



FEDERATION OF MEDICAL WOMEN OF CANADA

FÉDÉRATION DES FEMMES MÉDECINS DU CANADA

**FEDERATION OF MEDICAL WOMEN
OF CANADA**

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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President's Report – by Dr. Ramneek Dosanjh

It is with great honor and distinct privilege that I address you as the President for the Federation of Medical Women of Canada in 2024, the centennial year. While it has been a time to celebrate the monumental success of women in medicine especially at our recent 100th event, we need to continue to create awareness around collective action and shared ownership to meet the goals of gender & healthcare equity.

I marvel at all of the achievements and the shattered glass ceilings but we must continue to promote progression and not allow any regression of our advocacy, irrespective of the political climate nationally or globally.

The global inequitable treatment of women and girls is hindering the collective progress of the world. Systemic injustice whether it relates to poverty, gender-based violence, reproductive rights, or the glaring disparities in the lack of economical or educational support or resources for women and girls is alarming. As Canadian women medical leaders, our fight for gender equity, reproductive justice, healthcare equity and cultural safety and humility will require each one of us to challenge the system and ensure that women's rights are protected at all costs.

I am emboldened by the women who have come before me and those that will come after me. I am inspired by the abolitionists, the truth and justice warriors and all who continue to make change with the lens of morality for the greater good of humanity. Our collective impact is truly what will change the world. It will require us to continually disrupt and dismantle the systems that are rooted in systemic injustice by tearing down the hierarchical colonized misogynistic patriarchal designs. The systems were not designed for us or by us. Collaboratively, we can reimagine and rebuild them to be inclusive, representative & equitable.

At our first board meeting of this year, we created three new committees, a sexual and reproductive health rights committee, a learners committee and strategic partnerships committee. I believe these three new committees will add to our collective vision and purpose. I truly believe we can go further together. The ability of us to partner with other feminist organizations and look for allyship for our mission will be integral to propelling systemic change. Engaging our learners is essential into our succession planning process. Their voices are integral for our organization and leadership. Sexual health and rights have been a political issue, and we must ensure our rights are not threatened or challenged. It is our duty to ensure human rights are non-negotiable.

My hope for FMWC and for all medical women in leadership is to be compelled to act. To speak up and speak against injustice and inequities. Humanity needs more thoughtful representative leadership and women to challenge the status quo and change the world.

Ramneek Dosanjh
President | FMWC



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Past President's Report – by Dr. Kimberly Williams

I feel so blessed to have been your 100th President! It was so special to have worked with so many of our dedicated members and staff to celebrate 100 years of the Federation of Medical Women of Canada. It was an honor to have spent this past year working with so many amazing women.

What a rich history the federation has had and how lucky are we to have had so many women paving the road for us as we stand proudly on their shoulders and continue to strive to make not only Canada, but the world a better place for women and girls through health advocacy and within our daily practice as physicians.

The Federation of Medical Women of Canada is a national organization committed to the professional, social and personal advancement of women physicians and trainees and to the promotion of the well-being of women in the medical profession and in society at large. We are the preeminent advocates for women's evolving health and well-being. We are a recognized member of the Medical Women's International Association and a civil society member of the United Nations.

The Federation of Medical Women of Canada began in 1924 by six women physicians. They began the organization at a time when there were few female physicians in Canada. Dr. Elizabeth Bagshaw, one of our founding members, delivered babies by kerosine lamp. She also set up Canada's first birth control clinic in 1932.

One of the main goals of the federation was to have equal representation in medical school, and with more than 55 per cent of medical students in 2020 identifying as female, that has been achieved. However, there are still gaps that need to be overcome – the gender pay gap, the lack of surgical representation and of women in leadership positions.

There also continues to be large gaps in women's health. In 2020, only one per cent of health-care research and innovation outside of oncology was invested in female-specific conditions; rates of trauma are higher as 44 per cent of women experience some form of violence in their lives; diagnoses, as with cardiovascular care, are often delayed or missed altogether. There is still work to do.

This past year we were able to make some achievements including creating a strategic plan that should broaden our reach by enhancing value and expanding membership. It also hopes to increase our advocacy and impact on women's health all while maintaining fiscal stability. I started our first Instagram account and increased learner engagement. We had a team at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and held a well-attended virtual side event. We had a fantastic celebration in Ottawa thanks to so many members who went above and beyond to honor our legacy and provide a space for us to connect and celebrate.



