

# 20

IMPACT REPORT

# 24-25

# Research matters

We acknowledge with respect and humility that our offices are located on the unceded, ancestral, and traditional lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

We also acknowledge the diverse First Nations across British Columbia, who have inherent rights rooted in the connection to their lands and waters, which have never been surrendered.

In the spirit of reconciliation, we aim to practice cultural safety, value Indigenous ways of knowing, and respect the rights of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples.

# Research matters

It sparks new discoveries, better care, smarter policies, and a stronger health system.

That's what drives us every day at Health Research BC. Everything we do is about turning research into real benefits for people and communities across the province.

This is what we've always done, and we will continue to build on this legacy in an evolving landscape. The world of health research is changing fast. New challenges demand new approaches, and we're ready to meet them. We're building on our strengths, working more collaboratively, and moving faster to translate research into real impact.

Together with our partners, we're working to ensure research creates a healthier future for everyone in BC.



Dr. Geoff Payne  
President & CEO  
Michael Smith Health Research BC



## We fund people and research

## We partner on shared opportunities

Since 2001, we have supported more than 3,000 health researchers across BC. Those researchers in turn have launched independent programs, created life-changing innovations, and attracted hundreds of millions in additional research investment to the province.

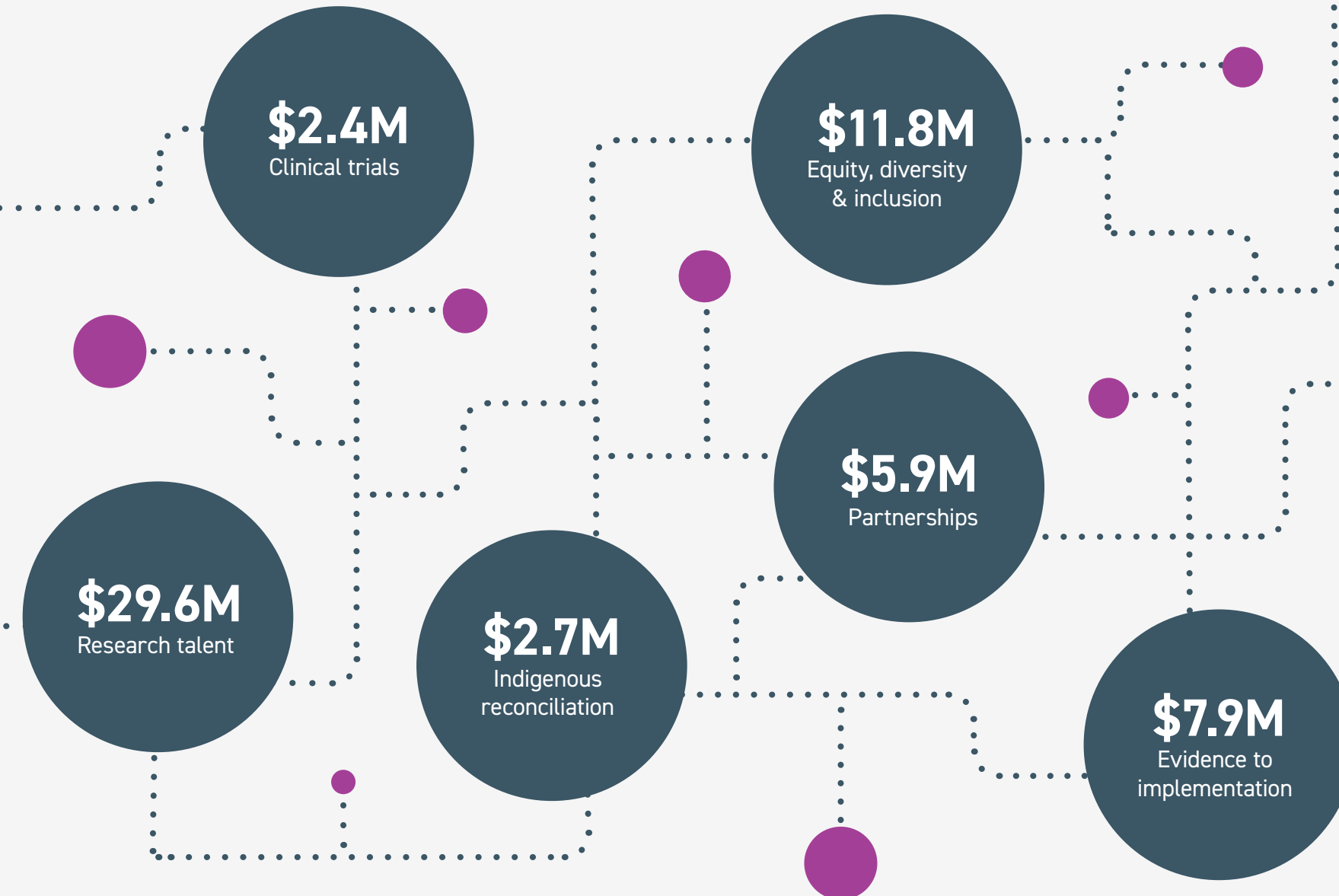
We also drive system-level change. For nearly 25 years, we've strengthened clinical trials and research ethics, advanced rapid response research on urgent health issues, and expanded funding opportunities through strong cross-sector partnerships.

