

Ovarian Cancer Canada
Cancer de l'ovaire Canada

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

2021-2022

YOUR SUPPORT SAVES LIVES, AND UNITES A POWERFUL COMMUNITY

We are all different, but there is one thing we share — hope. There is something so real and honest when you connect with someone on a similar journey. It feels as though only they can understand a part of what I live. The advice and support from other women brings me strength, when I am feeling vulnerable. I ask all sorts of questions about their history, their diagnosis and the life they have led ever since.

I am part of a movement to advance the cause. I want to put faces to this disease and bring forward our stories.

LAURENCE DOMPIERRE-MAJOR
Teal Sister living with ovarian cancer

Laurence is the creator of The Teal Road initiative for ovarian cancer (see page 17). A videographer and fundraiser extraordinaire, she is a recipient of the 2021 Peggy Truscott Award of Hope.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND CEO

In a time of transformation and turmoil, the Ovarian Cancer Canada team and community has been relentless in its pursuit of progress.

Our leadership in research into this disease means that a wide range of projects are now underway — including clinical trials, population studies, and deep investigations into the unique properties of ovarian cancer. Through a patient-centred, collaborative, “bench to bedside” approach, we are advancing made-in-Canada research that brings hope to women across the country, and around the world.

To share information into the work being done in laboratories and hospitals, provide access to a wide range of experts, and unite those diagnosed with ovarian cancer, we greatly expanded our support and education programming to include comprehensive symposium events, as well as a monthly speaker series and informal gatherings. These free, virtual events combined important research updates from experts across the country and personal care insights with interactive networking opportunities that united our community.

Meanwhile, our fundraising efforts underscored your powerful dedication and inspiring passion to unite for a common cause. The annual Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope was once again a tremendous success, despite ongoing limitations on in-person gatherings, and on World Ovarian

Cancer Day, May 8, we brought much needed attention to this disease, while raising more donations than ever before.

Looking ahead, the Ovarian Cancer Canada team is dedicated to support those impacted by ovarian cancer, connect with others at high risk for this disease, and amplify voices of support and advocacy from across Canada. As the results of our recent Every Woman Study: Canadian Edition prove, this important health issue needs increased focus and ongoing attention.

Now is the time to reach even more people affected by or at high risk for ovarian cancer, as well as concerned citizens who know everyone deserves to live their best lives. We are affecting change, spanning from prevention, to access to drugs and care, to research that is already changing lives. There’s an urgency that underpins all our work and demands attention that cannot be ignored. We’ve come too far to stop or even slow down. We are driving forward with a bold vision, and we are leaving no stones left unturned.

Your ongoing support is essential to that vision, and we cannot thank you enough. Together, we bring hope to thousands of people across Canada — we can and will improve outcomes for women living with ovarian cancer and change the course of this disease for good.



ERIN BARRETT
Chair of the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Barrett'.



TANIA VRIONIS
CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tania Vrionis'.

PRIORITIZING RESEARCH INTO RARE SUBTYPES

Low-grade serous ovarian carcinoma models

23 PROJECTS

Currently, Ovarian Cancer Canada is funding 23 projects to develop and share scientific models.

Low-grade serous ovarian carcinoma (LGSC) is among the rare forms of ovarian cancer, comprising less than 10 percent of cases. Research on this subtype has been extremely limited. But Ovarian Cancer Canada is changing that by prioritizing funding of rare subtype studies, including a project led by Dr. Mark Carey at the University of British Columbia.

Dr. Carey and his team are developing new models that mimic the behaviour of LGSC cells, so that scientists can test new drugs in advance of clinical trials. The team is also sharing its findings across Canada and beyond to inform related studies.

The goal: to give oncologists new tools to determine the best treatments, from the start of a patient's journey after diagnosis. This is especially important for rare cancers like LGSC, explains Dr. Carey. "Women with this subtype have fewer treatment options, and fewer opportunities to participate in clinical trials," he says. "The need for progress is urgent."



We're very pleased with the support from Ovarian Cancer Canada. Funding for work like this isn't generally supported by traditional research grants, particularly when it comes to rare cancers.

DR. MARK CAREY

Clinical Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
University of British Columbia

TWO NEW CLINICAL TRIALS

Made-in-Canada Innovation



Two Ovarian Cancer Canada–funded clinical trials now underway, though different in approach and focus, share a dedication to exploring innovative treatment pathways and a made-in-Canada pedigree.

