





Thank you

I have dedicated my clinical and academic career to a largely underrepresented area of care — mature women's health — with the goal that one day, it would lead to more answers about menopause and its impact on women and their communities.

Today, there has been more interest than ever before, and I am left feeling profoundly grateful to the donors and supporters whose contributions are helping us provide comprehensive care, education and research for women throughout all of life's stages.

I am thrilled to share that just ahead of International Women's Day, we announced an exciting investment in the Centre for Mature Women's Health — one that will help build the physical space to house the Centre and expand our education programs and research efforts. This historic \$25-million donation, made by The Hilary and Galen Weston Foundation and Janice and Earle O'Born, will make it possible to improve access to specialized care for thousands of women annually. In recognition of their generosity, the Centre has been named the Weston and O'Born Centre for Mature Women's Health.

This July, we hired the Centre's inaugural Director of Research, who will play an important role in developing new research into the often-overlooked health concerns of mature women. I look forward to introducing her to you in the following pages.

Together, with the support of our community and the record-breaking Hot and Bothered™ campaign, as well as the leadership of Sinai Health's clinicians, educators and researchers, we are bringing our vision for a world-class centre focused on mature women's health to life.

In this report, we are excited to share the progress made possible with your support, which is helping us close the significant gaps in mature women's health and provide the care, education and research that women deserve.

*Dr. Wendy Wolfman
Director, Weston and O'Born Centre for
Mature Women's Health
and Carol Mitchell Chair in Menopause*

Celebrating a transformational gift that will help women thrive at every stage of life



Ahead of International Women's Day, we announced an exciting investment that will help build the physical space to house the Centre for Mature Women's Health and provide the resources for education, training and research that will set a new standard for mature women's health care in Canada and globally.

More than just a space, this is a significant milestone in its journey to become a world-leading centre and a transformative shift in the way health care is delivered to women throughout their lives. The ability to take these bold actions and improve access to equitable care has been made possible through the recent \$25-million donation from The Hilary and Galen Weston Foundation and Janice and Earle O'Born.

In recognition of their generous gift, the Centre was named the Weston and O'Born Centre for Mature Women's Health.

“ Sinai Health's history has been undeniably shaped by the power of women-led philanthropy. The support and outstanding generosity of the Weston and O'Born families will have a lasting impact on mature women's health for generations to come. ”

Maxine Granovsky Gluskin
Immediate Past Chair, Campaign Cabinet
Past Chair, Sinai Health Foundation
Board of Directors

Announcing the Centre's new Director of Research



Dr. Paula Rochon, Director of Research,
Weston and O'Born Centre for Mature
Women's Health

We are excited to announce that Dr. Paula Rochon has joined Sinai Health as the inaugural Director of Research for the Weston and O'Born Centre for Mature Women's Health.

Dr. Rochon comes to us from the Women's Age Lab at Women's College Hospital, where she was the founding director. She is a leading health services researcher and geriatrician who has spent her career championing research, practices and policies that address the unique health needs women experience as they age.

She will also work closely with Dr. Wendy Wolfman, Director of the Weston and O'Born Centre for Mature Women's Health, to mentor the next generation of researchers and deepen our impact in this priority area.

**“ I'm thrilled to have
Dr. Rochon join our team.
Together, we will continue
to push for answers to the
often-overlooked health
concerns of mature women. ”**

*Dr. Wendy Wolfman, Director, Weston and O'Born
Centre for Mature Women's Health*

In addition to her role as Director of Research, Dr. Rochon will join the Department of Medicine at Sinai Health and hold the inaugural Dr. Barry J. Goldlist Chair in Geriatric Medicine. She will also be appointed as a Senior Clinician Scientist at the Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute.

Her appointment reflects Sinai Health's continued commitment to addressing gaps and inequities that exist in care and research related to women's health. It also represents a significant milestone in our efforts to establish the Weston and O'Born Centre for Mature Women's Health as a world-leader in research, education and care.

[Learn more about Dr. Rochon.](#)

World-class research in mature women's health

Canada's only fellowship in mature women's health and menopause

Fellowships are instrumental in shaping the next generation of physicians, the type of practitioners they become and ultimately, the health systems in which they work.

At Sinai Health, Dr. Wolfman and the team at the Centre have trained more than 20 fellows, from eight provinces and six countries.

We are pleased to introduce our 2024-2025 fellows in mature women's health and menopause, which include Drs. Elizabeta Shprits, Taylor Roebbotham and Meenakshi Goel. They are joining a growing network of mature women's health experts trained at Sinai Health and will go on to share the knowledge they gain here with institutions around the world.