Three strategic directions guide our work.



## Improving lives

At Health Research BC, impact isn't just numbers — it's better care, smarter policies, and healthier communities. Our investments support research from discovery to real-world application, making sure evidence translates into meaningful benefits across British Columbia.



## Informing decisions

We focus on outcomes that matter: both numbers and stories. We measure outputs like publications, training, and partnerships, along with real-world outcomes like policy uptake, improved clinical practice, and research capacity growth. We listen to researchers, health leaders, and patients to learn how our work is making a difference.

## Measuring impact

At every step, we make sure research translates into results people can feel and see.

- **Scan and adapt:** Monitor trends locally and globally to keep BC competitive
- **Engage patients and communities:** Make research relevant and meaningful through lived experience
- **Align with priorities:** Advance research ready for real-world impact
- **Collaborate nationally:** Amplify BC's voice and share innovations across Canada

## OUR IMPACT | RESEARCH TALENT

**\$29.6M**  
INVESTED

- 84% of funded researchers employed in BC five years post-award
- 3,883 trainees supported
- 348 highly qualified personnel employed on funded projects



### Breaking the stigma of dementia

*Co-funded with Alzheimer Society of B.C.*

Community-driven approaches to dementia care are the key to fighting fear, misdiagnosis, and isolation. This is especially true in rural communities where support is limited.

Dr. Juanita-Dawne Bacsu is building shared solutions across BC's Interior through workshops and community engagement. Her team is creating more inclusive dementia strategies, ensuring care is grounded in dignity, understanding, and respect.



### Improving climate readiness in long-term care

Integrating climate action with elder care protects both people and the planet. Dr. Jennifer Baumbusch is assessing climate readiness across BC's long-term care (LTC) sector, focusing on sustainability and preparedness.

Using surveys and a climate scorecard designed for LTC, her research will inform priorities for policy and practice. The goal is to ensure LTC homes are better equipped to respond to climate challenges.





# Rural health matters

*Co-funded with Pacific Public Health Foundation, Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)*

Hybrid care models combining virtual and in-person services strengthen healthcare in rural areas. They link specialists with local providers to provide timely services and keep care rooted in the community.

Alongside Indigenous partners and rural health teams, Dr. Anurag Singh is making hybrid care work for BC's rural and remote communities. His research integrates Indigenous knowledge and community priorities to ensure hybrid care is culturally safe, adaptable, and sustainable.

This work guides Northern Health's virtual care programs, workforce planning, and provincial service-delivery guidelines. It supports scalable, equitable policies that honour Indigenous knowledge and community leadership.

## OUR IMPACT | CLINICAL TRIALS

**\$2.4M**  
INVESTED

- 1,639 clinical trials supported in the Clinical Trials Management System
- 1,028 research participants matched and recruited by REACH BC
- 27 institutions participating in harmonized ethics review



### Bringing research closer to home

*Co-funded with the CANadian Consortium of Clinical Trial TRAINing platform (CANTRAIN)*

People in rural communities deserve access to new treatments. But most clinical trials never reach them.

Dr. Denise Jaworsky is working to change that. Alongside partners at Interior Health, UBC, and the College of the Rockies, she's building a rural clinical trials program in the East Kootenay region.



### Mapping BC's clinical trials future

BC's has world-class clinical research facilities and deep scientific talent. But there is still room to grow. Health Research BC commissioned an analysis of the province's clinical trials ecosystem to understand opportunities and gaps.