B.C. Cancer Medical Oncologist Dr. Anna Tinker is leading a nationwide study into the biomarkers that indicate how low-grade serous ovarian carcinoma responds to two commonly used treatment pathways. “It’s a very rich translational study,” says Alicia Tone, Ovarian Cancer Canada Scientific Advisor and Research Project Manager.

“This is really the next step in improving precision medicine for women with this type of ovarian cancer.”

Meanwhile, a trial led by B.C. Cancer Medical Oncologist Dr. Yvette Drew is exploring the efficacy of deploying PARP inhibitors as part of a treatment alternative to chemotherapy for women with stage 4 high grade serous ovarian carcinoma. “This clinical trial uses a combined approach to ‘target the targets’ within the cancer cells,” Alicia explains. “It could ultimately lead to a complete paradigm shift in how we treat high grade serous ovarian cancer.”



Ovarian Cancer Canada’s research initiatives employ a bench-to-bedside approach to drive transformative change in outcomes for those diagnosed with this disease.

IMMUNE CELL RESEARCH

A vaccine for ovarian cancer?



Université de Montréal Faculty of Medicine Professor Dr. Claude Perrault is leading a team working to develop a new ovarian cancer vaccine that spurs production of immune cells within ovarian tumours.

“Studies show that the more immune cells there are in a tumour, the better the prognosis,” says Dr. Perrault. “These immune cells can actually help destroy cancer cells. So the question I am obsessed with is: how can we mount a stronger immune response, producing even more immune cells, to stop this disease?”

This initiative, which Dr. Perrault hopes will lead to a clinical trial, is one of three projects being jointly funded by Ovarian Cancer Canada and the Institute for Research in Immunology and Cancer — Commercialization of Research (IRICoR). A leader in drug discovery, IRICoR is matching our funding dollar for dollar. “Clinical trials are the truest test of whether an approach like this would be viable,” says Dr. Perrault. “We are doing everything possible to ensure all the checks and balances are in place to reach this crucial next phase.”

While we remain cautiously optimistic, based on our current data we have every reason to believe this will work and that we will be able to deliver on a new treatment option for women with ovarian cancer.

DR. CLAUDE PERRAULT

Principal Investigator, Immunobiology Research Unit at IRIC
& Professor, Faculty of Medicine Université de Montréal

CELEBRATING OUR PATIENT PARTNERS IN RESEARCH

Powerful Voices

We deserve a voice at the table of researchers, oncologists, and scientists. We are the ones undergoing the clinical trials, enduring the side effects of treatments, and putting ourselves on the line in hopes of fighting back against this brutal disease.

SHANNON KADAR
Patient Partner

Ovarian Cancer Canada's Patient Partners in Research Program empowers people living with ovarian cancer, and their loved ones, to engage fulsomely in our groundbreaking, bench-to-bedside research initiatives and support programs.

The Patient Partners in Research team consists of more than 20 people from seven provinces who sit on grant review panels, take part in interactive sessions with researchers and trainees, speak at conferences and education events, participate in collaborative research grants with Ovarian Cancer Canada and external partners, consult on funding proposals, patient surveys, and educational tools, and more.

Ensuring ongoing, meaningful involvement from those who have been diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and amplifying their voices, is at the heart of all the work being done by Ovarian Cancer Canada. "Priority is actually given to research projects that have a plan for patient engagement throughout the study," explains Donna Pepin, Co-Lead of the Patient Partners in Research team. "We all know the only way statistics around ovarian cancer will ever change is through clinical research and scientific progress. Ovarian Cancer Canada remains committed to patient involvement in cancer research in Canada."

Patient Partners bring a perspective that cannot be duplicated by physicians and scientists. They can provide important information on the quality and appeal of trials to patients, and also concerns about adverse events, quality of life, and decision making.

DR. DAVID GERSHENSON, M.D.
Academic reviewer for Ovarian Cancer Canada-funded clinical trials

YOUNG RESEARCHERS ARE DEDICATED TO IMPROVING OVARIAN CANCER OUTCOMES

Bright Future



My current project examines potential for a new type of targeted treatment, to see whether a certain type of cell can be enhanced to identify and destroy ovarian cancer — without side effects. My hope is to turn the promise of our research into reality, by moving this work into practice, so people can benefit from it as quickly as possible. Ovarian Cancer Canada is making this happen, from supporting young scientists like me to ensuring we have the materials and funding to do what we do best.

