

Thank You for Making Lasting Change Possible

“As we reflect on 2025, I want to express my deepest gratitude for your continued generosity and support for Maritime women, children, and families. Every milestone achieved was made possible because of donors like you.

In addition to our commitment to children’s health, and to child and adolescent mental health and addictions, this year, we also focused on our commitment to women’s health, bringing it to the forefront. With your generous support, we have invested in vital equipment and research to help close the healthcare gender gap. Together with our community, we are having critical conversations—paving the way for more equitable, inclusive care for generations to come.

We know we have more work to do and, with supporters like you by our side, we are confident that anything is possible. You are part of a community that is reshaping the future of healthcare for Maritime women, children, and youth. We look forward to sharing another year of action, community, progress, and hope with you.”



Jennifer Gillivan, ICD.D
President & CEO
IWK Foundation

Equity in Health *Can’t Wait*

This past summer, we asked Maritime women to tell us the truth about their health. We expected stories. We received a movement. More than 27,000 Maritime women answered the call and powerfully shared their experiences—helping to shine a light on the inequities faced by too many. We heard raw, unfiltered, and courageous personal experiences. Stories of stress, anxiety, endometriosis, perimenopause, menopause, pain, delayed diagnoses, and so much more.

One of those stories was from Nikki (pictured left below), who shared, “It’s been immensely challenging. Especially now with the conversation around perimenopause, its symptoms, and appropriate treatment options. At times, I feel like I’m entirely on my own to figure out what I need and what can be done. Hearing that I’ll have to wait until things are far worse before treatment is an option is wild and maddening. To know there are powerful conversations happening around changing these issues—I want to be part of that in any way I can. That’s why I share my story.”

The IWK Foundation is calling for greater collaboration among governments, employers, educators, health providers, community health leaders, and individuals. It will take all of us to make real changes. By working together, we can call for a national women’s health strategy to become a reality. This is not a call for women to be more resilient. Women have proven their strength over and over again. What’s needed now is something bigger: a reimagined approach to women’s health, one that listens, adapts, respects, and responds.

With your help, we are turning awareness into action and building a healthcare system that truly delivers for women—because **equity in health can’t wait.**

when.
WOMEN’S HEALTH EQUITY NOW



Care Closer to Home

IWK Health knows how important it is to care for patients close to home. With help from donors like you, the IWK is bringing more and more services—like Anchor Youth Space Nova Scotia and Maritime Child Health—to communities across the region.

Anchor Youth Space, Named by Youth for Youth

Summer Pentecost, of Sydney, Nova Scotia, knows firsthand the tremendous impact Anchor Youth Space Nova Scotia will have on youth like her.

Anchor Youth Space sites—like the one in Sydney—will provide a safe space in the community for youth aged 12 to 25 years to receive free, rapid access to health and wellness resources, programs, and services in one location. They are dedicated to expanding walk-in access to mental health and wellness services and supports from one end of Nova Scotia to the other.

The power of Anchor Youth Space sites is that they are co-designed by youth like Summer, who is a member of the Youth Advisory Committee.

“Anchor Youth Space proves that even in the smallest of towns, big change begins when we choose to believe in our youth,” says Summer. “It’s a place that will continue to grow with us, where younger kids will one day find their voice and where caregivers will know their children are supported and safe.”



Three Anchor Youth Space sites are now officially open in Amherst, Halifax, and Sydney—providing accessible, welcoming, and inclusive space created with youth, for youth.

“I am extremely grateful to have been a part of something that will make a lasting impact in the lives of my peers and neighbours,” continues Summer. “To know that I played even a small role in helping create a place where even one person will feel seen and supported means everything to me.”

In partnership with the Government of Nova Scotia, five additional Anchor Youth Space sites will open by March 2027. Through the generosity of philanthropic partners and our donor community, the IWK Foundation is raising \$10 million to help establish these sites across Nova Scotia.

Maritime Child Health

Where you live should not determine the care you receive.

Led by the IWK, Maritime Child Health (MCH) works with regional and rural care teams to equip them with the knowledge, tools, and support they need to deliver specialized pediatric care, closer to home.

