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Echo News - February 2010

Echo Conversation on Equity in Cancer Screening for Women

If some cancers are caught early, they can be more effectively treated.



On December 7th, 2009, Echo, in partnership with [South Riverdale Community Health Centre](#), hosted an [Echo Conversation](#) in Toronto about increasing equity in cancer screening for women. Women and men from across the province were brought together to share information about best and promising practices to increase equity in cancer screening. The conversation drew on key findings from the [POWER Study's](#) (Project for an Ontario Women's Health Evidence-Based Report) chapter on cancer, which found that in Ontario, women in low-income neighbourhoods, isolated and rural areas, and younger and older women are less likely to get screened and have follow-up care for cancer.

We know that newcomers to Canada and immigrant women, disabled women, women of low literacy, women whose first language is not English, Aboriginal women, women who self-identify as lesbian, bisexual, queer, questioning or two-spirited, and trans and intersex people are seldom- or never-screened.

Aggie Mazzucco, Project Co-ordinator for South Riverdale, presented the Pan-Canadian Best and Promising Practices to Engage Seldom- or Never-Screened Women in Cancer Screening project based at South Riverdale, which enables people to share and increase knowledge within and between provinces, and make efficient use of limited resources. Project Advisory Committee member, Nancy Barry also spoke about her personal experience as a disabled woman getting her first mammogram. Dr. Monika Krzyzanowska, Principal Investigator of the POWER Study Cancer Chapter, presented findings about the under-screening of women in Ontario.

Eighty people – including community women, people from women's organizations, health care organizations, and policy-makers – came together to discuss what equitable screening would look like, barriers to cancer screening, as well as known and proposed best and promising practices.

Issues and recommendations generated and shared are helping to inform the following:

- (1) An [Echo Advance](#) policy brief for the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care and Cancer Care Ontario, summarizing policy recommendations for increasing equity in cancer screening for women;

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Echo is accepting articles and event submissions. Please contact Julie McFayden for submission requirements at 416.597.9687 ext. 232 or [via email](#).

- (2) The launch and evaluation of cancer screening demonstration projects (designed to increase equity in cancer screening); and
- (3) South Riverdale's Public Health Agency of Canada-funded Pan-Canadian Best and Promising Practices to Engage Seldom- or Never-Screened Women in Cancer Screening project. For more information about the Pan-Canadian Best and Promising Practices to Engage Seldom- or Never-Screened Women in Cancer Screening project, please contact Aggie Mazzucco, Project Co-ordinator, at amazucco@srchc.com or 416.778.9668 / 1-888.988.9668.

View Nancy Barry's comments on her first mammogram

POWER Study Cancer Chapter

Message from the CEO

Did you know that cardiovascular disease is the major cause of death and a leading cause of disability among Canadian women?

Many health conditions and therapies affect women in ways that are vastly different than men. Some health conditions affect women more seriously. There are also health conditions that are unique to women. That's why Echo's focus on women's health is so important to the women of Ontario.

We are excited to provide you with our first edition of Echo News, our quarterly newsletter that focuses on women's health issues in Ontario. Echo News provides you with the most current research and information in women's health, including updates on activities and programs that address the specific health needs of Ontario women.

Interested in health policy reform?

Echo News also keeps you up-to-date on our policy and knowledge translation initiatives and recommendations as the provincial government's advisor on women's health. In fact, we will soon be posting our recommendations on how to increase equity in cancer screening and a response to the government's mental health and addictions strategy paper, [Every Door is the Right Door: A 10-Year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy](#). Read more on these activities in this issue of Echo News.

Have you visited Echo's new website yet?

Launched this winter, echo-ontario.ca provides current news and information on Echo's projects in women's health, including our work in partnership with others. Check out our calendar for upcoming key women's health events across the province and feel free to forward others you think we should share. I also encourage you to join our [membership section for Health Professionals](#). It's a secure area where Echo will be posting full research documents. You will also be able to engage in

discussion groups on a range of topics relevant to women's health as we develop this exclusive part of our website.

Focus on the Heart

With February's focus on the heart, this is an opportune time to highlight some of the most recent research released on cardiovascular disease. [The POWER Study's](#) (Project for an Ontario Women's Health Evidence-Based Report) cardiovascular disease chapter highlights the gender differences that persist in the quality of cardiac care across the province. The study funded by Echo and conducted by researchers at St. Michael's Hospital and the Institute for Clinical and Evaluative Sciences, is helping to identify key areas for health care reform and provides a starting point to measure improvements.

Upcoming activities

Here are some of the projects Echo will be working on over the next few months:

- Echo's reponse to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's discussion paper, Every Door is the Right Door.
- Ontario College of Family Physician mentoring project. This initiative is intended to support physicians with expertise in women's mental health issues to mentor family physicians, by expanding the Collaborative Mental Health Care Network (CMHCN) to incorporate mentoring groups working towards women's mental health issues. The purpose is to increase family physician's expertise in women's mental health issues, to provide greater health awareness and supports for women across the province. The acronym for the project is WOMMEN – Women's Ontario Medical Mentoring Educational Network.

I hope you enjoy reading this month's newsletter. Please [drop us a note](#) and tell us what you think and visit our website regularly for your women's health information.

Sincerely,



Pat Campbell, CEO

POWER Study



The [POWER Study](#) (Project for an Ontario Women's Health Evidence-Based Report),

a multi-year project funded by Echo, is producing a comprehensive provincial report on women's health.

Dr. Arlene Bierman and her colleagues (an interdisciplinary team of over 60 researchers) have been examining gender differences on a comprehensive set of evidence-based indicators as well as differences among women associated with socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and geography. The research emphasizes indicators that are modifiable and can support efforts to link measures to intervention and improvement.