SARAH NERSESIAN
Vanier Scholar, Halifax



I'm working to personalize care, developing tools that will enable doctors to predict which treatments will work best based on specific characteristics of a person's tumour. My work relies on the Ovarian Cancer Canada Tissue Banking Network. All the samples we use are donated by women and families who have been directly affected, and I never lose sight of that. In a way, the samples I work with are part of their stories, and because of this I ensure that nothing is taken for granted.

KAYLA SIMEONE
Research Trainee, Montreal

THE EVERY WOMAN STUDY: CANADIAN EDITION

Standing Up For Our Community

Don't compare yourself to the statistics, listen to yourself, trust your body and look for support. Being diagnosed with cancer changes your life, yes. But it doesn't take away the essence of it.

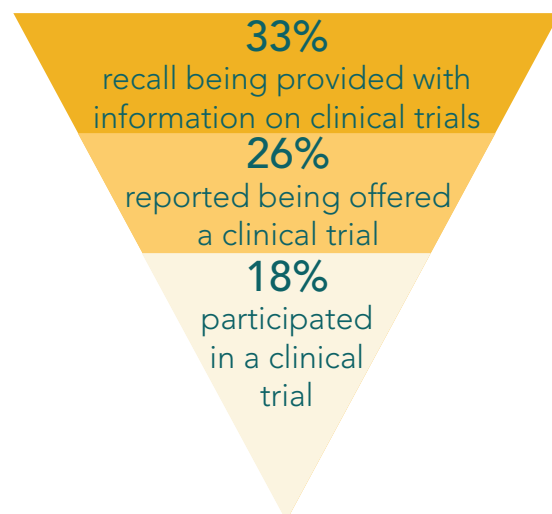
ELISE ST-GERMAIN
Teal Sister

Knowledge and understanding of ovarian cancer, time to diagnosis, symptom recognition, clinical trial awareness — these factors have an enormous bearing on experiences and outcomes, but we've long been limited in our ability to understand their scope and impact.

Last year, however, marked an important turning point, thanks to the release of the Every Woman Study: Canadian Edition from Ovarian Cancer Canada. Inspired by the World Ovarian Cancer Coalition's Every Woman Study, our made-in-Canada version provided many critical and actionable insights; for example, the study's findings about clinical trial awareness immediately prompted Ovarian Cancer Canada to develop a self-advocacy tool to help guide women in conversations with their doctors.

The Study's results are a clarion call that more awareness and action is urgently needed to improve ovarian cancer outcomes. Its findings provide an important foundation to guide our support and advocacy work, inform our research, and benchmark our impact and the community we empower.

Time from first visit with a health care provider to diagnosis:



ADVANCING RESEARCH INITIATIVES IN NOVA SCOTIA

Coast to Coast Collaboration

Ovarian Cancer Canada is leading an international movement to galvanize Canada's ovarian cancer research community. Thanks to a \$1 million commitment from the government of Nova Scotia, these efforts to rally and empower Canadian researchers continue to grow. "We are committed to fostering deep collaboration by research scientists across Canada. With the support from our community, partners and commitments like the \$1 million investment by the government of Nova Scotia, we can and will improve outcomes," says Ovarian Cancer Canada CEO Tania Vrionis.

Through this nationwide consortium of scientists and physicians, Ovarian Cancer Canada stands shoulder to shoulder with people diagnosed, as well as those at risk and their families. "We are deeply committed to improving lives. We are determined to help people living with and at risk of ovarian cancer in Nova Scotia, across Canada, and around the world live fuller, better, longer lives," Tania says.

Funded projects include:

- Dr. Jeanette Boudreau, Dalhousie University: Ovarian cancer in Nova Scotian patients: a longitudinal study to define alterations permitting tumour relapse and identify novel opportunities for intervention
- Dr. Robin Urquhart, Dalhousie University: Understanding ovarian cancer care and outcomes in Nova Scotia: an investigation using population-based linked data
- Dr. Stephanie Scott, Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA): Ovarian cancer biobank

PARTNERSHIPS

Expanding horizons in ovarian cancer research

Ovarian Cancer Canada and the Cancer Research Society invest \$2.25 million, funding 10 new projects testing treatments that show potential to help people with this disease live longer and better. The review process in support of this groundbreaking collaboration engaged researchers and oncologists from across the country and internationally. Importantly, seven people with ovarian cancer enriched and informed deliberations with their deep insights and lived experiences.

