

Ovarian Cancer Canada  
Cancer de l'ovaire Canada

# 2015-2016 Report to the Community

## Message from the Chair and CEO

It's been a remarkable year for Ovarian Cancer Canada and the community we work with and for.

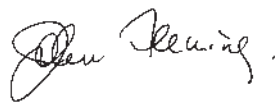
Hand in hand with thousands of people whose lives have been touched by ovarian cancer, we continue to take great strides that are making a difference. This Report is proof positive of our shared achievements.

Capturing recent news headlines, our boldest ever awareness campaign shone a light on the realities of ovarian cancer and the powerful stories of those impacted. Today, public interest is making way for an opportunity to affect changes that have potential to improve outcomes and turn around statistics.

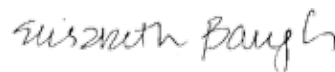
With all eyes on this vital cause, our time to act is now. And Ovarian Cancer Canada is poised to lead the charge.

Thank you for fueling and inspiring this important work.

In hope,



John Fleming  
Chair of the Board



Elisabeth Baugh  
Chief Executive Officer



The only national charity dedicated to overcoming this disease, Ovarian Cancer Canada provides leadership through unique support and awareness programs, and well-placed research investments that help galvanize the scientific community.

2,800 Canadian women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer this year.

For these mothers, sisters, soulmates, daughters, and best friends, Ovarian Cancer Canada is a beacon of hope. **Because we stand for change.**

This report covers the fiscal year ended March 31, 2016.



## Supporting women and families living with the disease

Access to support enhances quality of life, which is the very reason Ovarian Cancer Canada offers resources and programs to reach every woman living with the disease. Whether she is coming to terms with a diagnosis or adjusting to a new normal following treatment, whether her home is in a city centre or remote region; Ovarian Cancer Canada is here for HER.

### By Your Side

Introduced in May 2015, *By Your Side* is a guide to support and inform women who have been diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Uniquely, it is a resource from the community for the community.

"*By Your Side* lets people know that women who have already walked that walk are always with them providing encouragement," says Diane Johansen, a contributor.

The guide highlights insights from a panel of seven survivors, combining their wisdom with expert knowledge from medical professionals, healthcare providers, and social workers to present the best available information on ovarian cancer.

Offered free of charge by Ovarian Cancer Canada, over 1,387 copies of *By Your Side* have been distributed across the country to women living with the disease, their caregivers, and cancer clinics.



"When someone receives an ovarian cancer diagnosis, they become quickly aware of the statistics. But you need to know that the hard facts and medical information are about the range of possible outcomes, they aren't about you," says Anita Unruh, a *By Your Side* contributor. "You're not a statistic, you're an individual. Your story is the one you are about to make."

### Picking Up the Pieces

A continuing program, *Picking Up the Pieces: Moving Forward After Cancer* is a workshop focused on acknowledging change and adjusting to a new normal. The workshop assists in developing plans for moving forward when cancer treatment has ended.

Led by Kathy Scalzo, co-author of the book on which the program is based; *Picking Up the Pieces* was held in 8 locations across Canada this year.

### Connecting the online community

The website at [ovariancanada.org](http://ovariancanada.org) makes it easier than ever to connect with others who are committed to overcoming ovarian cancer. Visitors are now able to search by region to see events happening close to home and look up in-person support groups. As always, a range of online support resources is also available.

### In your region

Across the country, regional staff members are available to assist with questions, advise on local resources, and provide support by phone or email.

## Increasing awareness

Volunteers across the country give voice to this important cause with initiatives such as *Knowledge is Power* and *Survivors Teaching Students: Saving Women's Lives*®. Concurrently, Ovarian Cancer Canada is building inroads to communities and finding new ways to reach even more people with vital awareness.

### Have the ladyballs to do something

Eighteen months in the making, a bold awareness campaign to get Canadians the facts on ovarian cancer launched in early 2016. Inspired by the strength of survivors, the campaign to spark conversations about ladyballs took the country by storm.

"It's high time to show the world what having ladyballs really means," says Barbara Fleming, a survivor and awareness advocate.



Seemingly overnight, advertisements started appearing on billboards, television screens, in newspapers, at the cinema, online, and then aired on radio; generating an estimated 1 billion touchpoints nationwide.



"If this campaign opens up the conversation about ovarian cancer, to get people talking about how there is no test and how symptoms are so easy to overlook, we will have done a beautiful thing," says Geri Hall, a Canadian actor who is featured in the public service announcement.



