



**VANCOUVER WOMEN'S HEALTH COLLECTIVE**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2017-2018**

## Message from the Board

During the 2017/2018 year, the Vancouver Health Collective board (VWHC) aimed to take actions as directed by the strategic plan and celebrate the 45th anniversary of the collective. The board supported VWHC executive director in her role, oversaw the financials and governance of the organization. Board members represent the VWHC by attending numerous events on behalf of the collective including the Gender Equality Now symposium, Reconciliation March, Women Deliver Conference Launch, and International Women's Day events.

VWHC celebrated its 45th anniversary this year! For 45 years the VWHC has worked to create space where women help women help themselves. The Collective held two 45th anniversary celebratory events. Friends threw a Multicultural dinner to celebrate and raise funds for the VWHC. The night included a delicious multicultural dinner, numerous live performances, and silent auction of donated items. A 2nd celebration was held in-house at the VWHC, and the celebration included live music, a jewelry sale and refreshments. Many of the founding members of the collective attended the 45th anniversary, which allows women from the many iterations of VWHC to meet and celebrate together.

Early in the year, the board finalized VWHC position statements, which had been in process for the prior year. The position statement which lay out the VWHC's position on gender inclusivity, supporting survivors of violence, sex work, pro-choice and reproductive justice, cultural safety and harm reduction, all of which can be found on the VWHC website.

An area of VWHC strategic plan, which has seen the most success to date, is the diversification of revenue of VWHC. The board invested significant energy and focused on diversification by increasing the amount of income the VWHC receives through donations and fundraising events. We solidified a new relationship with Lululemon's 'Here to be' program which provided funds to enhance our existing yoga program and donated the proceeds of an event from international women's day to VCWH. We have also developed new relationships with female-owned fitness business in the neighbourhood, All-City athletics and Barre, who were looking for meaningful ways to contribute to the health and well-being of the women in our community. This year four events took place that gathered and empowered women and donated their proceeds to the VCWH.

What the VWHC delivers is far beyond its capacity, and this is due to the power of the collective itself and all the women who volunteer in the center. Thank you to all the volunteers for keeping the space welcoming and running, and thank you to my co-board members: Dianne Henshaw, Essya Nabbali, Lena McFarlane, Rebecca Tsang, Sanzida Habib and Wafa Asadian.



Amanda Pollicino

## Message from the Executive director

2017-2018 marked our 45 years of women's dedication to educating, empowering and supporting one another. I hope the work accomplished this past year was faithful to the vision the founding mothers had when they created the Vancouver Women's Health Collective, in 1972. At any rate, it was motivating and powerful to reconnect with them at the time of our intimate 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary meet & greet on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

On the programs and activities front, the new Gentle Pilates/rehab-orientated weekly class has become increasingly popular – to the point that the instructor requested we now simply call it 'All levels Pilates'. Kudos to her and all participants! Our 3 counsellors continued to provide support 3 days a week, and so did the yoga instructors, acupuncturist and team of Nurse Practitioners from BCWH. Attendance in the space may have been quieter than 2016-2017 (and similar to that of 2015-2016), yet we have been glad to see 'regulars' access better housing and more comprehensive care. The continued shift of the neighbourhood can be seen in the space, and we will adjust our offering to meet the needs of the community and ensure the space remains welcoming to many of the underserved women in our community.

None of the results outlined in this annual report could have come to be without the continued support from funders, partners, and of above all from our group of volunteers and our volunteer coordinator, Corrina Russ who has since has moved on. My gratitude goes out to each one, and their presence, feedback, ideas and questions are essential motivators for me - thank you.

Part of our work is cut out for us for 2018-2019 - reviewing our strategic plan and partnering up with other organisations to participate in the 2019 international Women Deliver conference, hosted in Vancouver in June. I look forward to this new chapter of the Vancouver Women's Health Collective story!



France-Emmanuelle Joly

## ACTIVITY REPORT

The focus of services offered by the Vancouver Women's Health Collective is our Drop-in resource centre, a safer, secure, women-only space located in the heart of the Downtown Eastside (DTES) of Vancouver. Services are free of charge, or by donation. We welcome all self-identified women and our clients reflect the diverse nature of Vancouver. We do not keep records of age, ethnicity, primary language, occupation or socioeconomic status, to avoid profiling women who use the space, and informal feedback tells us that women appreciate not having to disclose their history in order to access the space and services.

The VWHC volunteers are always on hand and strive to empower women as they access services and programs, research employment and housing options, other health/wellness services, or address their individual needs.