In 2021, Ovarian Cancer Canada and the Quebec Cancer Foundation announced a partnership to support more people affected by ovarian cancer. As this partnership evolves, both organizations will collaborate on support offerings and events, provide resources to inform all aspects of the cancer journey and provide many opportunities for those affected by ovarian cancer, and family and friends to build connections and support one another.

Working collaboratively with community partners is vital to ensure that we serve those who need us most and to reach more people affected by ovarian cancer. We are proud to partner with the Cancer Research Society and Quebec Cancer Foundation.

TANIA VRIONIS
CEO, Ovarian Cancer Canada

LEARNING, ENGAGING, AND MAKING AN IMPACT AT OUR SYMPOSIA

Community Empowerment

Excellent and powerful presentations. I enjoyed the Symposium and learned a lot about the ongoing research and its findings. Hearing Teal Sisters' stories and their experiences was inspiring and hopeful. Together we are stronger!!

SYMPOSIUM ATTENDEE

Motivated and inspired by the success of our first virtual symposium event in 2020, Ovarian Cancer Canada hosted two symposia last year to support, inform, and unite those impacted by this disease.

On May 8, 2021, nearly 300 people from across Canada tuned in for Ovarian Cancer Canada's World Ovarian Cancer Day Symposium, where attendees heard directly from experts and connected with fellow members of the community. And on November 5 and 6, almost 400 registrants for our Fall Symposium had the opportunity to engage in a wide range of presentations, panel discussions, Q&A sessions, interactive workshops, and networking groups, plus opportunities to unwind with yoga, mind-blowing magic, and more.

Hosted entirely online, in both French and English, these events provided a safe and accessible space for open conversation for women across the country who have been diagnosed with this disease, as well as their supporters and those at risk. "The symposium exceeded my expectations," said one attendee. "The workshops were relevant and often felt personalized — directly related to my experience or what I wanted to know."



SPEAKER SERIES & TEAL TEA GATHERINGS

Virtual Connections and Support



Getting a cancer diagnosis can feel like you're lost in the dark. Attending Ovarian Cancer Canada's Teal Tea with my fellow Teal Sisters was like turning on the light. I got ideas for coping and treatments, further understood what was happening to me and what was going to happen and made lifelong friends and support.

VICTORIA SCHUETZE
Teal Sister

Ovarian Cancer Canada has a long history of providing our community with opportunities to learn about new therapies, research advances, and treatment options, and to make valuable connections with one another. In the past, these events were often held in person; last year, however, technology advances spurred by the pandemic allowed us to shift online and launch two new events to reach more people than ever before: Teal Tea gatherings, and a Speakers Series.

Our regular Speakers Series events are interactive opportunities for women facing a diagnosis, and their supporters, to access a wide range of experts. Last year's schedule included sessions about clinical trials, emotional healing, oncology pharmacist services, new survey insights, living with resilience, and more. Meanwhile, our intimate Teal Tea gatherings offer a time for connection and conversation, where women living with ovarian cancer can share their stories and learn from one another's experiences.

Ovarian Cancer Canada received **993** registrations for 2021-22 Speaker Series events

Thanks to your generous support, we were able to offer tickets to our events at no cost to the community.

THE TRADITION CONTINUES

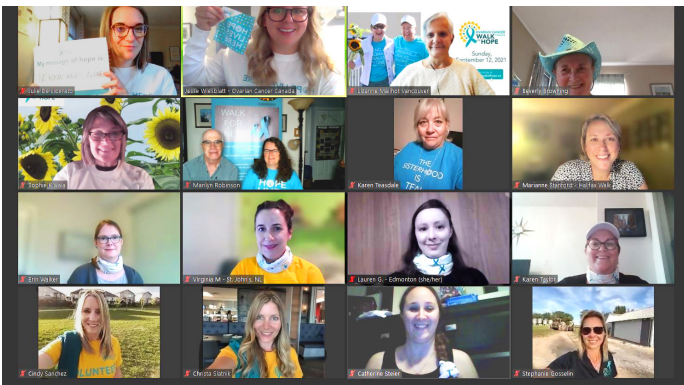
Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope



On September 12, 2021, thousands of people participated in the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope to help save women's lives. This event brings together participants from cities and towns in every province, as individuals, families, groups, companies, and organizations rally to unite their communities. While everyone took separate routes this year, participants walked with hope in their hearts, united by this important cause.