Media soon followed and stories of women living with ovarian cancer garnered an estimated 60 million earned impressions.

The tidal wave of awareness led to an increase in requests for information and support. Among the women reaching out to Ovarian Cancer Canada for the first time was Iris McKibbin.

"Since being diagnosed with ovarian cancer last year, I'd been wondering about the other women living with this. Where were they? Where could I find them?" says Iris. "While driving one day, I heard the answer on the radio and it made me so joyous that I had to pull over."



## Know Your Genes

For Toronto Fashion Week, David Dixon used his highly anticipated show to bring awareness to the role of BRCA gene mutations in ovarian cancer. While all women are at risk for developing this disease, certain genetic mutations are associated with increased risk. Knowledge of these mutations can inform preventive action, and in other cases treatment.



Inspired by the memory of his sister Susan, who was a women's health advocate, David used 'jean' fabric to promote conversations about 'genes' and ovarian cancer.

"It was not just a collection for the season but a conversation for a lifetime," he says.



Following a stunning runway presentation, David appeared onstage to walk alongside women living with ovarian cancer and others who had been tested for gene mutations.

"I am going for genetic testing just as soon as I finish chemo," says Erinn Monture, a survivor who joined David on the runway. "I'm doing it for my sister and my daughter. If we can do anything to help them avoid having to go through this, or make things better for them down the road, we've got to go there."



## World Ovarian Cancer Day

This year's World Ovarian Cancer Day activities encompassed 107 organizations banding together to create one voice for every woman. In 31 countries around the globe, people were invited to take an online pledge committing to send an informative email en masse in hopes of inspiring new awareness about ovarian cancer.

A total 5,990 pledges were received, and of these, an impressive 513 originated in Canada. Many World Ovarian Cancer Day participants also honoured the women in their lives by submitting photos that formed the basis of an online video celebrating our unbreakable bonds.

Occurring annually on May 8, this international effort is chaired by Ovarian Cancer Canada CEO Elisabeth Baugh.





## A record-breaking September

September is ovarian cancer awareness month. This year, the community broke records on social media and sent a strong message to Parliament Hill.

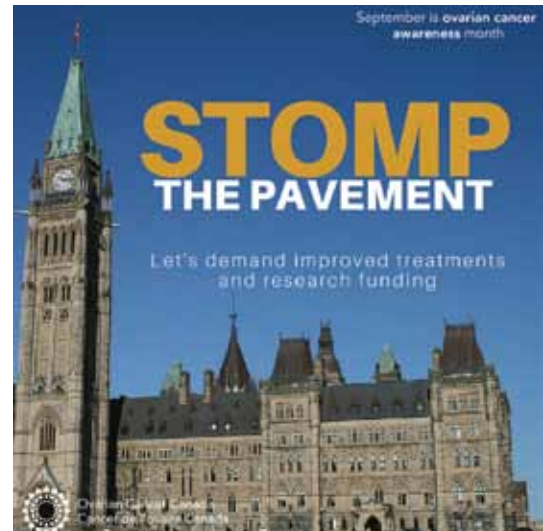
It started with the unveiling of Ovarian Cancer Canada's most shared social media graphic to date. "Teal is the new pink" reached an estimated 79,987 people to promote Wear Teal Day.



Frances Vanover responded with this: "September is for Ovarian. October is for Breast. I have had both. Teal IS the new Pink and we urgently need your support. This affects all the females in a family - and all ages, not just seniors like me."



Then came "Stomp the pavement," a social media initiative aimed at bringing awareness to national leaders on the campaign trail.



Targets were quickly exceeded, giving rise to a massive call to action that was posted by over 350 people simultaneously. It read:

#ovariancancer claims the lives of 5 Canadian women each day. We demand action from our national leaders RT #elxn42

The post reached an estimated 152,175 people across Canada and beyond.

## Community action

This year, volunteers delivered:

- 130 **Knowledge is Power** sessions to share the facts on ovarian cancer with 1,909 people
- 34 **Survivors Teaching Students** presentations to bring 1,392 future healthcare professionals and scientists closer to understanding the experience of living with ovarian cancer

## Furthering research

With strategic partnerships in place to prioritize research studies in need of investment, Ovarian Cancer Canada funds a variety of projects focused on prevention, improved treatments, and ultimately a cure. Bringing the impact of donations even further, the organization works shoulder to shoulder with groups that match its financial contributions. So while Ovarian Cancer Canada has itself put forward \$5 million in research funding over the years, it's also triggered additional investments of \$3 million from partnering organizations.