This number continues to grow thanks to generous funding from donors. For 2025-2026, we hope to welcome four new fellows — our largest number yet — who will come to us from Brazil, Kenya, China and Israel.

Meet two of our 2024-2025 fellows.

What is a fellowship?

Fellowships at Sinai Health are advanced training programs for select individuals who have demonstrated deep knowledge and potential in their areas of expertise. Fellows provide direct patient care under the supervision of senior clinicians and present and publish on their scholarly activity. These fellowships lead to more experts trained in the field of mature women's health and an increase in the overall capacity and research impact of the Centre.



Addressing gaps in menopause treatments for women over 65

Less than one per cent of preclinical studies consider menopause in their experiments despite the fact that 70 per cent of age-related diseases are influenced by menopause. As a result, very little research focused on menopause treatment and therapy exists.

One example is research looking at menopausal hormone therapy (MHT) for women over the age of 65. Driven by updated guidelines published in 2022 which called for greater individualization of hormone therapy, Dr. Wolfman saw an opportunity to explore a significant gap in research.

Dr. Wolfman, fellow Dr. Goel and team are now conducting a study to demonstrate that MHT as treatment for menopause symptoms can still be beneficial for women beyond the age of 65. It will be the first to address this gap in knowledge and will better our understanding of this specific population. The study will look at the key motivations for prolonged systemic MHT use in women over the age of 65, their level of knowledge on risks and benefits, the type and dosage of MHT, its side effects and impact on quality of life.

Building a leading team of mature women's health experts

The Weston and O'Born Centre for Mature Women's Health is quickly growing into a hub for comprehensive care, education and research focused on women throughout all of life's stages. It also builds upon the leadership of the Frances Bloomberg Centre for Women's and Infants' Health at Mount Sinai Hospital, Canada's largest academic institution for women's and infants' health.

Under Dr. Wolfman's leadership, the Centre has recruited and retained more mature women's health experts than ever before – with several new members joining this past year. In addition to Dr. Paula Rochon as the Centre's new Director of Research, new staff includes: a full-time

gynaecologist, a nurse practitioner, administrative and clerical staff and a social worker in the Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI) clinic.

They join a world-class team, many of whom were mentored by the Centre's own Dr. Wendy Wolfman. Drs. Marie Christakis and Lindsay Shirreff are two rising leaders who are driving a transformational change in the way care is delivered to women across their lifespan. In addition to providing excellent clinical care, their work will help change standards for care delivery, train the next generation of care providers and produce research with global reach.

Rising leaders in mature women's health



Dr. Marie Christakis, Gynaecologist, Sinai Health

Dr. Marie Christakis is a Gynaecologist and the new Clinical Lead at the Weston and O'Born Centre for Mature Women's Health. Also an Assistant Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Toronto, Dr. Christakis' clinical work focuses on conditions such as menopause, premature ovarian insufficiency and vulvar diseases, and her research explores how menopause can impact obesity, metabolic syndromes and cardiovascular risk. In her new role as Clinical Lead of the Centre, Dr. Christakis will launch an exciting initiative to transition patient records to Accuro Electronic Medical Records – a new software platform that will digitize and streamline patient care delivery and enable better collaboration across our teams in POI, menopause and endocrinology.



Dr. Lindsay Shirreff, Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, Sinai Health

Dr. Lindsay Shirreff is an Obstetrician, Gynaecologist at the Centre and an Associate Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Toronto. Her clinical work includes gynaecological surgery, pregnancy care and supporting women through perimenopause, menopause and premature ovarian insufficiency. Dr. Shirreff is spearheading initiatives to break down information barriers for patients and their physicians by developing patient-facing, evidence-based resources, like GynQI, a patient-facing website co-led by Dr. Shirreff.



Meet the POI Clinic's new social worker

Lezlee Lindzon, Social Worker, POI Clinic, Sinai Health

Lezlee Lindzon has been practicing social work for more than 20 years. In January, she joined the POI Clinic to help patients and their families manage the emotional, cognitive, social and physical aspects that come from experiencing life-changing events — like a POI diagnosis.

Lezlee offers counselling to support those impacted by health-related challenges, depression and anxiety. She is passionate about empowering patients as they navigate the complexities of health and social systems.

What is POI?

Premature ovarian insufficiency occurs when the ovaries stop producing eggs before the age of 40, leading to symptoms of menopause, including hot flashes, vaginal dryness and mood changes. In some cases, it can affect a person's ability to get pregnant.

