

New project to examine risk of mass gatherings and sex assault in women

The project, part of more than 20 others funded by Women's College Hospital Research Institute's *\$15K Challenge*, is aimed at improving the health of women and girls.

TORONTO, ON, June 12, 2014 — Nearly one quarter of women are likely to be victims of sexual assault in their lifetime. Now, a new project funded by Women's College Research Institute will examine the risk of sex assault for women who attend mass gatherings like concerts or sporting events. The project, led by researchers at the Ottawa Hospital, is one of 26 innovative research initiatives awarded \$15,000 or more through Women College Research Institute's *\$15K Challenge*.

The *\$15K Challenge*, encourages individuals to partner with organizations and academics to develop projects and conduct research to benefit women and girls in communities across the province. Funded projects, to be profiled June 20 at the Women's Health Research: Challenges and Opportunities event, include:

- Sexual Assault and Mass Gatherings (the Ottawa Hospital Sexual Assault Partner Abuse Care Program): Assessment of the risk of sexual assault for women who attend mass gatherings such as sporting events or concerts.
- Ladies Who Lunch (Centre Wellington Food Bank): To determine how weekly lunch dates for socially isolated low-income seniors can assist in reducing isolation and improve health.
- Understanding Women's Reactions to Eating Disorder Prevention Messages (York University): A study to examine how women react to eating disorder prevention messages and are they effective?
- Physical Activity in South Asian Women (Women's College Hospital): The impact of a women's only exercise program in a mosque, the first-of-its-kind in Canada.
- Enhancing Healthcare for Marginalized Sex Workers Through a Community-Based Approach: Possibility or Pipe Dream? (Street Health)

"Women's College Research Institute is excited by the projects that will be funded by the *\$15K Challenge*," said Paula Rochon, vice-president of research at Women's College Research Institute. "Our hope is that these innovative projects will advance the health outcomes for girls and women in our communities while building strong relationships between academics, organizations and communities."

Projects funded under the *\$15K Challenge* will focus on identifying unmet needs within a community, exploring or testing solutions to problems or better understanding factors that influence women's health.

Women's Xchange, funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, will improve the health and well-being of women and all Ontarians by supporting women's health research and helping to disseminate research findings across the province. The program engages diverse stakeholders and communities, including care providers, scientists, policy-makers and community leaders to ensure that research addresses issues facing all women, including underserved groups. The *\$15K Challenge* is one of Women Xchange's new initiatives.

To learn more about the *\$15K Challenge* and Women's Xchange visit www.womensxchange.ca

-30-

Women's College Hospital (www.womenscollegethospita.ca) is advancing the health of women and improving healthcare options for all by delivering innovative models of ambulatory care. Fully affiliated with the University of Toronto, the hospital is Canada's leading academic, ambulatory hospital and a world leader in women's health. With more than 800 physicians, nurses and health professionals, the hospital offers a range of specialized clinics and programs that are bridging the gaps in the health system. Women's College Hospital is helping to keep people out of hospital by being at the forefront of cutting-edge research, diagnosis and treatment that will help prevent illness and enable patients to manage their health conditions. This healthcare enables Canadians to live healthier, more independent lives. At the Women's College Research Institute, scientists combine science and patient care to develop innovative solutions to today's greatest health challenges.

For more information:

Julie Saccone
Women's College Hospital
Director, Marketing & Communications
416-323-6400, ext. 4054
julie.saccone@wchospital.ca