Our History

The Deborah E. Powell Center for Women’s Health was established in 2003 when the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded the University of Minnesota the designation as a National Center of Excellence in Women’s Health. Our center is an engaged group of University faculty, researchers, health care providers, students, and community partners who share a dedication to women’s health. As a National Center of Excellence, we are a recognized leader in the field of women’s health and serve as a catalyst for improving the health of women in Minnesota and beyond. In 2005, our center adopted the name of Deborah E. Powell, in honor of the current dean of the University of Minnesota Medical School and the first woman to hold this position.
A new model for women’s health

The Powell Center is leading efforts to create a model for comprehensive women’s health services. This network of clinical services is based at the Women’s Health Center, a clinic on the University campus. The Women’s Health Center provides a range of services and research opportunities in one location. In addition to Obstetrics/Gynecology and Primary Care, the Women’s Health Center provides care for Women’s Cancer, Mental Health, Osteoporosis & Menopause consultations, and Continence Care. Our new Women’s Heart Clinic adds a focus on heart disease prevention in women through comprehensive screening and education. Throughout these services, our patient-centered approach ensures that patients are active participants in improving their health.

Outreach to Communities

Building meaningful partnerships

The Powell Center proactively fosters authentic community-academic partnerships for women’s health. By responding to community recommendations and requests, our outreach programs strive to strengthen the health of underserved women. With more than 25 partner organizations, our outreach activities stretch across the state from North Minneapolis to Greater Minnesota and Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe:

♦ Community-based research in women’s health such as Health Education Priorities: Perspectives from Women’s Voices, a project to gather information from diverse women across the state regarding their health information needs and how they prefer to receive health information.

♦ Free women’s health education and screenings at community locations: We collaborate with our community partner organizations and clinics to offer health fairs and consumer education programs throughout the year.

♦ Dissemination of current health information to women across Minnesota through newspapers, newsletters, magazines, and Web sites, including our center Web site at www.womenshealth.umn.edu.

Partner Spotlight: Centro Campesino

Centro Campesino is dedicated to improving the lives of migrant, agricultural workers, and rural Latinos. A grassroots organization based in Owatonna, Minnesota, Centro Campesino requested collaboration with the Powell Center to conduct a survey assessing the mental health needs of their community. In response, the Powell Center developed a research team with the School of Nursing and has worked with Centro Campesino to develop a culturally specific, Latino mental health survey. Centro Campesino staff is currently administering the survey to 200 Latino youth and adults in south-central Minnesota. The results will guide Centro Campesino’s plans to increase local mental health resources for Latino women and families.
Promoting Women Leaders

Women’s leadership is a key component to improving women’s health. The Powell Center supports current and future women health leaders by

- **Developing mentoring resources**: such as the book “Mentoring and Being Mentored: Effective Collaboration throughout an Academic Career,” part of a comprehensive University mentoring program (Bland, Taylor, Shollenberg, Mulcahy).
- **Providing guidance to women** of all ages who are interested in health careers and pairing junior and senior researchers who share an interest in women’s health.

She who has health has hope; and she who has hope has everything.

~Arabian Proverb

Research

Fostering leaders and innovation

A primary goal of the Powell Center is to increase University research in women’s health and disseminate research findings to benefit all women.

- **Women’s Health Research Conferences**: In 2004, we organized Minnesota’s first interdisciplinary Women’s Health Research Conference. Since then, our annual conference attendance has tripled to over 300 participants in 2006. The day-long conference connects University and community members with presentations from local and national experts and awards for excellence in women’s health research.
- **Supporting new women’s health research**: The Powell Center has convened the University’s first Women’s Health Research Advisory Committee with representatives from across the University including Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health, and Psychology. The Powell Center leads research grant submissions and disseminates funding opportunities to researchers.
- **Encouraging women’s participation in clinical research**: We believe that participation of diverse women in clinical research, studies conducted in clinics or hospitals, is crucial to improve our knowledge of women’s health. Through our newsletter, Web site, and community outreach activities, we disseminate information to diverse communities about enrolling in current women’s health research studies.

Education

Can you hear me now?

One of the Powell Center’s priorities is to enhance how health care providers are trained to ensure they provide the best care possible. Through surveys and interviews with students, patients, and faculty, we identified one of the greatest needs in women’s health – improved communication between patients and their health care providers. The Powell Center worked with several faculty to propose an approach for medical students that weaves communication around women’s health issues and cultural awareness throughout medical education. We are one of five national centers to receive grant funding to implement the program. Today, medical students have increased exposure to women’s health communications issues, and they are measured on their effectiveness.
Focus on Women and Heart Health: 
Heart Disease does not care what you wear!

Red Dress Event 2004

The red dress is the national symbol to raise awareness of women and heart disease. In August 2004, the Powell Center partnered with over 25 community organizations from across Minnesota to educate diverse women about cardiovascular health risks. The event included workshops for health care providers and community leaders, as well as free health screenings and education for over 500 women at the Mall of America. The event culminated in a multicultural Red Dress Fashion Show sponsored by Macy’s and featuring Powell Center leaders, community members, and state legislators as models.

For information on supporting the Powell Center for Women’s Health, please contact Minnesota Medical Foundation at 612-625-1440.

420 Delaware Street S.E. 
MMC 293 
Minneapolis, MN 55455 
www.womenshealth.umn.edu 
612-626-1125
Selected Grants and Contracts Awarded to the Powell Center for Women’s Health and Associates, 2003-2006

**Association of Professors of Gynecology and Obstetrics**
Training Students in Effective Communication with Patients $30,000

**Johnson & Johnson**
Academic – Community Partnership $5,000

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**
University of Minnesota National Center of Excellence in Women’s Health $594,424
Incentive Award for Performance - National Center of Excellence $51,000
Red Dress Minnesota 2004 $2,176
Body Works Training, Minority Women’s Health Summit & National Obesity Forum $5,500
Office of Women’s Health, Region V-Heart Truth Campaign $4,297
Heart Truth Dissemination $50,275
Policy Briefing on Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in the Minneapolis, St. Paul Area $5,500
Heart to Heart Preceptorship $6,550
Improving Outcomes of Comprehensive Heart Health Care for High Risk Women $150,000
Center of Excellence Sustainability and Leveraging Resources $2,999
Health Careers Opportunities for Native American Youth $4,998
Women’s Health Promotion for Migrant Workers in Minnesota $4,998
Improving Outcomes of Comprehensive Heart Health Care for High Risk Women $75,000

**U.S. Department of Justice/Civil Society**
Services for Trafficking Victims $7,199

**University of Minnesota**
Council on Public Engagement - Health Education Priorities: Perspectives from women’s voices $7,500
Latino Mental Health – Academic Health Center Faculty Seed Grant $25,000

Total $1,032,416

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