### DROP-IN RESOURCE CENTRE

Our Drop-in Resource Centre is open 28 hours per week (weekdays, daytime) and offers:

- Free access to 7 updated/refurbished computers with Internet connectivity, printing, faxing and phone service
- Yoga classes three times per week, and a new Pilates class once a week, provided free of charge by qualified instructors from various institutes.
- Acupuncture once a week
- Wellness Counselling now 3 times a week (up from once a week in 16-17)
- Health and wellness workshops open to community members and to other community agencies regarding women's health issues.
- Free baked goods and sandwiches, donated by community business partners (average of 100 tokens and of 3,800+ baked goods)
- Free hygiene products (body/hair/feminine/dental) and distribution of donated make-up, costume jewellery, clothing, and linen & blankets.

For 2017-2018, the number of women who used the space averaged 39 per day.

A heartfelt thank you this year to our in-kind donors:

- Bean around the World, Pure Bread, Prado Café, Nelson the Seagull, Smallflower and Lost + Found café (baked goods) and Save-On-Meats (sandwich tokens)
- Sylvia Hotel (hygiene and bedding)
- Calabash restaurant
- Army and Navy (clothing)
- Unipharm for donated over the counter items
- Safeway on Broadway & Commercial - gift certificates
- Starbucks at Tinseltown donating the coffee and tea
- David Choi (Choi Foundation) for sponsoring a table at the YWCA Women of Distinction event
- Good Food for All for a budding weekly fruit donation as of March 2018
- All our individual annual and major donors

## VOLUNTEER-RUN ORGANISATION

Volunteers maintain all services. Resource Centre volunteer hours averaged 225 per month i.e. close to 2700 hours per year, an extraordinary commitment and one essential to the delivery of all the Collective services. In addition, there were 7 Board members, 14 yoga and Pilates instructors, acupuncturist, counsellors; as well as workshop facilitators who also generously volunteered their time. In all, volunteers donated close to 3300 hours of service. Our core group of volunteers consists of an average of 13 volunteers, with 6 long-term volunteers. 3 Langara Business students donated their time and worked on a donations strategy from local businesses that is being explored, and an ad hoc committee worked on drafting position statements that were voted on at the AGM in July 2017 and are posted on [www.womenshealthcollective.ca/about](http://www.womenshealthcollective.ca/about)

Meetings with volunteers had an average attendance of 6 participants. 6 workshops were organized (Intro to Trauma informed practice with Cherlyn Cortes from VCH and In-depth Trauma-informed practice with Nancy Clark, UBC Nursing; Compassion Fatigue and Violence prevention training with Katy Vinson from PHSA's Mobile Response Team (MRT); Naloxone trainings with BC Women's Nurse Practitioners) as well as 2 volunteer appreciation events.

## NURSE PRACTITIONER CLINIC

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective hosts a Nurse Practitioner community clinic thanks to a partnership with BC Women's Hospital (BCWH). 3 clinical rooms are at the disposal of a team of 4 Nurse Practitioners (NP) who provide half-hour visits by booked appointment or on a walk-in basis. The walk-in visits constitute approximately 1/3 of all nurse practitioner visits. This partnership also allows clients to access interpretation services through the Provincial Language Services.

Despite a couple days of unexpected closure and changes in personnel in the NP team, NP visits (both booked and drop-in) were up by 14% for the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year. There were 42 recorded turn-aways per month (11 in 16-17 and 18 in 15-16) and the average '3rd next available appointment' (standard measure of access to care) was 7.5 days (5.7 in 16-17 and 7.5 in 15-16).

## MONTHLY EVENTS

In addition to daytime hours, the resource centre space has been used one evening per month by the Oak Tree Peer Support group, providing a safe and secure meeting space for women who are living with HIV.

Workshops have also been presented on a monthly or weekly basis, in order to provide opportunities to explore certain topics in more depth. An average of 10 women attended, allowing for maximum discussion and interaction with facilitators.

### Monthly workshops topics:

April	Tech Café with néca?mat VPL Branch and UBC Learning Exchange
May	Beauty night
June	Finding Balance Inside Out workshop w/Marina Richards
July	Reflective Writing workshop w/Yvonne Myers Tech café
August	Pelvic floor exercises w/Chiara Martini
September	Eating on a budget w/Dinah Tiessen
October	Beauty Night Eating for Energy w/Dinah Tiessen
November	HIV Prevention & Sexual Health Promotion w/ VIDC Setting boundaries w/Rhodes Wellness Counselling students

December	Free Make-up and Portrait afternoon, with Nirvana Photography Holiday card making and cooking event Unsung heroes aka foods worth knowing w/Dinah Tiessen Vision Boards w/Hannah Gilgoff Reiki sessions w/Claire Mortifee
February	HIV Prevention & Sexual Health Promotion w/ VIDC
March	Pelvic floor exercises w/Chiara Martini

## FUNDING

We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Province of British Columbia for our Resource Centre, and the support from BC Women's Hospital, an agency of PHSA, for the NP Clinic. We also acknowledge support from the Shopper.Love.U for an outreach project (\$1,536), Technology@Work program for office furniture, and thank Lululemon regional stores for selecting VWHC as the recipient of their Here to Be sponsorship/community support program (\$2,500)

Several fundraisers were organised for the benefit of VWHC and raised over \$11,000. We are very grateful to:

- Z95.3FM and Inner-Fit studio
- Padminee Chundunsing and Saïda Ouchaou, and all the performers for the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary Multicultural Dinner
- Quality by Design
- MiniBar Vancouver's Empowering the Future event
- Vancity Tech Women
- Lululemon's Worth100 event
- Artist Angie Coates and tattoo studio
- Moksha Yoga

A special thank you goes to Central City Foundation for their support as landlord.