The Report is designed to serve as an evidence-based tool to help policy-makers, providers, and consumers improve the health of and reduce inequities among the women of Ontario. Educators can also use the report to teach about women's health, health inequities, population health, and health system performance.

The study's chapter on Access to Health Services will be released on March 23, 2010. Previous chapters include [Burden of Illness](#), [Cancer](#), [Depression](#) and [Cardiovascular disease](#).

The POWER Study is a partnership between St. Michael's Hospital and the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences in Toronto, Canada.

Echo Conversation: “Every Door is the Right Door” Discussion Paper on the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care’s 10-year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.



In October and November 2009, Echo worked in partnership with five different community organizations across the province (Community Develop Council of Quinte, Ontario Women's Health Network, Réseau des services de santé en français de l'Est de l'Ontario, Social Planning Council of Kitchener-Waterloo, and Social Planning Council of Sudbury) to hear women's responses to the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care's [Every Door is the](#)

[Right Door](#) Discussion Paper. This discussion paper describes a 10-year mental health and addictions strategy which proposes reforms to the province's mental health and addictions framework and services.

“The women we see need support in so many aspects of their lives. Integrating services will create more holistic and effective programs and services. Plus, it will help us treat women within the context of their lives.” (Front line worker from Toronto)

We took this opportunity to consult with women across the province to ensure that women's concerns about mental health and addictions services and policies are incorporated at the early stages. With our partners, we held six day-long consultation meetings (four in English and two in French), to present the strategy to women and to learn what they liked about it, what concerned them, and their recommendations.

In total, more than 250 women attended these consultation meetings. These women represented a diversity of backgrounds and experiences, and included: those with or recovering from mental illness and/or addiction and their advocates, health care providers, policy-makers, and agency workers. The knowledge and wisdom we gathered is being summarized to share with the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care and other stakeholders. The report will also be posted on our website when completed.

“It's three buses to go from my doctor's downtown, to the Ontario Works office across the city. Then I need to get to my peer support groups twice a week, which I can only get to by cab. I am on a fixed income and so this is very hard and takes up my whole life. People don't realize how hard and stressful it is.” (Woman from Kitchener)

Echo Requests for Applications

In November 2009, Echo released eight Requests for Application (RFA) for research and projects related to our focus areas and mandate. We were pleased to receive many thoughtful and high quality proposals from women's researchers and consultants across the province.

Winners of the following research projects will be awarded in March 2010, and announced on our website:

Evaluating Cancer Screening Demonstration Projects

Echo is partnering with four organizations across the province to pilot demonstration projects designed to increase access to cancer screening for marginalized women. The Evaluation project will evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of these demonstration projects.

Toward Enhancing the Knowledge Translation Needs of Ontario Health Care Providers in Relation to Gender Based Analysis and Health Equity

The intent of the study is to **learn how to** support practitioners to use gender-based analysis and equity-assisting frameworks. These frameworks are key to supporting improved health outcomes for women in Ontario.

Evaluation of the Impact of Fetal Fibronectin (fFN) Testing in Ontario's Hospitals

This project will evaluate the impact of the first year of the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's Fetal Fibronectin program. The Fetal Fibronectin test can very accurately predict whether a pregnant woman who has symptoms of preterm labour is in fact going into labour. The evaluation will assess the program's capacity to reduce health system costs while ensuring the appropriate level of care for mothers and newborns.

Gender Analysis of Ontario Primary Care Strategy

This work will examine and describe how well the Ontario primary care system meets the needs of women; and generate recommendations for enhancements that would increase women's health in Ontario.

Ontario Women's Health Research and Knowledge Translation Interests

This research will identify Ontario women's health research and knowledge translation interests in order to inform future research planning and knowledge translation investments toward improving women's health in Ontario.

Peri to Postmenopausal Health Scoping Review

This research will determine the state of current knowledge (research based and practice based knowledge) and intervention gaps in relation to peri to postmenopausal health in order to inform future research and knowledge translation activities.

Women's Health Leadership Development Program

This program is designed to foster leadership capacity and meaningful participation in relation to women's health throughout Ontario.

Exploration of Women's Involvement in the Health Sector in Ontario

This research will document baseline information about women's involvement in the health sector, and then generate insights toward facilitating greater and more meaningful involvement of women in health systems and structures.

Echo will release RFA's in the spring and winter of 2010. If you would like to be notified about these opportunities, please [sign up](#) to receive updates.

Celebrate International Women's Day - March 8

[International Women's Day](#) is a global day, which celebrates the economic, political and social achievements of women. Celebrate women on Monday March 8th at [events](#) taking place across the province.

ECHO CALENDAR



CAMH’s Norman Giesbrecht - the 7th annual Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity Forum

March 2
North York

» [View event details](#)



McMaster Health Forum, Hamilton, Ontario - “The Impact of Media on Women’s Health and Wellness”

March 8, 2010
With Dr. Marla Shapiro with a discussion panel to follow, including Pat Campbell, CEO, Echo

» [View event details](#)



The Power of Us: A Celebration of Women Presented by Women’s College Hospital

March 8 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
For more information contact: Phone: 416.323.6400

» [View event details](#)



Ontario Women’s Health Network Inclusion Research Handbook and Guide to Focus Groups discussion

March 8
2-4 p.m. York University, Harry Crowe Room, Atkinson College Bldg.
Light refreshments served.

» RSVP to OWHN at owhn@owhn.on.ca



Rainbow Health Ontario Conference 2010

March 24-26
Toronto Marriott, Downtown Eaton Centre Hotel
Toronto

» [View event details](#)

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