and partners across Canada. In 2026, PWHR also co-convended a national women’s health research summit.

## Mobilizing Action at Vitally Important: National Women’s Health Summit



*From left to right: Dr. Tamil Kendall, Director of PWHR, with the Presidents and CEOs of our sister foundations and members of the Women’s Health Collective Canada (WHCC), Cally Wesson, BC Women’s Health Foundation, Marie-Hélène Laramée, MUHC Foundation, Jennifer Gillivan, IWK Foundation, Sandra Sualim, Women’s College Hospital Foundation, Sharlene Rutherford, Alberta Women’s Health Foundation, and Amy Flood, Executive Director of WHCC.*

In partnership with the Women’s Health Collective Canada and CanWaCH, PWHR co-convended the **Vitally Important: National Women’s Health Summit** in Toronto on March 24 and 25, 2026. The Summit brought together more than 370 researchers, advocates, partners, and allies from across Canada to share knowledge, spark collaboration, and push the field forward.

The Summit showcased research progress and collaborative action across a broad range of women’s health priorities, including cancers, cardiovascular disease, pregnancy, chronic pain, menopause, autoimmune conditions, endometriosis, and mental and brain health. It also reinforced a shared understanding that persistent sex and gender knowledge gaps continue to limit evidence-based prevention and care.



*Novel Diagnosis and Treatment for Chronic Pelvic Pain and Endometriosis (from left to right): Dr. Lori Brotto, Women’s Health Research Institute, University of British Columbia; Dr. Linda McLean, University of Ottawa; Dr. Philippa Bridge-Cook, The Endometriosis Network Canada; Dr. Paul Yong, Women’s Health Research Institute, University of British Columbia.*

The Summit strengthened connections across the women’s health ecosystem and emphasised the growing movement to close the women’s health gap through sustained investment, collaboration, and evidence-driven action.

# ADVOCACY FOR INVESTMENT IN WOMEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH



Throughout the year, PWHR championed increased investment in women's health research through national awareness efforts including research, social media campaigns, thought leadership, and advocacy activities. These initiatives helped amplify the social, economic, and health benefits of investing in women's health research and contributed to the growing national momentum for change.

## Return on Investment for Women's Cardiovascular Research

PWHR supported the development of Canada's first prospective microsimulation-based economic model to estimate the societal return on investment in women's health research. Led by postdoctoral fellow Dr. Nan Chen, this innovative research focuses on women's cardiovascular disease, the leading cause of death among Canadian women, and explores the societal value of increased research investment in this critical area.



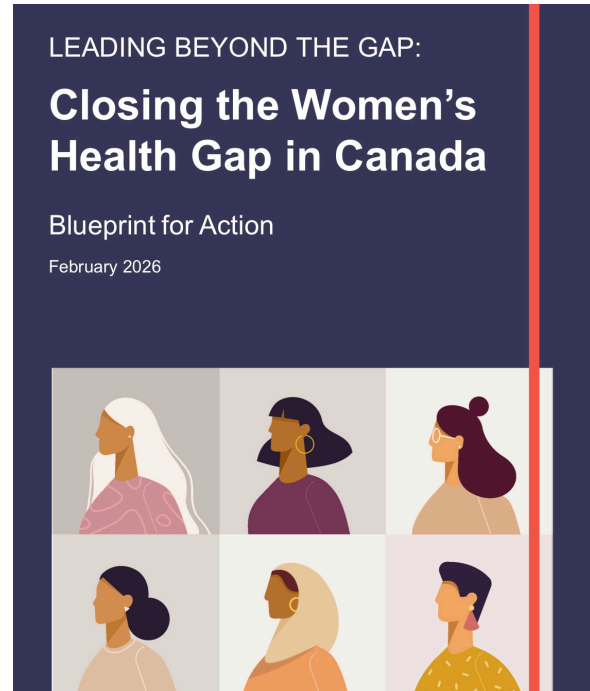
Guided by a multidisciplinary national advisory committee of researchers and clinician-scientists, this work represents an important step toward strengthening the evidence base for women's health research funding. Designed to be adaptable across other women's health priorities, the model has the potential to inform future investments and policy decisions. This project was supported by Mitacs.