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On a personal note, I gave birth to my third daughter who constantly reminded me of the need to use our privilege as physicians to advocate for women and girls' health. I wrote a piece on body autonomy with wide readership. I was open about how advocating at a system level can sometimes seem easier than advocating for yourself. I wrote about the challenges of being a 'doctor-mom'. Finally, I got to welcome an amazing, thoughtful, and skilled President-Elect Dr. Modupe Tunde-Byass and am so excited to see all the amazing things she will do when she begins her term in fall, 2025.

I am so grateful for the FMWC board and our Executive Director, Caroline Hornyak, my supportive family, and my mentors who helped to guide me through this past year. After all, there is no health, without women's health.

Kimberly Williams, MD, MSc, FRCPC, Diplomate UCNS
Past President | FMWC

Treasurer's Report – by Dr. Susan Wilkinson

I am pleased to report that our financial position is currently very solid thanks to on-going sponsorship and a successful 100th anniversary conference. We are grateful for the work of our Finance Committee, chaired by Dr. Cathy Clelland, this past year.



A YEAR IN REVIEW - Looking Back at 2024

STRATEGIC & OPERATIONAL PLAN

Beginning in April 2024, FMWC undertook a strategic planning exercise. With funding provided by the Affinity Group (CMA, MD Financial, Scotiabank), we felt this was a necessary next step for the organization. We hired a strategic planning consultant who held an in-person planning session in Ottawa in the spring and gathered input online from board members and key stakeholders. We refined our mission, vision and values and outlined our key strategies for the next 3 years which are:

1. Strengthen the organization by enhancing the value and expanding membership.
2. Enhance our influence and impact.
3. Ensure fiscal health.

We have just completed the 2nd phase which is the operational plan. We will use this to set priorities and objectives for 2025.



100TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

On September 27-28, 2024, FMWC celebrated a significant milestone - the 100th anniversary of our Federation. It was amazing to see how far we have come since 1924, when the Federation was started by six pioneering women physicians under the leadership of Dr. Maude Abbott of McGill University. Our 100th anniversary conference was a celebration of the history of women in medicine in Canada, past, present and future. Special thanks go to the planning committee chaired by Drs. Shelley Ross and Mamta Gautam for a successful event that welcomed 230 attendees including 37 esteemed speakers, award winners, travel award recipients, poster presenters and sponsors.



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At the opening cocktail held at the prestigious Rideau Club, we welcomed members from across Canada and distinguished speakers. We were grateful for the attendance of several political dignitaries who recognized our important role in representing the needs of women physicians and women's healthcare in Canada. This was also an excellent opportunity to foster connections in pursuit of advocacy initiatives.

The conference opened with a celebratory procession honoring many of our past presidents who were in attendance. Thank you to the many amazing speakers, panelists and moderators who presented on current health and advocacy topics throughout the 2-day conference.

Following the gala cocktail reception, a performance by Voices Rock, a choir of female physicians, delighted attendees with their amazing singing. This evening was an occasion to recognize 2024 award winners including honorary member Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, who shared remarks about her leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the gala evening, 49 esteemed members of FMWC were presented with King Charles III Coronation Medals in recognition of their significant contributions to the field.

100th anniversary commemorative merchandise was available for purchase including a book on FMWC past presidents, compiled by planning committee chairs, as well as a scarf and notecards featuring Dr. Janet Dollin's winning design.

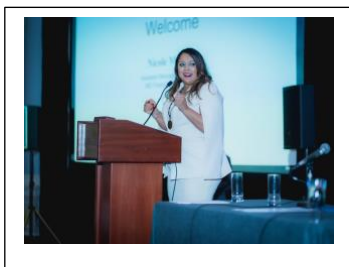
We are pleased to share a few comments from attendees and photos of this amazing event:

"A really fantastic conference!"

"Excellent job, great agenda, site and event."

"I am now a member due to this amazing conference."

"This conference was self-affirming and energizing."





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AGM & NEW DEFINITION OF WOMEN MEMBERS

Many of our members attended the Annual General Meeting in Ottawa on Sept. 27, 2024. This meeting was also the occasion to inaugurate our new president, Dr. Ramneek Dosanjh, past president of Docs of BC. Dr. Dosanjh received the Arnhem Medal from outgoing president Dr. Kimberly Williams - the FMWC's Presidential Insignia since 1947. We welcomed new board members including President-Elect, Dr. Modupe Tunde-Byass, immediate past president of Black Physicians of Canada.