One area of focus for MCH is pediatric pain management. MCH has partnered with SKIP (Solutions for Kids in Pain) to create a clinical implementation specialist role in pediatric pain management—a first in Canada that is now being modelled at other children’s hospitals.

Patti Douglas (RN) is the first Pain Management Implementation Specialist. She’s bringing her deep passion for improving pediatric pain care into action throughout the Maritimes.

“Our IWK community is not just within the four walls of our hospital but across the Maritime region we serve,” says Douglas. “I see the desire and need for resources to be shared and for patients to be cared for closer to their homes.”

“I am really looking forward to spreading the awareness that there are ways to make pain better and ensuring healthcare providers have comfort in providing equitable care to any patient at any location where they may seek care. Managing a child’s pain not only impacts their physical well-being but their mental health as well.”

Maritime Child Health is made possible through a generous donation from the Windsor Foundation and the IWK Foundation’s community of donors.



The Power of Play and Peacefulness

Therapeutic play and calming spaces can provide a welcome distraction while alleviating fears and providing a sense of comfort and home for patients and families. Thanks to your support, the IWK can administer different kinds of “medicine” —like play and peacefulness—that make a serious impact on health outcomes.



On display at IWK Health, this LEGO rendering of the new Emergency Department features the rooftop Therapeutic Garden!

The Gift of Solitude

Having a safe space to spend time in nature, take a moment for reflection, and gather with loved ones is vital for patients, families, and IWK care teams.

Through the generosity of the Miller family, a rooftop therapeutic garden will provide a welcoming oasis atop the new IWK Emergency Department. The Millers hope the therapeutic garden will be a “haven of healing,” where people can experience moments of joy, peace, and togetherness during challenging times.

The garden will be an all-weather therapeutic space, offering mobility-friendly activities and healthy distractions for physical activity, gardening, crafts, and playing. It will provide a quiet refuge for those having a difficult day, with designated areas for special activities like smudging and bereavement ceremonies.

We know that healthcare can come in many forms. When the therapeutic garden opens in 2027, it will bring nature’s healing touch to the entire IWK population.

Making an Impact, One MRI at a Time

“Jane makes me feel happy!”

This bold praise from seven-year-old Albert from New Brunswick is for Jane Marchildon, a Child Life Specialist in the IWK’s Department of Diagnostic Imaging (DI).

For many children, tests like Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) can be frightening. A generous gift from the late Arthur Irving, the Arthur L. Irving Family Foundation, Sandra and Sarah Irving, and Irving Oil is helping to ease those fears and even minimize procedures by funding Child Life Specialist positions specifically for DI. Now Jane and her colleagues use therapeutic play, simulations, and distraction techniques to offer comfort and make DI procedures less stressful.

Diagnosed with a non-cancerous brain tumour, Albert underwent a successful surgery at the IWK when he was four. He now returns for regular MRIs.

Although the IWK’s MRI scanner is designed to look colourful and fun, at first Albert found it loud and scary. Fearful patients will often get a general anesthetic before undergoing an MRI. And while completely safe and at times necessary, not having sedation can help improve a patient’s recovery time and overall care experience.

Since incorporating Child Life Specialists into the DI department in 2022, over 380 children—including Albert—have had MRI scans without sedation.

Thanks to donor generosity, instead of being afraid, Albert looks forward to visiting the IWK to spend time with Jane!



Albert & Jane

Specialized Equipment for Specialized Care



The Gold Standard of Orthopedic Care

In 2023, when 13-year-old Ava was diagnosed with scoliosis—a serious spinal deformity—she was devastated. An avid hockey player with dreams of playing professionally, the thought of being sidelined from the game she loved was unimaginable.

Ava underwent successful spinal surgery in February 2025 to correct a 100-degree curve in her spine. Today, she’s back on the ice—stronger and more determined than ever.

Thanks to funds raised through the 2025 Kent Great Big Dig and our generous donor community, the IWK will soon be home to an O-Arm, a state-of-the-art surgical imaging system for orthopedic surgery.

