

Human Papilloma Virus Self-Sampling proposal wins Royal University Hospital Foundation's Women Leading Philanthropy \$100,000 Grant

SASKATOON (October 1, 2021) – More than 90% of cervical cancers are caused by the Human papillomavirus (HPV) and screening for HPV can be achieved using a self-collected vaginal swab as an alternative to the conventional Papanicolaou (Pap) test. This is not the reality in Saskatchewan today which puts a lot of women at a higher risk of undiagnosed HPV and potentially life-ending cancer. This is about to change thanks to a novel pilot project proposed by Dr. Jennifer Brown Broderick and her team, funded by women philanthropists from Saskatoon and across Saskatchewan.

Royal University Hospital Foundation's Women Leading Philanthropy (WLP) program donors voted to invest their \$100,000 combined donation to Dr. Brown Broderick, and her team, in support of their project titled "HPV Self-Sampling for Primary Cervical Cancer Screening in Underserved Saskatchewan Women". A practicing engineer, Dr. Jennifer Brown Broderick, MSc ENG, MD, FRCSC, DABOG, later shifted to medicine, graduating from the University of Alberta in 2009. Having completed her residency and fellowship in gynecologic oncology at the University of Ottawa, she practiced for 4 years in Rochester, NY before returning to Canada. A gynecologic oncologist in Saskatoon at the Saskatchewan Health Authority's Royal University Hospital and Saskatchewan Cancer Agency and Assistant Professor of Oncology at the University of Saskatchewan, College of Medicine, she currently directs several clinical trials as primary investigator.

Cervical cancer is a disease that is almost entirely preventable with screening and vaccination. Less than half of all women in Saskatchewan who are eligible for traditional cervical cancer screening (using a Pap test) are screened. In the north and in underserved populations such as new immigrants, indigenous and metis women, screening rates are estimated as low as 19%. This pilot project will work to change the outcomes in this under-screened segment of Saskatchewan's population, by sending out self-collect tests and ensure proper follow-up with medical action if needed to make sure life-saving measures are initiated.

Dr. Brown Broderick's team was one of three finalists to "pitch" their projects to WLP members during our September 27th voting meeting, sponsored by Skye Planning Group. Other event sponsors were: D&M Images, Encore Events, Handy Special Events, Hillberg & Berk, Humanly Branding & Marketing, 1330 Creative Studios, MNP and Leland Kimpinski LLP.

"To be chosen as one of the finalists and preparing for the voting meeting was nerve-racking. Especially since it was a lot at stake. If I didn't receive the WLP grant then I wouldn't be able to help women detect cervical cancer early and potentially saving their lives", said Dr. Brown Broderick. She continued: "I've seen more advanced cancer in Saskatchewan than what I saw during my years in New York, and we have universal health care here. It doesn't need to be like that and it shouldn't. Cervical cancer is one of the only cancers that has a screening test to detect pre-cancer well in advance, before it's too late. My mission is to get self-sampling tests into the hands of women in Saskatchewan and make sure more lives are saved."

RUH Foundation's WLP program is a unique sharing circle of women philanthropists who are supporting innovative health-care initiatives to advance innovative women's healthcare led by women physicians, health practitioners and researchers. Launched in 2018 \$500,000 has been awarded to five novel projects led by female physicians and their teams. Honourary WLP Chair Rachel Mielke, Founder and CEO of Hillberg & Berk, praised the three grant finalists and the women philanthropists for their involvement.

"When we empower women we all benefit -- women, our families, and the entire community. You are a community of amazing women who have come together to champion innovation in health care," said Mielke.

The winning project team, led by Dr. Brown Broderick, will report back to the WLP donors, on their progress, in the year ahead.

To learn more about the WLP program and on how to become a donor, please visit <https://ruhf.org/women-leading-philanthropy/> or call Tricia Haugen, Development Officer, Corporate & Community Partnerships, at 306.655.6456.

(Editors: For more information, please contact Arla Gustafson, RUH Foundation CEO at 306.655.1050 or at arla.gustafson@ruhf.org)



L – r: Rachel Mielke (Founder and CEO of Hillberg & Berk), Dr. Jennifer Brown Broderick (recipient of \$100,000)), Dr. Mary Kinloch (WLP Volunteer Program Chair, SHA Division Head Anatomic Pathology, Arla Gustafson (CEO, RUH Foundation)



Dr. Jennifer Brown Broderick, MSc ENG, MD, FRCSC, DABOG