*Dr. Nan Chen, PWHR postdoctoral fellow, Dr. Tamil Kendall, PWHR Director, Jordan Chin, PWHR Knowledge Mobilization Coordinator. WHRI Annual Women's Health Research Symposium, March 6, 2026*

## Advancing a Blueprint for Action on Women’s Health in Canada

PWHR contributed expertise to [Leading Beyond the Gap: Closing the Women’s Health Gap in Canada](#), a national Blueprint for Action developed by Women’s Health Collective Canada in collaboration with McKinsey & Company Canada. Building on evidence that closing the women’s health gap could generate significant social and economic benefits, the report outlines a practical path for coordinated action to improve health outcomes, strengthen workforce participation, and advance equity in women’s health.

Drawing on input from PWHR partner institution researchers from across the country, the Blueprint highlights the importance of stronger evidence generation and investment in women’s health research as foundations for progress.



## A National Voice for Women’s Health Research

PWHR continues to strengthen its role as a national voice for women’s health research, contributing to growing momentum for coordinated action to improve health outcomes for women, transgender, and non-binary people across Canada. Through engagement in policy dialogue and national advocacy efforts, PWHR has helped elevate the importance of increased investment in women’s health research and related innovation, and applying evidence to strengthen preventive care and equitable access to services.

In February 2026, PWHR participated in the “Spotlight on Women’s Health” event hosted by Senator Danièle Henkel in Ottawa, where leading researchers from PWHR’s partner institutions shared evidence to inform parliamentarians, community members, and advocates. These discussions reinforced the importance of a coordinated national approach to women’s health and the need for long-term commitments to research and innovation.

These engagements reflect a growing national movement to position women’s health, and women’s health research, as a policy priority. PWHR’s continued engagement in these conversations contributes to building momentum for increased research investment and lasting system change grounded in research evidence.