At the AGM, members unanimously voted to update its definition of members as follows:

The Federation of Medical Women of Canada defines an eligible member as all people who identify as women+, including but not restricted to, cisgender women, transgender women, non-binary members, Two-Spirit and feminine-identifying people.

ADVOCACY & SPECIAL PROJECTS

Under the guidance and leadership of Dr. Vivien Brown, Chair of the FMWC Immunization Committee and Task Force, and support from Merck Canada, FMWC convened a 2024 HPV Task Force as a continuation of our on-going HPV work. This work also includes publication of a white paper, a PR campaign, and *Cancer Won't Wait* webinar and newsletter series.

With support from Pfizer Canada, and under the leadership of Drs. Vivien Brown and Shelley Ross, FMWC embarked on a new special project this year on maternal RSV vaccination which included a task force meeting, white paper, PR campaign and website.

We look forward to continued collaborations with Merck, Pfizer and other industry partners in 2025.

Reproductive Health Coalition: In 2024, FMWC joined the steering committee to learn from and advise our southern neighbours, and to ensure Canadian women have ongoing access to reproductive health care. The goal is to mobilize the healthcare community around a strategy for thoughtful discussions on reproductive healthcare and abortion and to identify viable actions that we each can take to ensure that our patients are able to access essential reproductive health care.

Immunize Canada: FMWC has a representative member of this national coalition that has a specific interest in promoting the understanding and use of vaccines recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). The goal is to contribute to the control, elimination, eradication of vaccine-preventable diseases in Canada.



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MEDICAL WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION (MWIA):

UN-CSW Virtual Side Event:

In March 2024, in addition to providing UN passes to 6 of our members to attend the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, FMWC hosted a virtual side event on advocacy that was very well attended.

BRANCHES / COMMITTEES / MWIA / OTHER ACTIVITIES

100th Local Events:

Branches in Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary held several activities this past year in recognizing our 100th anniversary. These were great opportunities to get together locally in informal settings, to network, to learn, to bring in new members and to recognize our accomplishments of the past.

100th Podcast Series:

Congrats to the Ottawa branch and learners for their work on the 100th podcast series which included 5 episodes featuring interviews with past FMWC Presidents and trailblazing women in medicine.



Learner Roundtables:

Our learner members continued with the virtual *Learner Roundtables* sessions – the latest one, on CaRMS tips was well attended and had great participation. Looking forward to more of these, organized by our learner committee, in the coming year.



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New Branch:

We are pleased to announce the creation of a new branch this year – The Manitoba Branch. The branch will be planning several member activities in 2025!

Committees:

Three new committees were created following our September Board meeting:

- Sexual & Reproductive Rights Committee
- Strategic Partnerships Committee (Chair: Dr. Beverly Johnson)
- Learner Committee (Co-Chairs: Dr. Celina DeBiasio, Ms. Odessa McKenna)

Terms of Reference and workplans are already underway, members are signing up to join and get engaged in these new committees.

We are grateful for the important work in 2024 of all our committees:

- Women's Peace & Security Committee (Co-Chairs: Drs. Karen Breeck and Anne Niec)
- Immunization Committee (Chair: Dr. Vivien Brown)
- Nominations Committee (2024 Chair: Dr. Shelley Zieroth)
- Awards Committee (Co-Chairs: Dr. Dalia Karol, Dr. Manrit Kaur Takhar)
- Women's Cardiac & Cerebrovascular Committee (2024 Chair: Dr. Shahin Jaffer)
- 100th Planning Committee (Co-Chairs: Dr. Mamta Gautam and Shelley Ross)
- Finance Committee (Chair: Dr. Cathy Clelland)
- Governance Committee (Chair: Dr. Shelley Ross)

MEDICAL WOMEN OF CANADA FOUNDATION (MWCF):

We are most grateful to the Medical Women of Canada Foundation for having facilitated the provision of charitable donation receipts totaling \$24,000 to all who graciously donated to 100th anniversary projects. We were also delighted that MWCF had a booth at the 100th conference in Ottawa which was visited by many of our members.

This milestone anniversary year not only commemorated our successes of the past, but has reaffirmed our commitment to the professional, personal and social advancement of women physicians and trainees and to promoting the well-being of women in the medical profession and at large.



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