The Walk is the most powerful fundraising event of its kind in the country. Last year, participants and donors opened their hearts and their wallets in support of this important cause and raised more than \$1.2 million. "With your fundraising, you took a stand to say that women deserve better," says Ovarian Cancer Canada CEO Tania Vrionis. "Every donation is being put hard to work in the areas of greatest need to help women with ovarian cancer and others at risk for this disease live fuller, better longer lives."



To date,
the Walk has raised
over **\$31 million** for
life-changing programs
and initiatives.

\$1.2M

The 2021 Walk raised more than \$1.2 million for Ovarian Cancer Canada

The 2022 Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope happens on September 11.
Register or donate at ovariancancerwalkofhope.ca

TEAL SISTERS POWER CHANGE THROUGH THE WALK

Getting Involved

The Walk is an important step forward. It's up to us to bring more attention to this important cause. I used social media to share how to get involved. It's about more than asking people for money to help me reach my fundraising goal. I ask people to share information about the Walk and about ovarian cancer. Each year I receive donations, recruit a new team member or two, and I feel such love from my friends and followers.

NATHALIE POIRIER

Teal Sister and four-time Walk participant



I was in shock at the time of diagnosis, and I still am now. Not shocked from disbelief that it happened to me, but shocked by how fortunate I am to be alive today and to be able to do something for my fellow Teal Sisters. My team walked for all women with ovarian cancer, those in treatment, and the families who relentlessly rise to challenge after challenge. They deserve our support and so much more.

ANDREA KENT

Teal Sister and captain of the Teal Good Inc. team, who raised more than **\$17,000** for the 2021 Walk

LEDOR'S GROUNDBREAKING SUPPORT

When Work Gives Back

Ovarian cancer has affected our team, professionally and personally, so we are deeply committed to supporting this cause. It holds an important place in our hearts.

JEANNETTE McAFFER

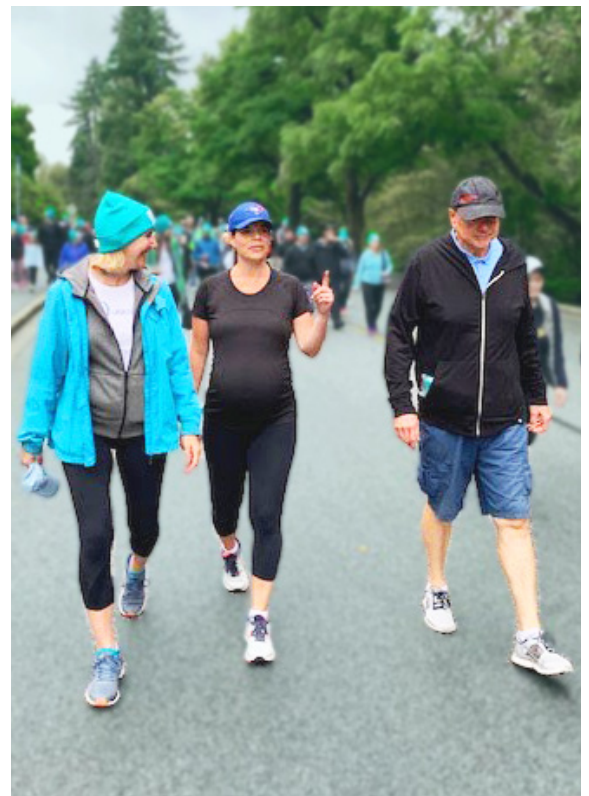
Senior Vice President of Human Resources (retired), Ledcor

Stephanie Valentinuzzi started working at Ledcor shortly after her mother's passing. Because of the profound impact ovarian cancer had on her life, she began raising awareness about the disease. Stephanie Valentinuzzi started working at Ledcor, a diversified construction company with projects and experience across North America, shortly after her mother's passing.

Three years ago, she joined forces with Ledcor's then-Senior Vice President of Human Resources, Jeannette McAffer (now retired), and engaged Ledcor Cares, a corporate philanthropy program. "Our team rallied for the Walk that same year and approached Ledcor Cares to match our fundraising," says Jeannette. "We did the same in 2020, and in 2021, Ledcor Cares generously donated outright."

Ledcor's support continues to grow: a matching gift sponsor of our 2021 year-end campaign, the company also supports Ovarian Cancer Canada through an annual giving initiative, where team members' donations are matched dollar for dollar.

Last year, Stephanie received the Ledcor Cares Award in recognition of her pivotal role in raising the profile of this important cause. "We will keep spreading the word until no one has to deal with what we've been through," says Stephanie. "Knowledge is power. Arm yourself and the people you care about with knowledge."