### Working together: Cancer Research Society

This year, two promising studies were awarded joint funding by Ovarian Cancer Canada and the Cancer Research Society, which essentially doubles our investment by matching funds dollar for dollar.

One study uses the tissue banks, also funded in part by Ovarian Cancer Canada, and experimental models to understand which features make cancer cells susceptible to new targeted therapies such as PARP inhibitors. Led by Dr. Anne-Marie Mes-Masson of the Centre de recherche du CHUM in conjunction with her collaborators Dr. Diane Provencher and Dr. Patricia Tonin, this research aims to ensure better outcomes with improved quality of life.

“Using our existing very powerful models, we intend to identify specific biological markers that can help predict a patient’s response to treatment. This will allow physicians to practice a more personalized medicine to improve the clinical management of women being treated for ovarian cancer,” says

Dr. Mes-Masson, Principal Scientist; Full Professor, Department of Medicine, Université de Montréal; Scientific Director, Institut du cancer de Montréal; Director, FRSQ Cancer Research Network.



The other selected study has

Dr. Barbara Vanderhyden and her team at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute investigating a subtype of ovarian cancer called small cell carcinoma of the



ovary, hypercalcemic type. This is a rare and highly aggressive form of the disease that occurs most often in younger women.

Researchers are focused on exploring its origins as well as the role of a related genetic mutation, SMARCA4, in efforts to identify potential treatments.

“Ovarian cancer is not one but a spectrum of different diseases with varying responses to treatments,” says Dr. Vanderhyden, Corinne Boyer Chair in Ovarian Cancer Research; Senior Scientist - Cancer Therapeutics, Ottawa Hospital Research Institute; Professor - Cellular & Molecular Medicine and Obstetrics & Gynecology, University of Ottawa. “This subtype presents very specific challenges. Accordingly, we aim to improve outcomes by learning more about the origins of the disease, particularly the role of genetics in its development.”

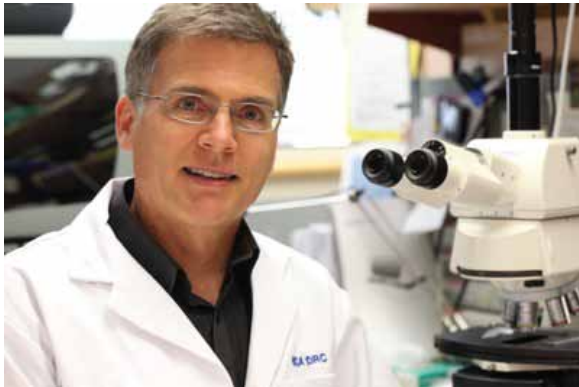


“This marks the second year of Ovarian Cancer Canada’s formal support of our operating grants competition,” says Andy Chabot, President and Chief Executive Officer, Cancer Research Society. “Since the partnership was announced there has been a marked increase in the number of submissions to address this area of much-needed research, allowing us to work together in enabling ovarian cancer research of the highest calibre.”



## Clinical trial in immunotherapy

A 2014 grant recipient, Dr. Brad Nelson is focused on immunotherapy; treatment that enhances the immune response to cancer. His research uses state-of-the-art techniques to learn how tumour-fighting T-cells can be triggered to work against cancer cell mutations.



Having established that immune responses in ovarian cancer patients can decline at a rapid rate as the disease progresses, Dr. Nelson's team is developing a clinical trial focused on adoptive T-cell therapy. This approach removes T-cells from a patient and essentially rejuvenates these cells before returning them to the bloodstream to target and destroy cancer cells.

"My team is exploring immunotherapy in ways that have yet to be attempted for other cancers," says Dr. Nelson, Director and Distinguished Scientist, Deeley Research Centre, BC Cancer Agency. "Ovarian Cancer Canada has helped us begin development of an entirely new way to treat this disease."

The clinical trial is expected to launch early 2017.

## New target for therapies

In the news, scientists at Lawson Health Research Institute identified a new target for ovarian cancer therapies. Data shows that LKB1, a molecule previously thought to slow the growth of cancer, can also promote tumour survival.

"What we have here is a huge opportunity to develop a therapeutic that targets LKB1," says Dr. Trevor Shepherd, who is leading the study. "Blocking these molecules could potentially kill ovarian cancer cells."