## OUTREACH/CONNECTING WITH PARTNERS

### Workshop and presentations offered by VWHC:

- 3 workshops presented at Tradeworks as part of their Women in Trades training program: Women's Rights in the healthcare system; Stretching; and Eating for Energy.
- 3 Women's Rights in healthcare system workshops reached 70 participants at Douglas College Students' Union; Sorella's housing; and York House School.
- Presented an overview regarding poverty and violence against women at the Single Mother's Alliance 'Why your vote counts' event (April 1, 2017)

### Events attended:

- City of Vancouver Gender Equality Strategy event (April 19)
- YWCA - Women of Distinction Gala (May 25, 2017)
- Central City Foundation - Fair in the Square (May 29, 2016)
- Union Gospel Mission - Summer Connect (June 14, 2016)
- Alley Health Fair (September 19, 2017)
- Reconciliation March (Sept. 24, 2017)
- CCF's Hope Series (Oct. 3, 2017),
- Info table for the Montreal Massacre Event being held by Vancouver Rape Relief (Dec. 2, 2017)

- International Women’s Day events organised by Hon. Hedy Fry “From Talk to Action” (March 3, 2018) and the City of Vancouver’s unveiling of Helena Gutteridge Plaza (March 8)
- Opening event of VCH’s new Heatley community health clinic (January 22, 2018)

Work groups/networking:

- Ongoing participation to the Women ED breakfast meetings, connecting with a diverse group of other women EDs at the head of Vancouver not-for-profits; committee a 1-day professional development event organised by this network (November 24, 2016)
- Bridging the Gap between Health and Settlement, immigrant & refugee services – quarterly meetings
- Vancouver Coastal Health’s Women’s Intensive Care Mobile Team (ICMT) – quarterly meetings
- Signed FAFIA letter calling for Equal Status for Women in the Indian Act
- Vancouver Rape Relief’s consultation on the impact of poverty on women - Imagining and strategizing on how to end women’s poverty and build the way forward (March 14, 2018)
- Ongoing participation to Patients in Education meetings

**COMMUNICATIONS**

- Interview w/Radio-Canada (April 2, 2017) re: priorities in BC to address poverty and violence against women
- Interview with Roundhouse Radio ‘Impact’ (June 13, 2017)
- Interview w/Radio-Canada (March 8, 2018) re: International Women’s Day

# VANCOUVER WOMEN'S HEALTH COLLECTIVE

## RESOURCE CENTRE REPORT: 2017-2018 FISCAL YEAR

### ANNUAL CLIENT SERVICES

	April 2017- March 2018	April 2016- March 2017	% Change 2017-2018 compared to 2016-2017
<b>Contacts</b>			
Drop-in	7,820	9,190	-15%
Appointments	1,924	1,644	+17%
Email	233	162	+44%
Phone	1,742	1,509	+15%
<b>Total Contacts</b>	<b>11,719</b>	<b>12,505</b>	<b>-6%</b>
<b>No. of women in space:</b>	<b>9,744</b>	<b>10,834</b>	<b>-10%</b>
<b>Services Delivered</b>			
NP visits	2,947	2,589	+14%
NP Related	1,805	2,080	-15%
Food/Drink	6,095	11,215	-45%
Hygiene & Clothing	2,087	2,275	-8%
Acupuncture	195	186	+5%
Yoga & Pilates	624	789	-21%
Computer/Phone/Fax	1,662	2,215	-25%
Workshops	121	104	+16%
Counselling	359	112	+220%
VWHC	393	622	-37%
<b>Total Services</b>	<b>16,313</b>	<b>22,187</b>	<b>-26%</b>
<b>RC Services</b>	<b>11,561</b>	<b>17,518</b>	<b>-34%</b>
<b>NP Appts. &amp; NP Related</b>	<b>4,752</b>	<b>4,669</b>	<b>+2%</b>

NP Visits: indicate the number of clients who saw a nurse practitioner, either by drop-in or appointment; the drop-in visits constitute approximately 1/3 of all nurse practitioner visits.

VWHC: tracks miscellaneous services such as women dropping in or phoning/emailing for information, have a tour, or share information about other services in the area

NP Related: indicates the number of women who come in/call/email to manage appointments.