



# NO COMMUNITY LEFT BEHIND

How Women's College Hospital  
thinks and acts beyond its borders

Since the inception of Women's College Hospital 140 years ago, its mandate has always sought to serve not only its surrounding communities and underserved populations but also influence the healthcare system far beyond its doors.

This is a different approach to how many hospitals in Ontario work and that is because Women's sees its role as fundamentally *different*. And, time and time again, Women's has demonstrated that when you see things differently, you do things differently. This philosophy and legacy have enabled the hospital and its healthcare teams to achieve many 'firsts' that have gone on to stir systemic change. Women's was the first to:

- Employ a female doctor in Canada
- Focus on women's health
- Open a cancer detection clinic
- Offer comprehensive reproductive care
- Design a hospital intended to 'keep people at home' via its ambulatory care model

**This work influenced fundamental change locally as well as throughout the healthcare system.**

Today, when a dollar is given to Women's College Hospital Foundation, it goes far beyond the local community. Donations go towards improving health for women, health equity and health system outcomes. It goes towards developing ground-breaking innovations that address issues related to population health, patient experience and system costs.

The teams at Women's work across many disease areas, education and training programs, funded research and study programs that continue to drive 'firsts' that benefit communities throughout Ontario and our healthcare system. Here are just a few examples:



**THE SUBSTANCE USE SERVICE PROGRAM** at Women's is one of the only hospital-based addictions programs in Ontario. The Rapid Access Addiction Medicine Clinic brings together healthcare providers from across the hospital to offer patients care that supports their journey towards health. **It is run in partnership with 11 clinics across the province** and includes a pilot model of virtual substance use care called The Digital Front Door – a service allowing people who are unable to access a physical clinic the ability to still receive quality healthcare and professional guidance relating to substance use.



**MOTHER MATTERS** is an eight-week online support group run for women and gender-diverse individuals who are parents or co-parents of a baby under the age of one year. Research continues to show the glaring gaps in care across postpartum mental health services, especially for young and racialized mothers. Sixty per cent of new mothers under the age of 25 experience postpartum mental health issues. Despite this, only 20 per cent of them receive the treatment they urgently need. Run by the Reproductive Life Stages Program, **Mother Matters is run as a virtual program so as many new parents who need to could access it regardless of location.**



**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH JUSTICE PROGRAM** at Ganawishkadawe Center for Wise Practices at Women's is developing care pathways, policies and recommendations that address the disproportionate impacts of colonial industrial environmental health hazards experienced by First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples. **Through a network of partnerships, the goal of the program is to support diverse communities of practice** to become more resourced to deal with the complex relationships between environmental injustices and place-based community health needs in clinical settings.



**THE SEXUAL ASSAULT/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CARE CENTRE** assists individuals of all genders and gender identities over the age of 16 who are victims and survivors of sexual assault and domestic/intimate partner violence. Now, in its 40<sup>th</sup> year and Ontario's largest SA/DVCC, the program is modelled so services can be accessed directly at Women's College Hospital in 13 different languages, via a mobile unit to other hospitals, and **shares best practices with hospitals across the province.**

While much has been achieved, there is much more to do. There continues to be gaps in healthcare for women and equity seeking people, gaps in research, gaps in equitable healthcare education and numbers of practitioners, and so on. That is why closing the gaps and creating equitable system access continues to underpin Women's programs.