Prior to beginning this study, Dr. Shepherd submitted a grant application to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). While unable to fund his work due to lack of resources, CIHR ranked the proposal very highly. Fortunately, a partnership between Ovarian Cancer Canada and CIHR was in place for situations like this one, where proposed research concentrates on ovarian cancer and exhibits significant scientific merit. As a result, Ovarian Cancer Canada was able to provide funding of \$100,000 to Dr. Shepherd's lab.

"The grant from Ovarian Cancer Canada came at a critical time in my career," says Dr. Shepherd. "It enabled me to bridge funding while I found a way to sustain our work. This study wouldn't have been possible without your support."

## Rallying for the cause

From coast-to-coast, hundreds of events bring together friends, families and total strangers for a shared purpose. Amazingly, most are championed by volunteers who have made it their mission to connect their communities with this important cause. Here are just a few examples of how people are stepping up to help overcome ovarian cancer.

### Walk for HER



Founded by Peggy Truscott in 2002, the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope has grown to become the country's most powerful event dedicated to supporting women and families living with the disease, while increasing awareness and raising much-needed funds.

Nationwide, the event is powered by local committees comprised of volunteers who go to great lengths to rally their communities and bring about a special time and space where those impacted by ovarian cancer can gather in a circle of support.



This year, despite inclement weather in many locations, some 10,500 supporters showed up in 45 towns and cities across Canada. In keeping with tradition, survivors and women living with ovarian cancer donned their teal t-shirts, bringing hope to everyone walking while extending warm welcomes to newly diagnosed women.

“For the first time I came face to face with women who had been through similar journeys, women who I now call my teal sisters,” says Nadia Hillier as she reflects on her first Walk experience. “They’ve been pillars of strength, especially on days when I thought I was a goner. I would have never met them had it not been for the Walk.”



Joining hands across the country, participants in the 2015 Walk raised \$2.16 million to provide year-round programming and to further vital research.

Register or donate at [ovariancancerwalkofhope.ca](http://ovariancancerwalkofhope.ca).

“The Walk represents the courage and the backbone of the ovarian cancer community,” says Martha Hoyt, a survivor who remembers the first-ever Walk. “This is my cancer and despite this being an intensely personal disease - we are in this together.”



## LOVE HER

Taking place in Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto, LOVE HER is a gala in support of Ovarian Cancer Canada. Each event is presented by volunteer committees and emphasizes local flavours. Bringing together fashion, comedy and music, this year's LOVE HER series created a stir. Some highlights:

- Commander Chris Hadfield, spokesperson Elly Mayday, and comedian Rick Mercer took to the stage in Toronto to bring the sold-out crowd to its feet



- Calgary took a boutique approach to fashion as models weaved through the crowd on a makeshift runway, giving the crowd high fives as they passed



- In Vancouver, the 2015 Virginia Greene Award was presented to Dr. Dianne Miller, Co-Founder of OVCARE and Provincial Gynaecology Tumour Group Chair for BC, Associate Professor at the UBC Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology



## Community events

Throughout the year, events of every shape and size are envisioned and brought to life by dedicated volunteers in communities across Canada. From teal parties to homemade jam sales to sports tournaments, these events create awareness opportunities and raise proceeds to further the live-changing work of Ovarian Cancer Canada.

To see what's happening in your area, visit the [Events and support section](#) of [ovariancanada.org](http://ovariancanada.org).





## Community of giving

Ovarian Cancer Canada depends on the generosity of its donors, private funders, and corporate sponsors. Every dollar entrusted to the organization is used to its fullest potential, where real impact stands to be made, whether it is changing the life of a woman today or contributing to tomorrow's discoveries.

Thank you for investing in this important cause. You make our work possible.

### Leadership gifts

After seeing an advertisement for the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope, Jane Horner made a donation and soon began receiving *Seeds of Hope*, the monthly e-newsletter. She later provided a major gift that was used to further research on biomarkers, which are substances in blood or tumours that hold promise for personalized care.



In this case, Jane's donation to Ovarian Cancer Canada was matched by the Cancer Research Society. This effectively doubled the impact of her gift; supporting operations of a Montreal-based lab aiming to predict which patients will respond best to new therapies.

"I know that we are going to overcome ovarian cancer through research and I wanted to give to further that push," says Jane, a survivor. "It's my hope that my donation will bring us one step closer to finding a cure."