Social workers can provide emotional and practical support as patients navigate through the complexities of their POI diagnosis, such as connecting them to community resources, support groups and spiritual care.

“As my work in women's health and the POI program evolves, I hope to provide vital support to women with POI, so they feel empowered and understood through this life-altering health diagnosis. To donors, I want to say thank you for focusing your attention and making a difference in the lives of young women diagnosed with POI. I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of this team.”

Lezlee Lindzon, Social Worker, POI Clinic

“GynQI is providing clinically meaningful feedback on menopause for gynaecologic surgeons across Canada. Donor support has not only made this quality improvement work possible, it has made it sustainable, and has allowed us to expand on invaluable initiatives in women’s health.”

Dr. Lindsay Shirreff, Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, Sinai Health

Gynaecology Quality Improvement Collaboration

The Gynaecology Quality Improvement Collaboration (GynQI) provides educational resources to improve gynaecologic care in Canada, including tools for patients, physicians and surgeons.

In 2022, Drs. Lindsay Shirreff and Ally Murji launched GynQI to translate knowledge on gynaecologic surgeries within their network of Canadian hospitals. This information is disseminated to Canadian medical residents, patients and the public through the GynQI website.

What began as an initiative at a single hospital has since expanded to include 15 Canadian hospitals and universities. Funded in part by donor support, they’ve launched three interactive patient portals on menopause, endometriosis and heavy menstrual bleeding, aimed at expanding information and care delivery to people affected by these conditions. They also completed the Patient Handout Project, which now has over 70 patient-facing, evidence-based handouts that can be easily accessed by patients or emailed by health-care providers.

Today, there are more than 2,500 monthly international users of GynQI and the website continues to bring useful resources to gynaecologists and their patients.

Explore GynQI and the many tools and resources available.



Celebrating 20 years of menopause education

This past year marked the 20th anniversary of Menopause Education Day, a unique event started by Sinai Health's Dr. Wendy Wolfman and Dr. Harold Drutz and hosted by Sinai Health experts in menopause and women's health. Menopause Education Day is dedicated to advancing the understanding and treatment of menopause among health-care practitioners and is the largest event of its kind in Canada.

Nearly 600 physicians and other care providers from across the country attended the virtual event. The event included expert-led sessions in hormone therapies, sexual health, care of urinary tract infections,

pelvic floor dysfunction, cancer screening, sleep issues, weight management and more. There was also a panel discussion that addressed questions from attendees, hosted by Sinai Health's Division of Mature Women's Health members, Drs. Wendy Wolfman, Marie Christakis, Lindsay Shirreff and Michelle Jacobson, whose presentation "When the Heat's Hard to Treat" closed out the day's sessions.

Sinai Health is the only integrated health system in the country to host such an event.

Sinai Live: Menopause and mature women's health

Sinai Live is a series of virtual events where health experts from Sinai Health share evidence-based care information with the community. In November, the panel was focused on menopause and mature women's health.

In the virtual session hosted by CityNews reporter Melanie Ng and joined by Drs. Wendy Wolfman, Colleen McDermott and Sharon Szmuiłowicz, they delved into health-care topics including menopause, pelvic medicine and mental health — and discussed and answered questions directly from the audience.

Almost 900 registrants attended — making it one of our most popular Sinai Live sessions — and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. A second Sinai Live on menopause and mature women's health is already in the works for later on in 2025.

Tune in to our Sinai Live session featuring Drs. Wolfman, McDermott and Szmuiłowicz.

Looking beyond menopause



Dr. Colleen McDermott
Division Lead,
Urogynaecology,
Sinai Health

Dr. McDermott leads the Division of Urogynaecology at Sinai Health. Alongside her team, she is focused on the diagnosis and treatment of pelvic floor disorders, including incontinence — the loss of bladder control — and pelvic organ prolapse — when the pelvic floor becomes too weak to hold up pelvic organs.

The risks of pelvic floor disorders are notably higher for women over the age of 65. About 60 per cent of adult women experience urinary incontinence and more than half of women over age 50 experience some stage of prolapse.

"It can have a devastating impact on a patient's quality of life," says Dr. McDermott. "Many have a hard time doing basic movements without discomfort or leakage, which makes it hard to stay active into their golden years."

Dr. McDermott operates out of Sinai Health's urogynaecology unit, one of the few clinics to treat patients with these disorders in Canada. As we move into what's next for the Centre, we are pushing the boundaries of knowledge in areas like urogynaecology, to expand the care we provide women throughout their lives.