TWO WOMEN RIDING FOR THE CAUSE

Pedal Power



Last summer, Teal Sister Laurence Dompierre-Major pumped up her bicycle tires and took to "The Teal Road." Laurence rode 3,100 km (from Montreal to Gaspé) for the 3,100 women in Canada who are diagnosed with ovarian cancer each year, while raising almost \$30,000 in donations. Along the way, she connected with other women living with ovarian cancer, capturing their stories. "I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in April 2019," she says. "This ride was a way for me to overcome my fears and pain and turn it into something beautiful that will help other women too."

After losing her sister, Katrina, to ovarian cancer, Bianca Hayes began a journey that would take her across the nation and connect her to a cause in desperate need of attention. Though her recent attempt to set the women's trans-Canada cycling record — while raising \$1 million for ovarian cancer initiatives — was cut short due to a collision, her resolve and dedication continues. She has raised \$126,000 and counting, and we are in awe of her tenacity and unwavering support for this cause. "This is not the last thing I will do, and this will not continue to be the cancer that nobody knows about," Bianca says. "I will not stop until this has created real change."



MEET THE RECIPIENTS OF THE 2021 PEGGY TRUSCOTT AWARD OF HOPE

Named after the powerhouse volunteer and founder of the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope, the Peggy Truscott Award of Hope celebrates individuals or groups who volunteer to support the mission of Ovarian Cancer Canada.

JENNIFER SMYTH

Victoria, British Columbia

Jennifer was diagnosed with ovarian cancer 20 years ago. Her team, The Polewalkers for a Cure, have raised over \$68,000 and counting in support of the Walk.



COLLEEN TKACHUK (1971–2022)

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Colleen was a voice of hope for other women living with ovarian cancer. She was a member of Ovarian Cancer Canada's Patient Partners in Research group (see page 7).



DONNA PEPIN

Toronto, Ontario

Donna has been speaking publicly about her experience with ovarian cancer and advocating for the cause since 2008. Today, she is the co-lead of the Patient Partners in Research group.



LAURENCE DOMPIERRE-MAJOR

Montreal, Quebec

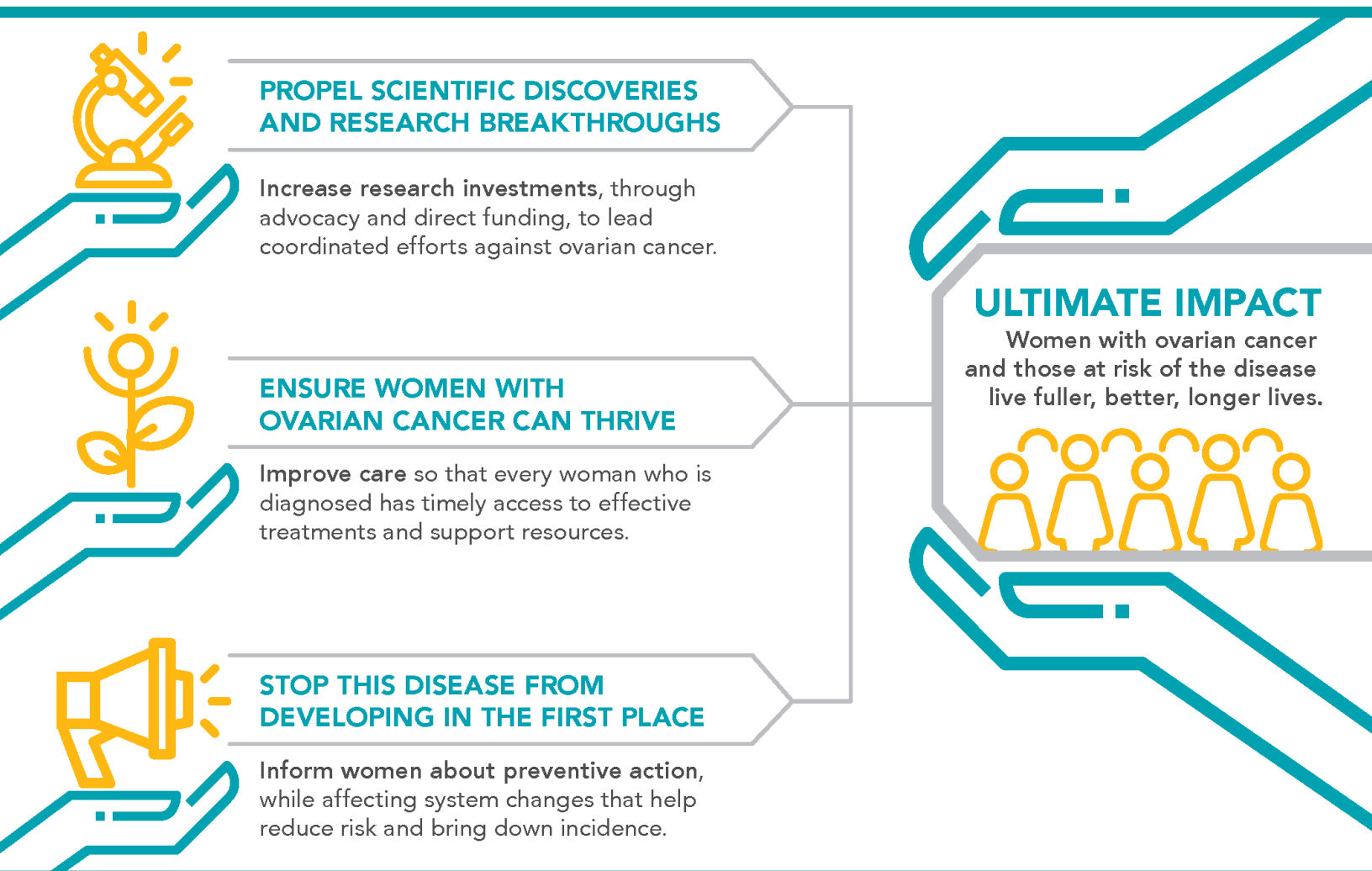
Laurence set off on her bike in the summer of 2021 to connect with others affected by ovarian cancer (see page 17). Her journey was inspired by Cécile Hryhorczuk, a fellow Teal Sister and past recipient of the Peggy Truscott Award of Hope.