### Leaving a legacy

Following her diagnosis, Pat McDonald became a dedicated volunteer with Ovarian Cancer Canada. From co-chairing the Walk for 9 years to serving on the organization's Board of Directors to providing support to others living with the disease, no task was too big or too small.

It was clear this cause was closest to her heart, a sentiment she shared at every opportunity.

When it came time to plan their wills, Pat and her husband John decided to include a bequest gift for Ovarian Cancer Canada.

"It was the natural thing to do as the organization was always there for Pat," says John. "Given the trust she had in the board and staff, we left our gift undesignated with full confidence that funds would be put to their best use in the area of greatest need."



In hopes of having a more immediate impact on women's lives, they soon decided to accelerate a portion of their giving. Pat and John also established plans for annual contributions, helping to build a steady stream of funding that enables Ovarian Cancer Canada to be increasingly proactive in meeting the information and support needs of the community.

Launched this year, the Pat McDonald Research Award honours the legacy of our friend, a true force of nature.

Including Ovarian Cancer Canada in your financial plans enables long-term forecasting to address pressing needs within the community.

To speak with someone about your gift to Ovarian Cancer Canada, please call 1 877 413-7970.

## Championing change

Outcomes for ovarian cancer haven't improved in over 50 years. In efforts to change this, Ovarian Cancer Canada looks at where the greatest impact stands to be made in the least amount of time. By gathering an army of volunteer advocates and bringing forward insights from women who have experienced this disease firsthand, we are making a difference today and into the future.

### Advocacy training

Volunteer advocates participated in advocacy training as preparation for Ovarian Cancer Canada's first-ever federal lobby day. Hailing from coast to coast, 28 supporters convened on a strategy to encourage political support for overcoming the disease.

"The more people we have talking to politicians, the better our chances of getting more government funding for ovarian cancer research," says Katherine Farris, a survivor and volunteer advocate.

With the aim of building relationships in advance of lobby day, many reached out to their elected representatives to discuss the realities of this disease as well as actionable solutions.



### Enriching knowledge

Towards improved outcomes, Ovarian Cancer Canada initiated surveys to gather insights from women living with the disease as well as their caregivers. Compiled responses were shared with key decision makers, helping to:

- Improve support for those impacted by ovarian cancer
- Improve access to treatment through public funding

Thank you to everyone who participated in these surveys to bring about change.

## Looking ahead

With public interest piqued following launch of the awareness campaign, our case for support is more apparent than ever. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Ovarian Cancer Canada is gearing up to rally political support for change.

In the coming year, a delegation of volunteer advocates, board members and staff will take to Parliament Hill for a federal lobby day. They look forward to connecting with Members of Parliament, Senators, and other leaders to inform future decisions on research funding and genetic fairness legislation.

At the same time, Ovarian Cancer Canada plans to deepen its support resource offering for women living with the disease. A new guide, developed specifically for those experiencing recurrence, will be released in Spring 2016. Entitled *Still By Your Side*, it will assist in managing the journey with ovarian cancer by providing strength and encouragement to women facing the disease again.

As the only national charity dedicated to overcoming ovarian cancer, we are affecting changes that will improve outcomes. Supporting women along their journeys, while instigating action that is so urgently needed; Ovarian Cancer Canada is improving lives.

For more information, please visit [ovariancanada.org](http://ovariancanada.org).





## Leadership

The Ovarian Cancer Canada Board of Directors is comprised of survivors, community champions, and leaders in research, healthcare and business. Directors hail from every region of the country.

### Board of Directors as of October 2015

#### **John Fleming**

*Chair, Board of Directors*

*Chair, Executive Committee*

Chartered Director, John Fleming Occasional Consulting

#### **Theresa Marie Underhill**

*Vice-Chair, Board of Directors*

*Chair, Governance and Nominating Committee*

Consultant

#### **Kelly Ryan-Parker**

*Treasurer, Board of Directors*

*Chair, Audit and Risk Committee*

Senior Manager, KPMG

#### **Tammy Brown**

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*Chair, Human Resources and Compensation Committee*

Audit Partner, KPMG

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Vice President at PROCOM and

President at NIAD Systems

#### **Howard Thomas**

*Chair, Marketing and Communications Committee*

Consultant

#### **Dr. Barbara Vanderhyden**

*Chair, Research Committee*

*Corinne Boyer Chair in Ovarian Cancer Research*

Senior Scientist and Professor, University of Ottawa, Centre for Cancer Therapeutics

