



Improving Women's
Health in Ontario

Pour l'amélioration de la
santé des Ontariennes

Echo: Improving Women's Health in Ontario

Women's health is the focus of Echo. Women face health conditions that are unique to them. Some health conditions affect women more seriously. Many health conditions and therapies affect women in ways that are vastly different than men.

Echo's mission is to improve the health and well-being of all Ontario women and to reduce health inequities. As Ontario's health system continues to evolve, there is a critical need to mobilize and transfer existing knowledge to women and into care settings and to conduct gender based analysis.

Mental health and addictions, chronic disease, and sexual and reproductive health are the areas of initial focus for Echo's work. We believe that improving the health of women in these areas will improve the health and overall quality of life, relationships, families, and communities.

Echo will strengthen the health care system and improve women's health through knowledge transfer. It is now recognized that considerable time and funding has been spent on clinical research with little focus on ensuring the findings of the research are understood by the stakeholders, decision makers and the public. Through dissemination and exchange of knowledge and by turning the theoretical to the practical, Echo will create a better understanding and promote overall improvement of women's health in Ontario.

Many health conditions are specific to women such as ovarian cancer and pregnancy. Conditions such as eating disorders and depression affect women more than men and some conditions are more serious in women such as heart disease and HIV. Echo's goal is to raise awareness of these differences and provide more focus on women's specific health needs.

For example, recent studies have shown that the cardiovascular damage caused by depression due to unhealthy relationships may have a greater impact on women. Targeting the causes of depression and finding solutions will improve the health of women as well as the overall health of women's relationships, including children and families.

Echo is an agency of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care governed by a board of Directors. Echo works through strategic partnerships to ensure gender-based analysis supports decisions that affect women. We also collaborate with diverse stakeholders and act as the provincial advisor on women's health to the Government of Ontario. We are working to ensure Ontario is at the forefront of improving women's health.