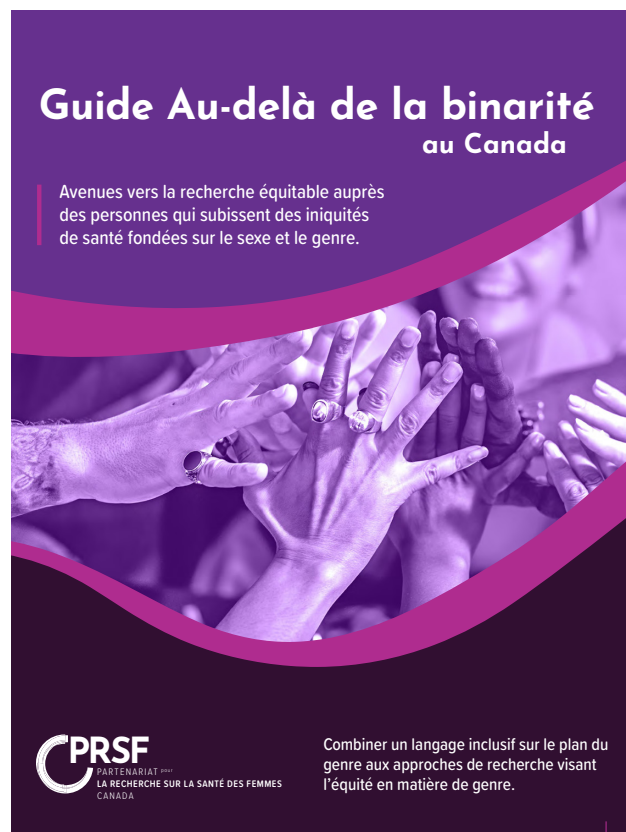
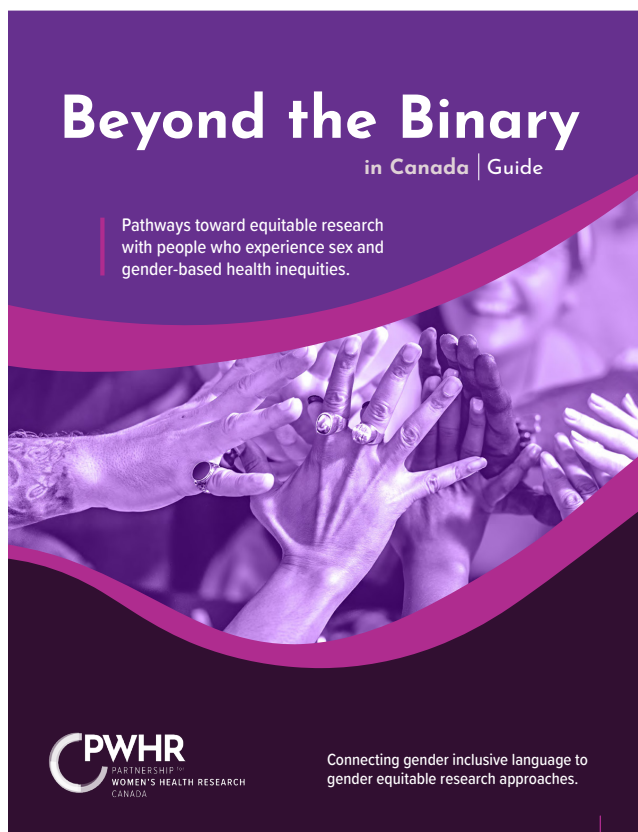
*From left to right: Dr. Sofia Ahmed, Academic Lead-Women’s Health Research, WCHRI, Senator Danièle Henkel, Dr. Angela Kaida, Scientific Director of the CIHR Institute of Gender and Health, and Dr. Tamil Kendall, Director of PWHR.*

# BETTER HEALTH THROUGH BETTER RESEARCH: ADVANCING INCLUSION, COMBATTING MISINFORMATION

In 2025-2026, PWHR continued to coordinate and lead the Beyond the Binary in Canada Initiative, and engaged with partners from across Canada to highlight women’s health research evidence in order to combat misinformation and disinformation that is negatively affecting the health of women, transgender, and non-binary people.

## Advancing Gender Equitable and Inclusive Research with Research Ethics Boards

For decades, health research systems have been built on binary understandings of sex and gender. While awareness of sex and gender diversity has grown, researchers and institutions continue to seek practical guidance on how to conduct gender-inclusive research in meaningful and accountable ways.



The **Beyond the Binary in Canada Guide** (available in [English](#) and [French](#)), provides nationally relevant, community-informed guidance that enables researchers to conduct gender-inclusive health research.

Building on the **Beyond the Binary in Canada Guide**, PWHR is currently coordinating a national initiative to develop knowledge mobilization tools to support reviewers and Research Ethics Boards to guide health researchers and institutions in their commitments to conducting gender-inclusive and equitable research.

This project is co-developed with community experts, PWHR's partner institutions, representatives from the Canadian Association of Research Ethics Boards (CAREB) and the Accelerating Clinical Trials (ACT) Consortium, researchers, reviewers and research ethics board chairs from across Canada.

This project is supported by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).



## Together Against Sexual and Reproductive Health Misinformation

PWHR partnered with ScienceUpFirst, the science communication initiative of the Canadian Association of Science Centres, to address sexual and reproductive health misinformation through research-informed public engagement.

