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For immediate release

Women's health in Calgary gets multi-year boost thanks to \$10M investment through Calgary Health Foundation

The two-year investment will support women-focused research, advocacy, and care.

CALGARY, AB – **Calgary Health Foundation announces a \$10M investment over two years** from the Government of Alberta in support of women's health initiatives. This commitment will impact healthcare for women throughout southern Alberta. The one-time investment represents a tangible first step toward removing gender disparity in healthcare practice, policy, research, and care.

"The Premier gave me a clear mandate to improve the health outcomes of women and children in Alberta. Our goal is to continue leading the way in women and children's health programs and research. These investments will make a real difference in tackling health issues that impact women, promoting overall well-being, and ensuring every Albertan can thrive, no matter their age or stage in life." Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Health.

Women's health is one of Calgary Health Foundation's organizational priorities, currently supporting initiatives like an innovative breast cancer project impacting the patient experience; state of the art gynecological equipment, and programs for the pelvic floor clinic in Calgary—all of which will significantly impact women's health. Calgary Health Foundation is committed to further funding female-related clinical care, research, and education.

"This investment will enable us to give the necessary attention, funding, and advocacy to the unique health challenges of women. Through partnerships like the one with Dr. Erin Brennand and the Calgary Pelvic Floor Clinic, the funding will allow us to confront the gaps in the diagnosis, treatment, and care of women's health concerns. We are grateful to the Government of Alberta for its support." Murray Sigler, President & CEO, Calgary Health Foundation.

A reduction in waitlist times, the building of additional examination and treatment spaces, the expansion of existing initiatives, and the creation of new innovative programs focused on priorities identified by women are all possible thanks to the new investment.

"This is an important and meaningful investment that will result in positive outcomes for many women and families in southern Alberta. As partners in healthcare delivery, the Government of Alberta and the Calgary Health Foundation recognize the need to expand access and enhance care in this critical area, and for that we are very thankful." Athana Mentzelopoulos, AHS President and CEO.

The unmet need in women's health is a silent epidemic affecting half of our population. Reproductive health, pelvic floor health, mental health, autoimmune disorders, chronic conditions, and diseases like cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis disproportionately impact women.

"My hope is that this injection of funds can help us offer resources like a rapid access clinic—where those with acute illness can receive fast-tracked medical assessments, screenings, and treatment by a multidisciplinary team—and plan for the establishment of a Women's Health Innovation and Research Hub space in Calgary." Dr. Erin Brennand, Urogynecologist and Department Head, Obstetrics & Gynecology, University of Calgary & Alberta Health Services, Calgary Zone.

Historically, medical research has assumed that women's and men's bodies are alike enough not to warrant women-specific studies. The result has been a considerable gap in the understanding of a woman's physiology, specific disease risks and indications, and prevention, screening, and treatment needs.

Women's health issues receive shockingly less funding and attention compared to men's health. A 2021 Alberta Women's Health Foundation (AWHF) report showed that only 3.4 percent of total research funding in the province goes toward female-specific health concerns. This is despite women making up 51 percent of the provincial population.

Alberta tracks lower than the national average of eight percent of medical research funding going to women's health, a statistic the \$10M investment hopes to tip in women's favour.

The \$10M investment to Calgary Health Foundation combined with donor support will launch women's health outcomes in a positive direction.

Calgary Health Foundation is a community-based charity that raises funds to advance healthcare in our city. We find opportunities to invest in excellence across the entire healthcare system, all to enhance outcomes and improve lives. calgaryhealthfoundation.ca

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