THE LADY BALL Halifax Committee

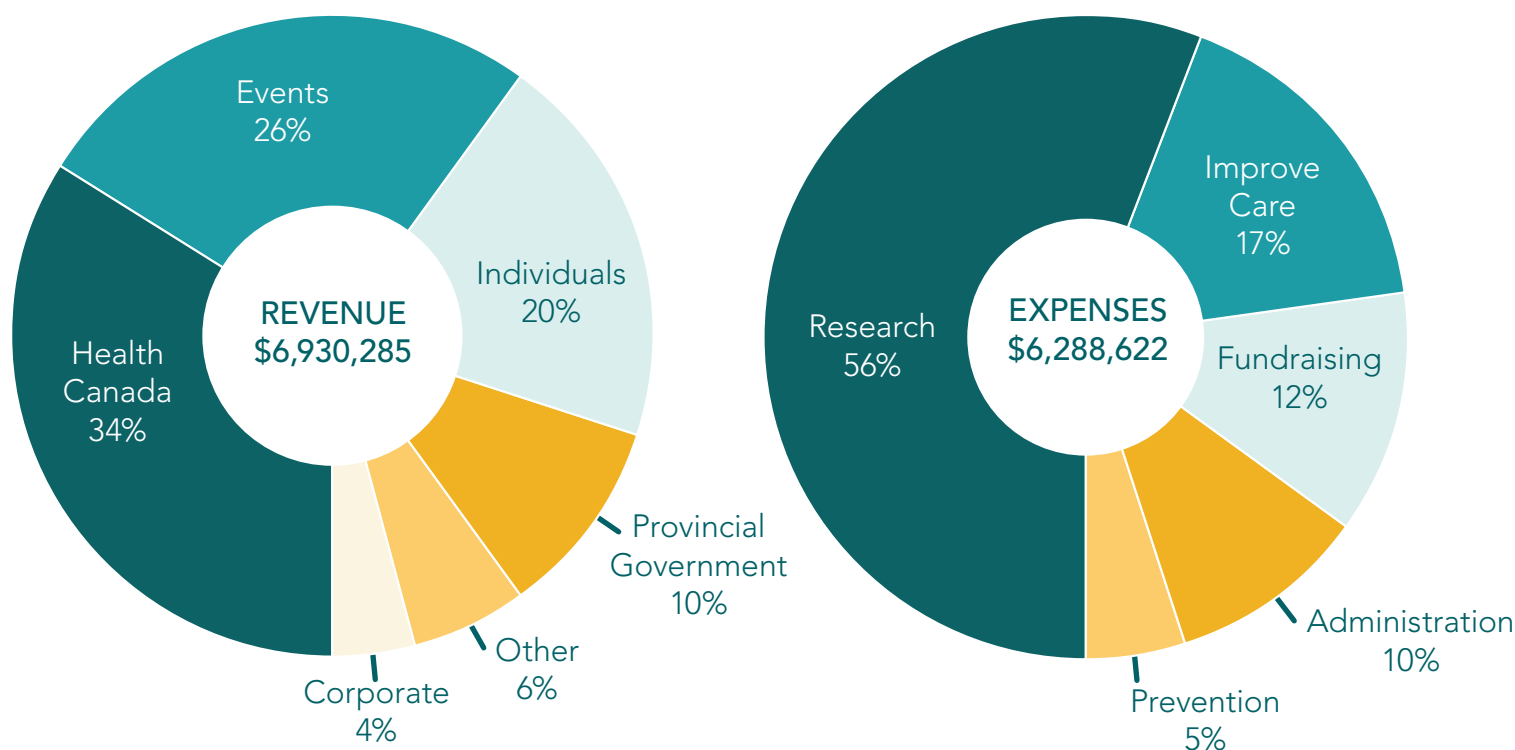
THE LADY BALL Halifax is a gala that brings together women living with ovarian cancer, supporters, sponsors, friends, and family, to celebrate all the women in their lives. Over the years this gala has raised approximately \$500,000 in support of Ovarian Cancer Canada.