The report recommends key actions, such as creating a central “convener” to streamline collaboration. Health Research BC is working with Clinical Trials British Columbia to activate the report's insights and create a more efficient and competitive clinical trials system.





# Innovation matters

A new clinical trials unit is keeping innovation in BC, accelerating discovery, and bringing new treatments closer to patients.

The eight-bed unit at Vancouver's Mount Saint Joseph Hospital is BC's first for non-cancer Phase 1 human trials. It gives local companies a place to test new therapies, while volunteers are recruited through REACH BC and cloud-based systems streamline trial management.

Health Research BC and Clinical Trials British Columbia partnered with Providence Health Care to open the unit.

Photo: Guests celebrate the opening of the new clinical trials unit at Mount Saint Joseph Hospital: Anne Stevens, VP of Business Development, AbCellera (second from left); Dr. Darryl Knight, VP Research and Academic Affairs, Providence Health Care (centre); Ravi Kahlon, BC Minister of Jobs and Economic Growth (right).



**\$7.9M**  
INVESTED



- 407 clinical guidelines informed through funded research
- 23% of funded research projects include patients

## Improving wellbeing in long-term care

Relationships. Activity. Good nutrition. These are the things that drive healthy aging in long-term care (LTC).

The Long-Term Care Quality Initiative (LTC-QI), a province-wide program, helped care homes use research data to improve residents' wellbeing by focusing on what really matters. Nineteen percent of publicly funded care homes participated. Every participating health authority reported positive impacts, and findings from LTC-QI informed the BC Government's Long-Term Care Quality Framework.

LTC-QI was a partnership between Health Research BC, the BC Ministry of Health, regional health authorities, and academic researchers.





# Healthy aging matters


Older adults want to stay healthy and independent in their own homes. Health Research BC is supporting that vision through a new program.

The Advancing the Use of Evidence in Seniors' Home and Community Care Program funds research teams to implement promising approaches in seniors' care in the health system and evaluate the outcomes.

It will provide evidence to help decision-makers support programs that help seniors to live longer, healthier lives more independently in their communities. By supporting evidence-based programs with health-system partners, Health Research BC is closing the gap between research and care.

Photo: Peggy Woo spins a winning play during a 55+ BC Games table tennis match 75-79 year division.





# Indigenous knowledge matters

Dr. Lyana Patrick, Dakelh from Stellat'en First Nation, is working to improve Indigenous Peoples' healthcare experiences and foster respectful relationships between communities and providers.

She works with urban and First Nations communities to explore how Indigenous Peoples respond to systemic inequities in order to transform relationships with health systems and industry. Her approach uses multimedia and creative knowledge-sharing methods guided by OCAP principles, ensuring communities lead the work.

By connecting Indigenous frameworks of human, animal, and planetary health, her research informs policies, education, and practices that support nation-to-nation relationships, cultural safety, and equitable care.

INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION

**\$2.7M** INVESTED

Photo: Lyana Patrick collects her thoughts at the water's edge of the Nechako River.





## Advancing Indigenous research ethics

The BC SUPPORT Unit, part of Health Research BC, and the BC Network Environment for Indigenous Health Research brought together nearly 100 Indigenous community members, researchers, Elders, and students for a provincial symposium focused on strengthening Indigenous research ethics in BC.

Participants emphasized that ethical research must be led by communities and grounded in relationships, trust, and Indigenous governance. They highlighted the need for system-wide change, including greater recognition of Indigenous protocols and more culturally safe ethics review.

Photo: Leaders supporting the Indigenous Health Research Ethics in Clinical Research Symposium in April 2024.  
Left to right, top to bottom: Dr. Jeffrey Reading, Dr. Stirling Bryan, Dr. Krista Stelkia, Mark Matthew, Gillian Corless, Dr. Evan Adams, Tara Erb.



## Reducing barriers to Indigenous-led research

Embedding Indigenous worldviews and priorities in peer review increases cultural safety. Health Research BC launched a dedicated Indigenous review panel for the 2025 Scholar and Health Professional-Investigator programs to increase the success rate of Indigenous applicants and foster trust among Indigenous researchers.

Composed of BC-based Indigenous experts in methodologies and knowledge systems, the panel offered applicants the option of culturally grounded review. Dr. Gabrielle Legault, a 2025 Scholar award recipient, was the first researcher to be funded through this process.

