

## **First-ever Canadian research probed what women want from their health care experience**

*Women's College responds with new state-of-the-art facility and stands as Ontario's only ambulatory hospital focused on women's health*

TORONTO, ON September 28, 2010 – Women's College Hospital together with The Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and women representing Ontario's diverse communities, today announced Women's College Hospital is building Ontario's only ambulatory hospital focused on meeting the unique health care needs and priorities of women.

In announcing its new building, Women's College Hospital was responding to research it conducted and is contained in its report "*A Thousand Voices For Women's Health*". The research looked at what women in the province of Ontario want from their health care experience. The study, (involving 1,000 interviews with women from all walks of life, along with an omnibus survey of Ontario women), demonstrates that women seek a place of healing that goes beyond fixing bodily symptoms, and want help in preventing and managing their conditions while continuing to live a normal life at home, without inpatient hospitalization.

"Today's event is a positive step forward in realizing the vision our government has for meeting the health care needs of women in this province," says Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care in Ontario. "I'm thrilled to see Women's College Hospital moving forward in preparing for its new role as an ambulatory care centre, and a provincial leader in women's health care, education and research."

Women's College Hospital is advancing women's health with an ambulatory hospital. It will enable women of every age who are living with a complex array of health issues – like diabetes, cancer, heart disease, arthritis, osteoporosis, migraine and mental illness – to live healthier and more independent lives. It will deliver care without inpatient hospital stays that is proactive and preventative, respecting their individual needs due to their age, race, ability, religion, sexual orientation or life circumstance.

### ***A Thousand Voices For Women's Health***

According to Women's College Hospital's *A Thousand Voices For Women's Health* report, women are not satisfied with the care they receive and are often disappointed by it. In fact, 65 per cent of women say they often feel treated as a number rather than as an individual, and 70 per cent say they feel there is more of a focus on moving them through as quickly as possible instead of hearing what they have to say about their life circumstances and needs. Eighty-eight per cent of women say it is vital that health care facilities provide a holistic approach to health that treats the whole person, not merely parts of the body. But only 43 per cent feel hospitals and health care facilities are successful at it.

In addition, 90 per cent say they want to be treated as an outpatient instead of being admitted. They do not want to have to exit their life during ongoing treatment for complex conditions. And 80 per cent of women surveyed want an organization that is knowledgeable about the sensitivities of women from diverse cultures and one that has put practices in place to help address these sensitivities.

"After 100 years, Women's College Hospital continues to be at the forefront of health care for women," says Marilyn Emery, President and CEO of Women's College Hospital. "Two years in the making, the report *A Thousand Voices For Women's Health* is informing the very design of our new state-of-the-art facility and will directly influence the way we deliver services and care. The report underscores that women are ready for and want the kind of care that Women's College Hospital is already delivering."

## **About Women's College Hospital's new facility**

Women's College Hospital's new facility, scheduled to be completed by 2015, will be built around specialized operating suites and clinic spaces. These "clinical neighbourhoods" will be welcoming and supportive spaces for patients and staff, combining clinical care, research and education.

"When I first walked through the doors of Women's College about four years ago, I was scared," said Barbara Tabuno, a cutaneous t-cell lymphoma patient at the Phototherapy Education and Research Centre (PERC) at Women's College Hospital. "But it didn't take long for the nurses and doctors to put my fears to rest. From my first appointment I was made to feel respected, safe and comfortable. The health care professionals go beyond the call of duty and have helped make me a stronger person."

Today the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Marilyn Emery and Barbara Tabuno were joined by many community organizations to announce the new facility. These groups included: Sistering, Equality for Gays and Lesbians, Aga Khan Council of Canada, Women's Health in Women's Hands, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, Nellie's Shelter and others. In fact, in preparing the A Thousand Voices for Women's Health research project, Women's College Hospital spoke with over 60 groups of diverse women to learn about their distinct needs and to ascertain what each community of women want most in a hospital.

## **About Women's College Hospital**

For the past 100 years, Women's College Hospital has been dedicated to groundbreaking advances in women's health. Women's College Hospital collaborated in the invention of the Pap test, opened Ontario's first regional Sexual Assault Care Centre and was the first hospital in the province to use mammography. Today Women's College Hospital is Ontario's first and only ambulatory care centre and is a teaching hospital affiliated with the University of Toronto focused on state-of-the-art care, research and education in women's health. The Women's College Research Institute is the only one in a Canadian hospital devoted to women's health and innovations in ambulatory care.

For more information about Women's College Hospital or the Research Institute, visit [www.womenscollegetherospital.ca](http://www.womenscollegetherospital.ca).

**About the *A Thousand Voices For Women's Health* report**

Between June and September, 2009 1,000 women were approached across Ontario to provide their insights into women's relationships with their health and health care. The information was gathered by 25 live community forums and 35 online community forums.

In addition, between April 20 and April 28, 2010 584 women in Ontario over the age of 18 were surveyed by Leger Marketing to provide Women's College Hospital with a better understanding about their experiences with hospitals and health-care providers. A probability sample of the same size would yield a maximum margin of error of  $\pm 4.1\%$ , 19 times out of 20.

Full results of the *A Thousand Voices For Women's Health* report can be found at [www.womenshealthmatters.ca/1000women](http://www.womenshealthmatters.ca/1000women).

Support The Campaign for Women's College Hospital. To find out more contact Joanne Cole, President & CEO, Women's College Hospital Foundation. 416-813-4738

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