#ScienceUpFirst #PWHRCanada

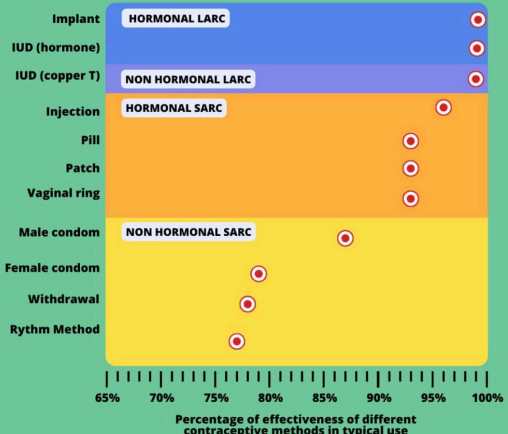
**Thinking about tracking your cycle instead of using birth control?**



**Learn how it works and what to keep in mind**

#ScienceUpFirst #PWHRCanada

**Some contraceptive methods are a lot more effective than others.**



Method	Effectiveness Category	Approximate Effectiveness (%)
Implant	HORMONAL LARC	99
IUD (hormone)	HORMONAL LARC	99
IUD (copper T)	NON HORMONAL LARC	99
Injection	HORMONAL SARC	96
Pill	HORMONAL SARC	91
Patch	HORMONAL SARC	91
Vaginal ring	HORMONAL SARC	91
Male condom	NON HORMONAL SARC	88
Female condom	NON HORMONAL SARC	82
Withdrawal	NON HORMONAL SARC	78
Rythm Method	NON HORMONAL SARC	76

**We explain it all here**


Can a single test really tell you if you're in

**MENOPAUSE**

or

**PERIMENOPAUSE?**

**NO.**

Read on to learn more. 

#ScienceUpFirst #PWHRCanada



**Health misinformation can have immediate consequences.**

Last September, the Trump administration claimed, without evidence, that Tylenol during pregnancy increases autism risk. Within a month, its use in emergency departments for pregnant people dropped by up to 20%.

**Here's what that means. —>**

#ScienceUpFirst #PWHRCanada

Working with experts from across Canada, including researchers, health care providers, community organizations, and advocates with lived experience, PWHR identified and addressed common myths and misinformation negatively affecting informed decision-making by diverse women, transgender, and non-binary individuals of all sexual orientations on topics including contraceptive effectiveness, the safety of acetaminophen during pregnancy, safety of medication abortion, and medical testing during perimenopause and menopause. Through this initiative, evidence-based content helped support informed choices and promote sexual and reproductive health.

This initiative was supported through financial contributions from the Government of Canada. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Health Canada.



*Montreal, QC, May 13, 2025 – Joint CNPRM-CAMCCO Plenary: Acetaminophen use during pregnancy and the risk of neurodevelopmental disorders (from left to right): Dr. Tamil Kendall, PWHR; Dr. Anick Bérard, University of Montreal, Dr. Louise Winn, Queens University; Dr. Graeme N. Smith, Queens University; Dr. Enav Zusman, UBC; Dr. Marion Lecorguillé, McGill University.*

## Looking Ahead

This year demonstrated the growing national momentum behind women’s health research in Canada. Through research excellence, strategic partnerships, and sustained advocacy, PWHR continues to elevate women’s health research as a national priority and advance evidence-informed change. We look forward to continuing this work alongside partners and communities across the country.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WOMEN'S HEALTH  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
AT BC WOMEN'S



women & children's  
health research institute

WCHH WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL | Research & Innovation Institute



---

## PWHR GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES AND THANKS OUR FUNDERS

BC WOMEN'S  
HEALTH  
FOUNDATION



AWHF  
alberta women's health foundation

WCHH WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL FOUNDATION  
Healthcare | REVOLUTIONIZED



Health  
Canada

Santé  
Canada



*Thank you to everyone who helped us spread information, create vibrant partnerships, and advance science to benefit the health of women, transgender, and non-binary people. We are making a difference.*



From coast to coast to coast, PWHR recognizes and honours the ancestral and unceded territories and diverse ways of knowing of Inuit, Métis, and First Nations. Our acknowledgment, gratitude, and respect extend to all the Inuit, Métis, and First Nations communities on whose traditional territories PWHR builds relationships.

