Our History

The Deborah E. Powell Center for Women’s Health was established in 2003 when the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded the University of Minnesota the designation as a National Center of Excellence in Women’s Health. Our center is an engaged group of University faculty, researchers, health care providers, students, and community partners who share a dedication to women’s health. As a National Center of Excellence, we are a recognized leader in the field of women’s health and serve as a catalyst for improving the health of women in Minnesota and beyond. In 2007, we completed our federal grant and now continue our mission with the support of grants, donors and the University of Minnesota.

Our History

Improving the health of women across their lifespan

Women’s Health encompasses all aspects of women’s lives, including their physical, mental, social, cultural, and spiritual well-being.

From our Directors

We know that when we improve the health of women, we improve the health of families and communities. The Powell Center increases women’s access to high-quality health care, personal health information, and well-trained health care providers. We use tools available to us through the University of Minnesota, including ground-breaking women’s health research, our innovative educational practices, and our partnerships with community organizations.

Among all of the pressing health issues that Minnesota women face, we have selected the following focus areas in 2008 and 2009. We are working to increase access to:

- Treatment and prevention of heart disease in women
- Community-based partnerships to promote healthy women and girls
- Resources for young researchers so they can develop innovative women’s health research programs
- Information for policy makers to enhance their ability to enact and carry out effective women’s health policy.

Inside the Report, you will find more detailed information on these initiatives, as well as ideas for how you can get involved.
The Powell Center for Women’s Health received a Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women’s Health (BIRCWH) grant from the National Institutes of Health to support promising women’s health researchers. The BIRCWH program fosters career development of junior faculty members. BIRCWH scholars must engage in basic, clinical, translational, behavioral, or health services research relevant to women’s health. Scholars are guaranteed time for their research and mentorship to advance their skills as independent researchers. Mentors are established investigators committed to interdisciplinary research in women’s health and sex and gender factors.

What you can do to support women’s health research:

♦ Sponsor a BIRWCH scholar to study a women’s health issue of interest to you.
♦ Participate in a women’s health research study.

This year, the University of Minnesota Powell Center selected 5 BIRCWH recipients:

Rahel G. Ghebre, M.D., Assistant Professor, Dept of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Women’s Health, Medical School

Dr. Ghebre will be investigating cervical cancer prevention through innovative testing for HPV. She will focus on improving screening among populations of women in Minnesota who are not regularly tested for HPV.
Mental Health

Access to Resources in Latino Communities

The prevalence of some mental health problems such as depression and anxiety is higher among women than men. Partnering with the Latino-led organization, Centro Campesino, the Powell Center developed and completed a bilingual community based survey to assess mental health issues among Latina women and families in South Central Minnesota. We now are using survey results to increase access to mental health services in Greater Minnesota. Through a partnership with University of California Berkeley, we also are training Latino Promotoras de Salud (Health Promoters) to be community mental health educators.

A few tips for good mental health:
- Have people you can talk to about problems
- Find time to do things you enjoy
- Exercise and eat well
- Take time to take care of your self
- Seek professional help if your feelings seem overwhelming

She who has health has hope; and she who has hope has everything.

~Arabian Proverb

Susanta K. Hui, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Dept of Therapeutic Radiology – Radiation Oncology, Medical School
Dr. Hui’s research will focus on early identification of bone loss to decrease the risk of bone fractures among women who are undergoing treatment for breast cancer.

Vallabh Janardhan, M.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Neurology, Medical School
Dr. Janardhan will study ischemic stroke, which occurs when an artery to the brain is blocked. He is particularly interested in understanding gender differences in stem cell responses, which will help in developing innovative treatment strategies to salvage areas of the brain damaged during stroke.

Jerica M. Berge, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Dept of Family Medicine and Community Health, Medical School
Dr. Berge will study family and home environment predictors of obesity, focusing on adolescent girls. Dr. Berge will work with family practice clinics using community-based participatory research to address the needs of families to reduce the obesity epidemic.

Carolyn M. Garcia Ph.D., M.P.H., R.N., Assistant Professor, Integrative, Global and Public Health Cooperative, School of Nursing
Dr. Garcia will be testing school-based methods to strengthen coping skills among Latina adolescents. She will explore the use of reactive cortisol as a measure of stress levels and evaluate effectiveness of the school-based program.

Doulas

Access to Birth Support for American Indian Women

Research has shown that women who receive birth support (also known as “doulas”) have a greater likelihood of healthy birth outcomes. In September 2007, the Powell Center sponsored training for eight American Indian women to be doulas on the Mille Lacs reservation. The Center is now working with the Mille Lacs Band Public Health to establish ongoing doula services in the area. The doulas provide culturally-specific education and support for women before, during and after birth.

