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Committed to Cardiac Care, With Your Help

“Donor support of the program is of the utmost importance.”



Dr. Anita Soni is St. Boniface Hospital's new Cardiac Sciences Medical Specialty Lead. She is also a front line physician at the Hospital. She and her husband, who is an Emergency Department physician at Health Sciences Centre, have four children.

Dr. Anita Soni is excited about her new role as the Cardiac Sciences Medical Specialty Lead at St. Boniface Hospital.

Soni, who was born and raised in Winnipeg, accepted the leadership role in April 2023 because she saw it as an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of Manitobans who need cardiac care. She is the former Medical Director of the WRHA Echocardiography Labs and Cardiology Clinical Teaching Unit at St. Boniface.

The role with Cardiac Sciences St. Boniface Hospital makes her the newest physician in charge of cardiology, cardiac surgery, and cardiac anesthesia at the Hospital.

“As a front-line physician, I understand what patients go through and where their needs are,” said Soni, who also serves as the director of cardiovascular education for undergraduate medical students at the University of Manitoba.

“Cardiac Sciences is a St. Boniface Hospital program,” she noted. “As such, in order to ensure optimal care for all patients who need specialty cardiac services, we need to collaborate with the region and province to establish a provincial approach,” she said.

Gifts from Foundation donors are helping Cardiac Sciences St. Boniface Hospital to deliver the highest standard of patient-centered care, education, and research, she says.

“Donor support of the program is of the utmost importance. For example, our donors have been instrumental in supporting a new initiative we are working on at St. Boniface, which is a program for women’s heart health and a related clinical research position.”

St. Boniface Hospital provides excellent cardiac care and pursues groundbreaking cardiac research, all thanks to you.



Karen's Corner

Take a moment to think about the women in your life. They are your mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends.

Cardiovascular disease is a major health issue for Canadian women of all ages. In fact, most women have at least one risk factor that can lead to cardiovascular disease.

Despite this, women's lives are not yet equally represented in medical research. Closing this knowledge gap is one way to ensure better outcomes for women with cardiovascular disease.

Dr. Anita Soni is St. Boniface Hospital's new Cardiac Sciences Medical Specialty Lead. (You can get to know her on the previous page.)

She recently pointed out to me that Manitoba is one of the few provinces in Canada that does not yet have a women's heart health program in place. "We can learn from the research, and by putting together data collection, we will know how we are performing," Dr. Soni told me.

"We need to focus on this group that makes up half of our population, because there is this knowledge gap in treatment of women with symptoms, recognizing heart disease, and some of the needs that are unique to women," she continued.

We know the existing research data is skewed towards male participants. This needs to change.

Meanwhile, the research we do have has already shown us that younger women who have heart attacks experience worse outcomes than men of a similar age. On average, outcomes are even worse for Indigenous and under-represented women in our community.

Your support is helping St. Boniface to establish a dedicated research program in women's heart health in the heart of our province. Thank you for making a difference in women's lives.

Karen Fowler, CFRE
President & CEO
St. Boniface Hospital Foundation

In Brief: Foundation News



Dr. Pawan Singal (at left) with Foundation President and CEO Karen Fowler.

Farewell to a pioneer of St. Boniface Hospital Research

The Foundation was saddened by the passing of Dr. Pawan Singal on June 7, 2023. Dr. Singal

was a Principal Investigator and former Director of the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences (ICS).

Dr. Singal was a generous and longstanding donor to St. Boniface Hospital Foundation, and he established the Dr. Pawan K. Singal, ICS Director Fund to support the ongoing needs of the ICS. He also ably served as a member of the Foundation's Board of Directors for six years beginning in 2016. He will be greatly missed.



Pierce named to Order of Canada

Congratulations to Dr. Grant Pierce, Principal Investigator, Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences (ICS), and distinguished professor in the field of pathophysiology, on being appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada in June 2023.

