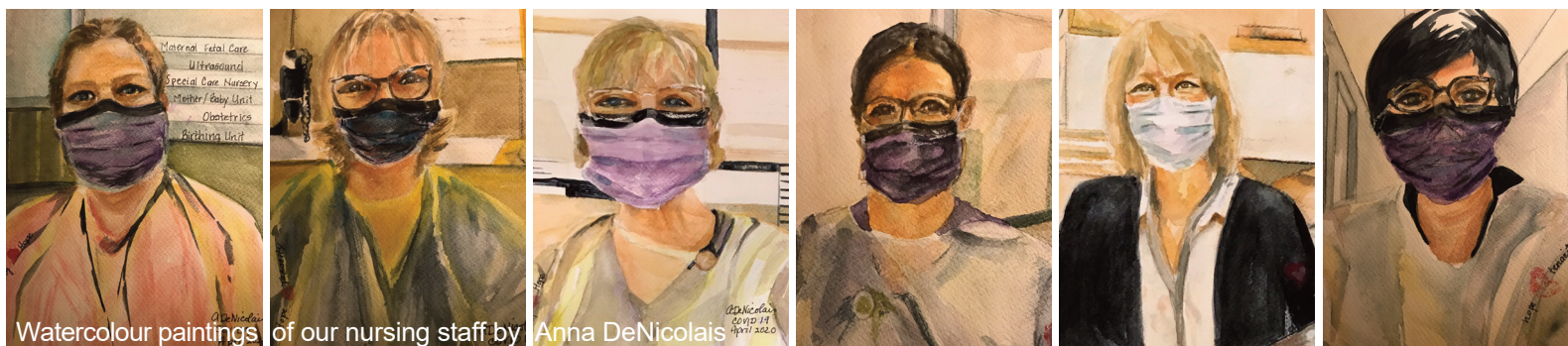


# Shaping the future of health care

at the Shirley E. Greenberg Women's Health Centre



Watercolour paintings of our nursing staff by Anna DeNicolais

SEGWHC patients leave each visit with a printed summary thanks to EPIC, the new health information system at The Ottawa Hospital (TOH). Patients can also review treatment advice, appointment schedules, and share health information through EPIC's online portal, MyChart.

Our innovative approach to decision coaching in women's pelvic health, led by Dr. Joyce Schachter, won a Best in Category prize at the International Continence Society Congress in Florence, Italy.

Dr. Innie Chen is leading CanWISER – Canadian Women's Investigators for Surgical Excellence in Research, in a comprehensive review of hysterectomy in Canada. Funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR), this project will inform new healthcare policy and resource allocation.

## Staffing Announcements

### Congratulations Dr. Dy, welcome Dr. Kielly!

We are pleased to announce Dr. Jessica Dy has assumed the role of Vice Chair, Operations (COO) of the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Newborn Care at TOH. She and Wendy Hicks-Boucher will work closely as the operational leads for SEGWHC.

SEGWHC also welcomes Dr. Maria Kielly, an Obstetrician Gynecologist who trained at Queen's University and University of Ottawa. Her focus at our clinic will be on the gynecologic care of cancer survivors, primary ovarian insufficiency, and complex menopause care. She also specializes in pediatric and adolescent gynecology and transgender care.



Dr. Jessica Dy



Dr. Maria Kielly

## Leading the Way:

### How the COVID-19 Pandemic impacts Women's Health

Researchers at SEGWHC are examining the health impact of COVID-19 on Canadian women as part of the Pandemic Women's **Health Equity Response Study (HER Study)**. Led by Dr. Innie Chen, a Tier 2 Research Chair at the University of Ottawa, a team of experts from across the country will characterize the scope and extent of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's health in Canada.

"Women are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and women-specific diseases may be neglected due to shifts in healthcare priorities," says Dr. Amanda Black, a co-investigator for the HER Study. The objectives of the study are to provide key guidance for healthcare policies and decisions and to provide the groundwork for a National Women's Health Dashboard in the future.

## Testimonial

"The care I have been receiving through the Shirley E. Greenberg clinic has been such a positive experience... I am so happy that your clinic was able to provide such an essential service."

– Donna Wilson, SEGWHC patient

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## SEGWHC staff, patients pivot to virtual care

Within days of the COVID-19 pandemic hitting Ottawa, staff at the Shirley E. Greenberg Women's Health Centre (SEGWHC) had to re-think how to provide care to hundreds of women seeking and receiving care at the Centre.

"Hospital operations had to change on a dime," says Wendy Hicks-Boucher, Corporate Clinical Manager of Obstetrics and Gynecology at The Ottawa Hospital. Non-emergency surgeries and examinations were put on hold and ultrasound services were drastically reduced. In addition, nursing staff were redeployed to other areas of the hospital to address the pandemic.

"Although we had some experience with virtual care previously, the entire Centre had to quickly pivot to almost complete virtual care," says Dr. Amanda Black, Professor of Ob/Gyn and Medical Director of SEGWHC. "In doing so, in-person visits were limited to those most urgent while ensuring that our patients were still being cared for."



"We had to adapt, and we became more efficient. Then we started to see some advantages," says Dr. Sukhbir Sony Singh, Professor Ob/Gyn and Director of Surgical Services at SEGWHC.

"Nobody had to pay for parking, people didn't have to take time off to make an appointment or to sit in the waiting room.

Dr. Singh and his colleagues believe that most consultations for even complex care could start with a phone call and then determine who needs to be seen in person.

"At SEGWHC, we deal not only with cancer but also complicated gynecologic issues," he says, "and we recognize how much these women are suffering, so we definitely try to stay on top of these important aspects using virtual care."



Dr. Dante Pascali, who is Division Head of Urogynecology and Pelvic Reconstructive Surgery, agrees.

"Typically, we were seeing one hundred patients per week but in March, basically everything was frozen while we tried to figure out how to service our patient population."

Dr. Pascali says many of the clinic's patients are over the age of 65.

"We had to be very conscientious in this more vulnerable population given the fact that older patients are more affected by the COVID-19 virus."

"We were seeing patients who needed urgent care," Dr. Pascali says, "where the alternative would have been to go to the emergency department. So, the Women's Health Clinic pivoted to an emergency-triage unit where patients with urgent needs could be seen in a very controlled environment...to keep it as safe as possible."

The doctors all admit there have been challenges in working through this ever-changing landscape, but they hope it will ultimately improve care.

"We have completely changed the way we provide care," says Dr. Singh, "and I think it will be for the better."



Originally built and equipped with the support and generosity of our community, The Shirley E. Greenberg Women's Health Centre is a vital piece of the Canadian women's healthcare network. Your support today enables cutting-edge clinical care, education, and research to improve the lives and health of women.

Visit <https://www.ohfoundation.ca> to give.