The O-Arm is primarily used in spine, orthopedic, and trauma-related surgeries. It allows surgeons to visualize the surgical site in detail and make adjustments during the procedure.

“An O-Arm is a game-changer because it allows surgeons to more efficiently place screws during spinal surgery with the utmost precision,” says Dr. Kevin Morash, Orthopedic Surgeon, IWK Health. “Bringing this advanced equipment to the IWK will be life-changing for IWK patients, like Ava.”

Helping Maritime Women Suffering from Chronic Pelvic Pain

Approximately 15 per cent of women of reproductive age suffer from chronic pelvic pain, which causes a tremendous impact on quality of life. Day-to-day functioning, mood, sleep, sexual function, relationships, employment, and mobility are often compromised. The IWK Endometriosis and Chronic Pelvic Pain Clinic is the first interdisciplinary clinic dedicated to managing these conditions in the Atlantic Provinces.

With generous support from the Orchid Women’s Health Initiative, the IWK Endometriosis and Chronic Pelvic Pain Clinic now has a Sonosite PX Ultrasound System (Ultrasound). This advanced imaging tool delivers greater image clarity for diagnosing and treating patients at the bedside. The Ultrasound enhances patient care by allowing anesthesiologists to provide targeted abdominal wall and pelvic nerve blocks with greater precision and safety.

For individuals living with complex and persistent pelvic pain, access to guided interventions can offer a significant step toward meaningful relief, improved function, and restored quality of life.



Leah Pink, Nurse Practitioner; Dr. Elizabeth Randle, Gynecologist; and Dr. Allana Munro, Anesthesiologist, IWK Endometriosis and Chronic Pelvic Pain Clinic



Keeping Infants Safe and Warm

Matilda was born 10 weeks early, weighing only one pound 10 ounces. She needed the IWK’s advanced care and equipment to overcome severe medical challenges.

The IWK will have new Panda Warmers for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), thanks to you and our remarkable community of donors.

Panda Warmers provide critical aspects of care for premature infants. They feature a resuscitation system that enables the IWK care team to quickly access life-saving measures, such as oxygen and suction, and a full-screen display to monitor vital signs. It also keeps infants safe and warm.

Premature infants, like Matilda, often require a Panda Warmer to help them get stronger and healthier during a critical time.

We are thrilled to share that Matilda, now two years old, is thriving! She is working on developing her voice and is meeting all her other milestones.

From One Star Researcher to Another: Dr. Margaret Oulton Accelerate Chair in Women+ Health Research



Dr. Margaret Oulton’s innovative research decades ago ensured the safe delivery of thousands of babies. Now, she’s expanding her impact even further with a leadership gift that will make women’s health a priority well into the future.

Research focused on women’s health accounts for only seven per cent of Canada’s research funding. Even when women+ are included in health research, sex and gender variables are not always considered, putting women+ and gender-diverse individuals at greater risk for misdiagnosis, ineffective treatment, and health risks.

Thanks to Dr. Oulton’s incredible generosity, the Dr. Margaret Oulton Accelerate Chair in Women+ Health Research will help address these long-standing gaps by bridging clinical teams, community needs, and emerging research trends.

“As a research scientist with the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Grace and then the IWK, I really valued the collaborative and supportive environment we had that enabled us to turn my research into meaningful procedures to improve outcomes for infants in high risk pregnancies—truly a ‘from bench to bedside’ collaboration,” says Dr. Oulton. “This experience opened my eyes to the need for more focused research into the specific needs of women’s healthcare. My hope is that this gift will be a spark that will truly impact the future of women’s health research at the IWK.”

Introducing the Inaugural Chair

As the first Oulton Chair, Dr. Justine Dol brings a wealth of research expertise and a clear vision to her new role. Along with her ongoing research to improve women+ health and to create and improve digital health solutions, one of Dr. Dol’s first priorities is to work with patients, clinicians, researchers, and the public to identify the gaps and the top research priorities for women+ health in the Maritimes.