In his 15 years as Executive Director of St. Boniface Hospital Research, Dr. Pierce played a pivotal role in developing the ICS. He also helped found the Canadian Centre for Agri-Food Research in Health and Medicine, among many other accomplishments.



Kirshenbaum named to Order of Manitoba

Congratulations to Dr. Lorrie Kirshenbaum, Director, Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences, on being chosen to receive the Order of Manitoba in July 2023. The Order of Manitoba honours those whose work has enriched the well-being of the province and its residents.

Dr. Kirshenbaum's pioneering research on cardiac cell death has transformed cardiovascular care worldwide. He is best known for his work in understanding why the cells of the heart die after a heart attack and in cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy.

Surviving a Heart Attack, Thanks to Your Support

Christie Klassen, of Rosenort, MB, is a heart attack survivor who was treated at St. Boniface Hospital in March 2021. Eager to share her story, this is her experience, in her own words.

I never thought that I would be having a heart attack at my age, but I did.

After a busy but otherwise normal day I suddenly felt a sharp, shooting pain between my ears, around my jaw area. My hands became clammy, and I started sweating. I just didn't feel right.

Then my jaw locked, both arms started aching, and within seconds, I felt like I was losing my ability to speak. My husband noticed something was wrong and sat me down. I became extremely nauseated, the pain in my jaw worsened, my back ached, and my hands cramped up.

I thought, "I'm 39 and healthy, this can't be a heart attack!"

My husband called 911.

The ambulance arrived within minutes, and an electrocardiogram (ECG) confirmed I was having a heart attack. En route to the Hospital, the paramedics treated me and assured me I was safe. A care team was on standby at St. Boniface Hospital and ready to take me into the Cardiac Catheterization Lab.

That day, I learned why it's so important to know the signs of a heart attack - not only for yourself, but also for your loved ones. If I'd tried to drive myself to the Hospital, there would have been no one to confirm it was a heart attack, and no one to administer medication or ease my anxiety, all of which could have meant even more damage to my heart.



Christie Klassen had a heart attack at age 39, in March 2021. She received life-saving care at Manitoba's Centre of Cardiac Excellence at St. Boniface Hospital.

Because my husband made the decision to call 911 that day, I survived, and my three children still have their mother. I wish people knew that an ambulance is much more than a faster ride to the Hospital. It's a mobile care centre with specially trained professionals — and it can mean the difference between life and death.

Your support has saved the lives of St. Boniface Hospital cardiac patients like Christie Klassen. Thank you.

St. Boniface Hospital Foundation would like to thank the Manitoba ACS Network for sharing Christie's story with us. The Manitoba ACS Network was established to improve outcomes of patients with Acute Coronary Syndrome within the province. Learn more at mbacsnetwork.ca.



Advancing Women's Heart Health Research, Thanks to You



Most Canadian women have at least one risk factor that can lead to cardiovascular disease. Although they make up about half our population, women's lives are not yet equally represented in medical research.

St. Boniface Hospital has been taking steps to change that.

Last fall, Dr. Inna Rabinovich-Nikitin, Principal Investigator, Women's Heart Health and Cardiometabolic Function at the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences, St. Boniface Hospital Research, was awarded the first-ever Evelyn Wyrzykowski Family Professorship in Cardiovascular Sciences at the Hospital.

In her new role, she is building a robust program dedicated to the field of women's heart health. The program addresses the needs of Indigenous and under-represented women with limited access to health care.

Dr. Rabinovich-Nikitin will give a public lecture on women's heart health in early November 2023 at the St. Boniface Hospital Albrechtsen Research Centre. Follow the Foundation on Facebook and Instagram (@STBHF) to get all the details.

Giving. Remembering. Celebrating.

Thank you to our many compassionate donors who have chosen to make gifts to St. Boniface Hospital Foundation in honour of those listed below.

Gifts recognized were made from December 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023.

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Hôpital St-Boniface Hospital
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