TO AFFECT BOLD CHANGES THAT SAVE LIVES, OVARIAN CANCER CANADA IS WORKING WITH YOU TO PROPEL RESEARCH, IMPROVE CARE, AND ADVANCE PREVENTION EFFORTS.



THE IMPACT OF YOUR DONATION

Transformational research, passionate advocacy, and critical support



Ovarian Cancer Canada is proud to be accredited by Imagine Canada as a charity committed to operating at the highest level of transparency and accountability, assuring valued donors that their gifts are responsibly stewarded for the greatest impact.

Your donations and contributions are put to immediate use in accelerating progress to improve outcomes, and providing essential support programs for those diagnosed and their families.

During the fiscal year 2019-2020, Ovarian Cancer Canada entered into a contribution agreement with Health Canada related to the Health Care Policy Contribution program. In fiscal 2021-2022, \$2.3 million was distributed and included in Research.

The Standards Programs Trustmark is a mark of Imagine Canada, used under license by Ovarian Cancer Canada.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors provides governance that supports Ovarian Cancer Canada in achieving its mission. It includes people who have been impacted by ovarian cancer, community champions, and leaders in research, healthcare, and business.

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INSPIRING HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Legacy giving is the cornerstone of a strong and sustainable source of future funds to further our progress against this disease. A commitment today is the ultimate show of support and inspires hope.

While kayaking in July 1993, Mum finally took note of a bulge in her abdominal area, and after tests and surgery was diagnosed with Stage 3 Ovarian Cancer. After her diagnosis she lived for another 20 years and enjoyed travels internationally, time with family, and many new adventures - including the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope where she brought us all to walk with her. The impact of ovarian cancer on her life and the possibility of us and her granddaughters going through the same experience sparked her commitment to naming Ovarian Cancer Canada as a beneficiary in her Will. Mum's legacy and her hope will continue on to help and inspire others.

CHRISTINA AND JACQUELINE PEACOCK,
DAUGHTERS OF ANITA VIDAL



Our gift to Ovarian Cancer Canada was made to fulfill a wish from our sister, Linda. Linda was very grateful and supportive of the efforts of the charity to ovarian cancer research and treatment. Linda's hope, and thus our hope, is that research results in a cure for ovarian cancer. In the meantime, we hope that Ovarian Cancer Canada is able to make living with ovarian cancer better for those afflicted with the disease. Linda actively encouraged others involved in treatment and was personally determined to beat it. The gift is her way to continue to support others.

BILL AND TOM MOORE AND THEIR FAMILIES,
SUPPORTERS OF OVARIAN CANCER CANADA

HERE FOR YOU

As the only registered Canadian charity solely dedicated to overcoming ovarian cancer, Ovarian Cancer Canada provides leadership in research, advocacy, and support, so that women live fuller, better, longer lives.

Connect with us...



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ovariancanada.org

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