“I want to see more evidence generated about women+ health, better care informed by that evidence, and ultimately improved health outcomes,” says Dr. Dol. “Creating this Chair is an important step in shifting that narrative. It’s about ensuring that women+ health is seen, valued, and advanced through focused research and meaningful change. Dr. Oulton is helping to make this happen.”

Women’s Health Research Excellence: Paying It Forward

Starting her research career at the Grace Maternity Hospital in the 1970s, Dr. Margaret Oulton blazed a trail over the next three decades, earning accolades like the IWK Grace Award of Distinction and the Dalhousie Golden Eagle Lifetime Achievement Award. Her groundbreaking discovery that helped determine if unborn infants’ lungs were developed enough to withstand induced premature birth led to the safe delivery of over 10,000 infants in Atlantic Canada across a 20-year span.

The chair that bears her name adds yet another important element to Dr. Oulton’s ongoing legacy in health research.



Canon, IWK patient, and
Becky, IWK Clinical ED
Redevelopment Lead

Enhancing Pediatric Emergency Care

Over the past three years, the power of the Maritimes has been on full display as donors like you have collectively helped build a new state-of-the-art IWK Emergency Department (ED). We are incredibly grateful and humbled by your outstanding show of support.

From all corners of our region, you are coming together to ensure that the IWK’s new pediatric ED will be so much more than just a space—it will be a place of comfort, hope, and healing for children and their families during some of their most difficult moments.

The IWK knows that environment dramatically impacts patient outcomes. This has been the guiding principle behind every aspect of the redevelopment, including the creation of a purposefully designed space connecting the ED and the rest of the IWK. This area will serve as a gateway between emergency care and the other care and services provided.

This space will be a symbol of comfort, continuity, and healing. Thoughtfully designed in collaboration with patients and families across the Maritimes, it will feature calming colours, natural light, child-friendly art, and quiet zones for reflection and relaxation. Having a place to decompress and relax will help ease the emotional burden for families during what can be a frightening and uncertain time.

Research That Impacts Care

Emergency Departments across Canada, including the IWK, are facing unprecedented times. They are seeing more patients, many with increasingly complex health needs. At the same time, hospitals are struggling with staff shortages and delays in accessing care across the system. This makes the delivery of emergency care more challenging than ever.

Despite these pressures, the IWK ED has a long track record of innovation, while continuing to provide high-quality care. With a strong background in research and quality improvement—and the investment in the new ED—thanks to donors like you, the IWK has an incredible opportunity to shape the future of emergency care.

Moving into a new environment built for the delivery of exceptional emergency care will allow the IWK to continuously learn and evaluate what truly impacts outcomes for Maritime patients and families. A purpose-designed space will help reduce many of the variables that can affect care, allowing the IWK to gain a clearer understanding of what makes the biggest difference for patients and families. These insights will strengthen care here at home and help influence best practices across the province and beyond.

The simultaneous move from an existing to a purpose-designed space rarely happens in health care, and the learnings that will come from this transition will be invaluable.

This transformation isn’t just about a new building. It’s about making a lasting difference in the care provided, using every opportunity to learn and improve to ensure world-class care for Maritime patients and families.

The IWK Foundation is proud to work in partnership with IWK Health and the Province of Nova Scotia on the new ED. Our efforts to support the ED redevelopment are ongoing.

Where There’s a Will, There’s the IWK!

The IWK Foundation is proud to be a charitable partner participating in Will Power—a national program educating Canadians on the taxation benefits of leaving a philanthropic gift in a Will. Will Power is inspiring Canadians to think differently about charitable giving and empowering them to create positive change through their Wills.

Join the Journey

Donors ensure that the IWK has cutting-edge technology and world-class facilities to care for patients. Here are a few other ways you can continue to help Maritime women and children.



Give a Gift
of Securities



Leave a Gift in
your Will



Join our Founders Club



Fundraise for the IWK



Become a Monthly Donor



Make a Tribute
or Memorial Gift

Stay Connected

@IWKFoundation

Follow us on social media, where we share patient stories, exciting funding announcements your support makes possible, career opportunities, and more!

1-800-595-2266 | iwkfoundation.org

