

First Endometriosis Awareness Month in Nova Scotia

This March is the first Endometriosis Awareness Month in Nova Scotia following the passage of Bill 119 (Endometriosis Awareness Month Act) in the Fall 2023 sitting of the legislature.

Endometriosis and chronic pelvic pain (E&CPP) is a common, often under-recognized issue, affecting one in 10 women and an unknown number of gender diverse people. There is a tremendous cost to quality of life and mental health and often relationships, employment, and mobility are compromised by the pain. It can have a devastating effect on quality of life due to symptoms of pain and infertility. Endometriosis Awareness Month hopes to raise awareness of the symptoms of endometriosis with the goal being more women receiving diagnosis and treatment earlier. “Be your own advocate you know your body best. Ask your family doctor for a referral to a gynecologist if you feel your symptoms are not being managed adequately,” says Dr. Elizabeth Randle, IWK OBGYN.

The IWK E&CPP clinic interdisciplinary team sees patients with endometriosis and chronic pelvic pain who have been assessed by a gynecologist in the past five years and who have not adequately responded to initial treatments. These patients tend to have more complex care needs and would likely benefit from a biopsychosocial approach.

An interdisciplinary approach to treatment is considered the gold standard of care and demand for the clinic is high. The IWK E&CPP offers assessment, management, patient education and is actively involved in research to better understand the cause of endometriosis and optimize treatment options.

The annual economic impact of endometriosis is \$1.8 billion in Canada. Additional costs are associated with emergency visits, hospitalizations for pain, and unnecessary investigations and treatments while awaiting a specialist. Though it affects 1 in 10 women and people with uteruses, Nova Scotians with endometriosis spend years in debilitating pain, with poor understanding of the disease and long wait times for treatment. Once referred to the IWK’s E&CPP Clinic, those suffering can wait 18 months or more to be seen.

The Endometriosis Network Canada is dedicated to enhancing the lives of individuals living with endometriosis across Canada. As a registered charity in Canada founded in 2012, its impact includes providing support and education to thousands of Canadians, developing dedicated programs for underserved communities, raising awareness, and impacting policy across Canada. For more information and resources visit: <https://endometriosisnetwork.com/>