Menopause in the workplace

Women can spend up to 50 per cent of their lives in a menopausal state (perimenopause, menopause and postmenopause) and there are more than 30 symptoms, some of which can be so severe that women are leaving the workforce at the peak of their professional careers to manage them.

Many are beginning to speak up about the impact of menopause – at home and in the workplace. In response, Sinai Health partnered with the corporate community to raise awareness for mature women's health care and the role of the workplace in encouraging ongoing conversations.



Sinai Health's Dr. Wendy Wolfman speaks up about bringing conversations on women's health out in the open, appearing on expert panels (from top to bottom) at the Empire Club's "Here's a Hot Flash: Women's Health Matters. Period", the Longwoods Leadership Discussion "Life Beyond Stigma: Elevating the Voices of Women Experiencing Menopause" and an interview with TVO on "What You Need to Know About Menopause" with patient advocate and Menopause Foundation of Canada co-founder Trish Barbato.

4

employee engagement events held with corporate partners across the city and broadcasted widely to employees

1,000+

clients and employees attended

3,000+

engagements on our story featuring RBC executive Kris Depencier, demonstrating the interest and need for supporting the wellbeing of people experiencing menopause in the workplace

[Learn more](#) about how Kris's experience with menopause motivated her to speak up at work.

Taking Sinai Health around the world



Sinai Health experts are positioning the Centre to lead the world in areas dedicated to menopause and mature women's health care, education and research. Drs. Wolfman, Christakis and Shirreff are often called upon to speak at conferences, to present their work and translate research into teachings that will lead to more experts in the field.

The team at the Weston and O'Born Centre for Mature Women's Health is continuing to share their expertise in papers, publications and presentations – in Canada and around the world.

Presentations and publications

3

leaders in mature women's health

11

research publications in peer-reviewed journals

23

presentations nationally and internationally

The Hot and Bothered campaign

CHANGING THE CONVERSATION, CHANGING LIVES

The Hot and Bothered campaign sparked a nation-wide movement to end the stigma of menopause.

From billboards to social feeds, Hot and Bothered was everywhere – and so were you. Your collective voices challenged the status quo and got people talking about what women are going through before, during and after menopause.

Here's what some of you said:

"It's through conversations like this that we can start changing the narrative about menopause and let other women know you're not alone, and you never have to be."
– Tricia

"Your campaign is the first time in my 34 years in health care I've said - Yes! Excellent. This, I can get behind. Finally, someone is making women a priority."
– Lisa

"FINALLY, a real push towards helping women at this stage of life. FINALLY, a reference point so we know what we are going through. FINALLY, some answers so we don't have to suffer in silence. I hope no woman has to deal with this alone ever again."
– Allison





AMANDA BRUGEL
ACTRESS,
WOMEN'S HEALTH ADVOCATE

By the numbers

\$50+ million

raised in support of the Centre,
including donations to the Hot
and Bothered campaign

100+

stories shared, amplifying the
voices of women and breaking
the silence around menopause

86

media outlets shared our
message, reaching more than
33 million people across the
country — including coverage
by *Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star*,
Global News, *CBC* and more

3,200+

recipients of *The Flash* — our
e-newsletter in support of the
Centre — emphasizing the
importance of open conversations
about menopause and the
continued growth of our
community to reach even
more individuals

HOT AND BOTHERED IN THE COMMUNITY

Cause for the 'Pause



Event co-chairs (left to right): Maxine Granovsky Gluskin, Victoria Webster and Suzanne Rogers at the Cause for the 'Pause event, presented by Rogers.

On October 30, 2024, more than 200 guests gathered at the Four Seasons Hotel for the inaugural Cause for the 'Pause event, presented by Rogers. With an expert panel discussion, hosted by Catherine Murray, and featuring Drs. Wolfman and Christakis and entrepreneur and patient advocate, Grace Tong, the afternoon was full of thought-provoking discussion and information sharing.

Co-chaired by Suzanne Rogers, Victoria Webster and Maxine Granovsky Gluskin, the event received overwhelming support – raising more than \$630,000 on the day of the event with an additional \$300,000 donated afterwards, bringing total funds raised for the Centre to almost \$1 million.



The Sinai Health community came together in an inspiring show of support for women's health by making a splash – literally. To date, more than 75 groups from across Ontario have participated in cold plunges and lake swims – even hosting gatherings “over ice” as a fun way to participate in the challenge. Inspired by the desire to make a difference, these courageous fundraisers have not only braved the cold but also raised awareness – rallying support from their families and friends and motivating others to get involved.

[Check out the Hot and Bothered Challenge!](#)



For more information:

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