



Women's Health @ St. Mary's

Overview

Within St. Mary's mission to serve in the community with the highest level of patient and family-focused care is implicit in our commitment to providing women with a whole care that recognizes and respects her particular needs for physical health and psychosocial wellness. For nearly a century, St. Mary's, as the namesake of one of the most celebrated women in history, has offered very specialized care to women through all our Centres of Excellence. Today, we seek to formalize a relationship that has, for decades, been quietly acknowledged and much celebrated throughout Montreal through establishing an Endowment specific to women and family health that would address healthcare, education and clinical research.

The St. Mary's Hospital Foundation is committed to supporting the development of St. Mary's Hospital Center. ***One element of this ongoing support is through establishing The Chrysalis Endowment for Women's Health @ St. Mary's. This endowment will see \$2 million secured with \$1 million earmarked for the Program Coordinator/Liaison and required education and communications needs (lunch n' learns, one day Symposium on Women's Health open to the public) and \$1 million earmarked for Clinical Research in the area of Women and Family Health.***

The Mission:

- To celebrate and enhance St. Mary's integrative approach to women's health by linking the concerned departments through a medium of education, communication and research.
- To assimilate our current healthcare services and identify growth opportunities.

The Vision:

- To continue to foster the interdisciplinary approach – interaction of specialists of different complimentary fields - and to engage leading medical experts through monthly educational seminars on women's healthcare issues. The objective of which is to share our current practices with the internal medical McGill RUIS community and leverage their collective expertise to ensure that St. Mary's is at the forefront of education in health promotion, prevention and standards of clinical care in women's health.
- To host an annual public Symposium on Women's Health at which accessible and progressive information on prevention and treatment options for women's healthcare issues will be disseminated.
- As Women's Health is one of four areas identified by the Director General of the Hospital for clinical research, The Chrysalis Endowment for Women's Health @ St. Mary's will provide the necessary funding for collaboration between physicians and allied health professionals to identify priorities of clinical research through analysing interactions,



reporting trends and findings, for the development of educational resources for women, their families and their healthcare providers.

Summary

The Chrysalis Endowment for Women's Health will seek advancement of women & family health issues through funding:

- design and delivery of more effective health promotion, disease prevention and harm reduction programs
- the development and refinement of clinical diagnostic and therapeutic protocols
- Supporting clinical research

The creation of *The Chrysalis Endowment for Women's Health @ St. Mary's* is a tremendous opportunity to invest for advancement of what we are known for - *Healthcare on a Human Scale*.



Appendix A

Patient Care & Education Programs as well as areas of Clinical Research will be formed in response to the priorities as identified by the interdisciplinary teams that define St. Mary's

Possible Key Topics/Programs for Patient Care, Education and Clinical Research

a) Female Psychosocial Function and Dysfunction:

- Raise the awareness that mental illness in women continues to be both under-diagnosed and under-treated.
- Address the issues of substance abuse and behavioral addictions, which are often self-therapy for undiagnosed mental illness.
- Promote female gender cognitive strategies that alleviate psychological distress and morbidity in their lives and enhance their resilience through the menopausal transition.

b) Cardiovascular Health:

- Address issues of diet, inactivity, abuse, neglect and other risks relative to the denial of mortality, denial of disease and denial of symptoms as commonly seen in women.
- Find ways to convey and apply this knowledge to women with, and at risk for; diabetes, cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases, etc.
- Coordinate exercise prescriptions with local gyms, athletic facilities, physiotherapy offices.
- Develop rapid and easy cardiac assessments for those at possible risk from exercise. This will provide for earlier case finding.

c) Cancer:

- Women have many cancers that are many gender specific, including breast cancer, ovarian and cervical. Educating women at younger ages – in university, in employment physicals, and at the time of discussions around sexual activity and contraception – will facilitate heightened awareness & enhance self-care in women.
- Establish and communicate best practices for screening, diagnosis and management of gynecological cancers as well as breast cancer.

d) Breast Diseases:

- Outline the approach to diagnosis and treatment of breast disease.
- Convey the importance of self-examination in early diagnosis of breast cancer. Though its incidence is rising, the self-exam message is largely absent among many segments of the young female population.

e) Hormone Management and Menopause (HRT):



- Encourage & establish best diagnostic & therapeutic practices in female hormone replacement therapy.

f) Sexual Function and Dysfunction:

- Because so much of a woman's role is – wrongly or rightly – defined by her sexual function, this component will have a large impact on a woman's overall physical and psycho-social health.

g) Contraception and Female Reproductive Health:

- Promote and encourage the responsible role which women, at every age and circumstance, must play in birth control, family planning, and parenting of their children, in and out of marriage.
- Dispel myths surrounding vasectomy and tubal ligation and provide accurate information about male and female sterilization.
- Raise awareness of male factor infertility and its management, as well as the newly emerging field of infertility prevention.

h) The Aging Female – Geriatrics in Women's Health:

- Ensure that our programs for female osteoporosis, incontinence, social isolation, depression, alcoholism, sexual functioning, nutrition, cardiovascular disease, etc. are current and promoted as prevention is the core to correction.
- Establish models for a "Well Aging Female Visit", from the "all inclusive" to the "minimum standard of excellence", that enhance timely diagnosis, risk stratification, early intervention and prevention, for aging females across all cultural, educational and economic sub-populations in our society.



Appendix B

Program Roles & Responsibilities:

- To organize monthly educational seminars for the internal medical RUIS community
- To coordinate an annual Symposium for the public on health topics covered internally
- To assimilate our current healthcare services and identify growth opportunities for the various departments
- To update the Women's Health section of the Hospital's website and post regular and pertinent health articles for the general public
- To act as liaison between the external community and the various Hospital medical experts
- To develop relationships within the Hospital and various departments
- To assist with access to Hospital services where necessary
- To act as a resource for women and navigate through the medical system
- To lead a council of nurses – liability on Hospital for giving medical advice?