## Our commitment to Indigenous reconciliation

We envision a health research system that is culturally safe, values Indigenous ways of knowing, and respects the rights of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples. We aim to create new opportunities for Indigenous health researchers through our programs and support research grounded in Indigenous perspectives and values.



## Our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion

We envision a health research system that advances equity by removing barriers to participation; promotes diversity by recognizing the underserved and underrepresented; and enables inclusion by supporting cultural change that allows for meaningful involvement.

**\$11.8M**  
INVESTED



## Closing the gap in cancer care

*Co-funded with CIHR, BC Cancer Foundation, BC Nurses' Union*

When her younger brother was diagnosed with cancer, Dr. Leah Lambert saw the barriers to care facing many in BC – poverty, racism, stigma, mental health, and substance use.

She is working with leaders and communities to build a system where everyone gets the care they deserve. Her work to redesign care using trauma-informed and culturally safe approaches is shaping policy. BC's health authorities have adopted guidelines to strengthen and support clinical nurse specialists providing cancer care. The result is more equitable and culturally safe care for BC's diverse communities.



## Improving healthcare for 2SLGBTQIA+ people

*Co-funded with BC Nurses' Union*

BC's first 2SLGBTQIA+ Liaison Nurse was hired in Victoria in 2023 to support both patients and healthcare teams with culturally informed care.

Dr. Allie Slemon is studying the role to see how it can be replicated across BC. Early results are promising. Healthcare providers are exploring new hires, and patients report better experiences. With support from Health Research BC and CIHR, the team will continue evaluating the impact, helping expand liaison nurses province-wide, and eventually across Canada, to strengthen equitable, inclusive healthcare.



# \$5.9M

INVESTED

- 23% of talent activities supported through diversified funding sources
- \$218.5M indirect attraction from non-BC government sources
- \$6.9M direct leverage from non-BC government sources

Photo: Dr. Danielle Lavallee, Vice President of Research Programs, Health Research BC, announcing our partnership with Mitacs.

## Connecting researchers and industry

An \$8 million partnership between Health Research BC and Mitacs gives emerging researchers direct access to industry experience in BC's fast-growing life sciences sector.

The initiative co-funds internships that embed researchers inside BC companies, offering hands-on training that traditional academic routes can't always provide. More than 50 interns have already joined over 30 small and medium-sized companies this year, bringing fresh skills and new energy to the sector.

By working with partners like Mitacs, Health Research BC is creating practical, innovative pathways that prepare researchers for the future while strengthening BC's life sciences ecosystem.





## Pandemic readiness matters

Early detection of avian influenza is essential. To strengthen preparedness for future outbreaks, Health Research BC partnered with CIHR to support BC researchers developing new, faster, and more accurate detection tools.

Dr. Horacio Bach is creating a rapid test that can identify the virus at its source, whether in poultry barns, wild bird habitats, or clinical settings. The test aims to improve safety for high-risk populations and frontline workers.

Dr. Agatha Jassem is developing a blood test that can confirm exposure to the virus, even without symptoms. It can distinguish between strains more accurately than current methods, improving our ability to identify emerging threats.

These innovations will strengthen surveillance and build BC's capacity to respond to future pandemics.



# Engagement matters

Patient voices are transforming health research in BC. Patients, researchers, clinicians, and policy makers came together in Vancouver for the sixth annual Putting Patients First conference to advance patient-oriented research.

Hosted by the BC SUPPORT Unit, the conference focused on connecting people and sharing strategies to improve health systems. Highlights included a keynote by Dr. Robert Reid and Dr. Kerry Kuluski on learning health systems, and interactive sessions using games, arts, and real-world projects to embed lived experience into research.

500+  
attendees

90  
abstracts

55  
posters

Photo: Dr. Robert Reid, keynote speaker at Putting Patients First 2024 (right), speaks with an attendee.





# Advancing research engagement

It is critical that partners, funders, and the public understand how research delivers meaningful outcomes that improve lives. This requires more than reporting results. It calls for ongoing engagement across the health research system and beyond.

Broad, transparent communication helps create a shared understanding of why research matters and encourages collaboration across the entire system.

**133,592**  
website  
visitors

**41**  
research  
impact stories

**11**  
educational  
webinars

**19,868**  
social media  
followers

**5,360**  
newsletter  
subscribers



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