#### **Anne Chase**

Retired

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#### **Janet Giroux**

Nurse Practitioner, Gynecology Oncology, Kingston General Hospital

#### **Justine Greene**

Consultant

#### **Karen Louie**

Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary, Harlequin Enterprises Limited

#### **Dr. Anne-Marie Mes-Masson**

Scientific Director and Professor, Centre de recherche

CHUM et Institut du cancer de Montréal

Hôpital Notre-Dame

#### **Laura Nelson**

Therapeutic Development Specialist, Celgene

#### **Katherine Orr**

Retired

#### **Paul Pastirik**

Business Consultant

#### **Susanne Robertson**

Chief Operating Officer, Canadian Museum of Human Rights

#### **Dr. John Robinson**

Director and Adjunct Associate Professor, Tom Baker Cancer Centre

#### **Verna Magee-Shepherd**

Consultant

#### **Kelly-Jo Wellings**

General Manager, Sales, Canada Post

#### **Brian Wynn**

Partner and Lecturer, Gardiner Roberts LLP

#### **Remembering**

#### **Dr. Philip White**

Family Physician and Chair, Medical Director, Family Practice Oncology Network, BC Cancer Agency

### Emeritus

#### **Eileen Beadle**

Retired

#### **Bruce Galloway**

Retired

#### **Valérie Garneau**

Vice-President, Association des CMDP and Chief of emergency health services at the CSSSTR

Three positions on the Board are held by members of the following professional associations: the Society of Gynecological Oncologists of Canada, Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology, and the College of Family Physicians of Canada.



## A dedicated team

This is the professional team committed to developing and delivering Ovarian Cancer Canada's many programs, resources, and campaigns.

### Leadership

**Elisabeth Baugh**, Chief Executive Officer

### Programs and Regions

**Kelly Grover**, Vice President, National Programs and Partners

**Marilyn Sapsford**, Manager, National Programs

**Monique Beaupre-Lazure**, Regional Director, Quebec

**Emilie Chiasson**, Regional Director, Atlantic Canada

**Cailey Crawford**, Regional Director, Ontario

**Stephanie Gosselin**, Regional Director, Manitoba & Saskatchewan

**Tracy Kolwich**, Regional Director, British Columbia, Alberta & the Territories

**Ashley Laurin**, Regional Coordinator, Ontario

### Community Engagement

**Dianne Sheridan**, Vice-President, Community Engagement

**Allyson MacQueen**, Director, Community Engagement

**Kelly Hagerman**, Senior Business Development Associate

**Kathryn Vincent**, Senior Business Development Associate

**Erin Cayne**, Event Coordinator

### Marketing and Communications

**Karen Cinq Mars**, Vice-President, Marketing and Innovation

**Janice Chan**, Director, Communications

**Hilary Lanyon**, Manager, Marketing and Sponsorship

**Arden Bagni**, Communications Associate

**Laure Sabatier**, Communications Associate

### Development Services

**John Hazelwood**, Director, Development Services

**Jessie Benjamin**, Development Services Associate

### Finance

**Hoda Brooke**, Director, Finance

**Delphin Shamamba**, Accounting Manager

**Kumari Jeronimo**, Accounting Assistant

### Operations and Human Resources

**Roxana Predoi**, Director, Human Resources and Operations

**Faiza Ahmed**, Administrative Coordinator

## Here for HER

For more information or to donate, please contact the office in your region or visit [ovariancanada.org](http://ovariancanada.org).

### Pacific-Yukon Regional Office

831 – 470 Granville Street  
Vancouver, BC V6C 1V5  
Toll-free: 1 800 749-9310  
Local: 604 676-3431

### Saskatchewan & Manitoba Regional Office

Toll-free: 1 877 413-7970  
Local: 306 747-3211

### Quebec Regional Office

435 – 4950 Queen-Mary Street  
Montreal, QC H3W 1X3  
Toll-free: 1 888 369-2972  
Local: 514 369-2972

### Western Regional Office

105B – 1409 Edmonton Trail NE  
Calgary, AB T2E 3K8  
Toll-free: 1 866 591-6622  
Local: 403 277-9449

### National Office and Ontario Regional Office

205 – 145 Front Street East  
Toronto, ON M5A 1E3  
Toll-free: 1 877 413-7970  
Local: 416 962-2700

### Atlantic Regional Office

1542 Queen Street  
Halifax, NS B3J 2H8  
Toll-free: 1 866 825-0788  
Local: 902 404-7070

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