What you can do for expectant mothers:
Sponsor a doula. Just $700 covers the cost of prenatal, birth and post-partum doula services for an expectant mother in Mille Lacs.
Making a Difference in Women’s Health Policy

Did you know that chlamydia is the most commonly reported sexually transmitted infection (STI) in Minnesota? The incidence of chlamydia more than doubled over the past ten years, so that 1 out of 4 young women in the U.S. today are infected with an STI. Chlamydia can have long-term consequences for individual and public health, including infertility in young women.

Since, 2007, the Powell Center has led the Minnesota Alliance for Women’s Health Policy, in partnership with the Humphrey Institute’s Center for Women and Policy, and Planned Parenthood of Minnesota/South Dakota/North Dakota. We created the Alliance with the vision of using public policy as a tool to promote women’s health. In 2008, the Alliance chose the STI epidemic as an urgent women’s health issue and worked with legislators on policies to address the problem. The Powell Center is committed to impacting women’s health policy by providing policy makers with scientifically accurate information on women’s health.

University of Minnesota
Deborah E. Powell Center for Women’s Health
A National Center of Excellence

To support the Powell Center for Women’s Health, please use the enclosed envelope or contact Minnesota Medical Foundation at 612-625-1440.

Contact us:
420 Delaware Street S.E.
MMC 293
Minneapolis, MN 55455
www.womenshealth.umn.edu
612-626-1125
wmhealth@umn.edu

Translating Research into Practice

Leaders of the Powell Center are committed to bringing the best of women’s health research into clinical practice so all women have access to the best health care available.

- **Women’s Health Lecture Series:** These free monthly lectures present the newest women’s health research. Many lectures are available for free viewing on our website at www.womenshealth.umn.edu/
- **Annual Women’s Health Research Conference**
Each fall, the Powell Center brings together hundreds of researchers, clinicians and students to share research results and ideas.
- **Our Speakers’ Bureau**
provides local speakers on current women’s health topics.

What you can do:
- Attend our conferences and lectures.
- Sponsor a women’s health research award at our annual research conference
- Have a U of M women’s health expert speak to your community group.
Deborah E. Powell Center for Women’s Health
A National Center of Excellence

Leadership
Nancy Raymond, MD
Director
Professor, Departments of Psychiatry and Family Medicine

Linda Carson, MD
Co-Director
Professor and Chair, Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Women’s Health

Sharon Allen, MD, PhD
Education Director
Professor, Department of Family Practice and Community Health

Carole Bland, PhD
Leadership Co-Director
Professor, Department of Family Medicine and Community Health

Eileen Harwood, PhD
Evaluation Director
Assistant Professor, Department of Epidemiology

Jean Wyman, PhD, APRN-BC, FAAN, GNP
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Professor, School of Nursing

Staff
Diane O’Connor, MPA
Administrative Director

Lauren D. Gilchrist, MPH
Outreach Director

Autumn Rydberg, MA
Research Coordinator

Mikow Hang, BA
Administrative Assistant

Selected Grants and Contracts Awarded to the Powell Center for Women’s Health and Associates, 2006-2009

Association of Professors of Gynecology and Obstetrics
Training Students in Effective Communication with Patients $ 30,000

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
National Institute of Health – Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women’s Health (BIRCHWH) $ 1,985,000
Incentive Award for Performance – National Center of Excellence $ 51,000
Body Works Training, Minority Women’s Health Summit & National Obesity Forum $ 5,500
Office of Women’s Health, Region V-Heart Truth Campaign $ 4,297
Improving Outcomes of Comprehensive Heart Health Care for High Risk Women $ 166,887
Center of Excellence Sustainability and Leveraging Resources $ 2,999
Health Careers Opportunities for Native American Youth $ 4,998
Women’s Health Promotion for Migrant Workers in Minnesota $ 9,996
Heart Truth Dissemination $ 38,088
National Center of Excellence in Women’s Health $ 112,500

University of Minnesota
Minnesota Women’s Healthy Heart Program $ 1,260,000
Latino Mental Health – Academic Health Center Faculty Seed Grant $ 25,000
WISE Kids East Well - Program in Health Disparities Research $ 20,000

Corporate Support
Annual Women’s Health Research Conference $ 16,300
Johnson & Johnson Academic-Community Partnership $ 5,000

Total $ 3,737,565

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