

Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women’s Health Highlights & History

Over the past two decades, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) has invested significant faculty and clinical expertise, funds, and facilities to both coordinate and expand a range of existing women’s health care, research, and education programs. The timeline below highlights some of the major accomplishments over the years.

Established in 1999 with approval from the Board of Visitors, the VCU Institute for Women’s Health seeks to improve the health of women through education, research, clinical care, community outreach, and leadership development. The Institute was created to bring together these diverse activities, create synergy within VCU, and foster coordinated alliances with the greater community.

In 2003, these efforts were rewarded when the VCU Institute for Women’s Health was designated by the US Department of Health and Human Services as a National Center of Excellence. The National Centers of Excellence serve as models for medical centers across the United States in providing innovative, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and integrated health care systems for women across the life span.

Timeline of Women’s Health Major Milestones at VCU

1987	Women’s Health Community Advisory Council
1992	Women in Medicine and Science Faculty Organization
1993	Pathways to Leadership Conference
	Women’s Health Center at Stony Point
1995	Committee on Status of Women & Minorities
1997	Women’s Health Residency Track
1999	Institute for Women’s Health
	Women’s Health Conference
	Women’s Health Referral Line
2000	Building Interdisciplinary Careers in Women’s Health NIH grant
	AAMC Women in Medicine Leadership Development Award
2001	Women’s Health Network for Bilingual Consumer Health Outreach
2002	Directory of Women’s Health Residency and Fellowship Programs
	Women’s Health Residency & Fellowship Directors Conference
2003	National Center of Excellence in Women’s Health designation from DHHS
	Women in Science, Dentistry, & Medicine Faculty Organization (expanded)

2004	Breast Health Center at Stony Point
	Women's Surgical Care Wing at VCU Medical Center
2005	Women's Health Resource Center at Stony Point
	First Annual Women's Health Research Day
	Women's Health Research Core
2006	Young Women's Health Day
	Women's Health Issues Across the Lifespan undergraduate course

Institute Structure

As a National Center of Excellence, the Institute for Women's Health maintains strict standards of quality and accomplishments in five major areas: clinical care, research, community outreach, professional education, and leadership. Selected milestones and ongoing initiatives are highlighted here to demonstrate the breadth and depth of services offered and expertise available throughout the Institute.

Clinical Services

Each Center of Excellence is required to maintain a comprehensive, integrated clinical care center that provides "one-stop shopping" for a wide range of primary and specialty health care for women, including preventive services. "Excellent" clinical services also includes providing health information geared specifically toward the needs of women and their families. While the Women's Health Center at Stony Point serves as the focal care center, services provided to women throughout the VCU Health System comprise the Clinical Services component of the VCU Institute for Women's Health.

The concept for the development of a Women's Health Center began with the Women's Health Advisory Council, appointed in 1987 by the Chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology to advise the Department on what women wanted in services and research. The Advisory Council, composed of influential women in the community from business and professional arenas, was educated about women's health issues in monthly programs by VCU faculty. As an outgrowth of this education, the Council envisioned an ambulatory center that would respond to the special needs of women in a one-stop approach with diverse providers for medical and educational services. Thus, the original plans for a 10,000 sq ft clinic grew into a 52,000 sq ft building to house a range of general and specialist care options. The VCU Women's Health Center at Stony Point opened in 1993. A satellite site was chosen in a more suburban setting to provide a location for easy access in a safe environment with free parking facilities. The satellite also provided an opportunity to bring University faculty expertise into the community and offers a more convenient means for women to enroll in clinical trials. The Women's Health Center received the National Association of Professionals in Women's Health Award in 1998 for the best comprehensive outpatient women's health services in the United States, and the Platinum Award in 2002 from Professional Research Consultants for its innovative design to meet the privacy and confidentiality needs of women.

Clinical Highlights

- Nearly 20,000 patient visits occur annually at the **Women's Health Center at Stony Point**. Approximately 35% of patients are non-white.
- A **VCU Women's Health Referral Line** (1-877- VC- WOMAN) was established, which addresses questions about women's health services at VCU Medical Center.
- A **\$100,000 grant** from the Theresa A. Thomas Memorial Foundation funded the renovation and enhancement of the **Charlotte K. Roberts Women's Health Resource Center** at the Women's Health Center at Stony Point. The grant supports salary for an information specialist, renovations, and computer equipment and patient education materials.
- The **Breast Health Center** opened in June 2004 at Stony Point, providing 4 breast imaging suites with state-of-the-art mammography, including 2 dedicated suites fully equipped for breast ultrasound and 1 suite for interventional breast biopsy procedures.
- The Women's Health Center at Stony Point was one of the pilot sites for the **National Library of Medicine and American College of Physicians Information Rx** project to provide better health information to patients.
- The **Women's Surgical Care Wing** opened in the Main Hospital of VCU Medical Center in January 2005. The first such hospital wing in Central Virginia, the Women's Surgical Care Wing caters solely to the pre- and post-operative needs of female patients.
- The **VCU Program for Osteoporosis and Bone Health** at Stony Point, which is contiguous with the Women's Health Center, has been expanded to provide 3 regular clinics per week staffed by osteoporosis experts and researchers.
- Efforts have begun to lay the groundwork to establish a **Women's Heart Program** at the Women's Health Center at Stony Point.

Research

The Research Component of each Center of Excellence must develop a comprehensive women's health research agenda that includes basic, preventive, clinical, and applied research and disseminate research findings. The Institute for Women's Health supports researchers throughout the University who conduct research in women's health or sex- or gender-based differences and helps establish collaborative initiatives.

Research Highlights

- In 2000, the Institute for Women's Health received a \$2.7 million grant from NIH entitled **Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health**. Associate Vice President for Research Roy Pickens PhD served as the grant Principal Investigator, and Joann Bodurtha MD served as the Program Director. This mentored research training program for junior faculty comprised 5 areas of research strength that are relevant to women's health: substance abuse, psychiatric genetics, reproductive health, cancer, and diseases related to aging. The BIRCWH program successfully trained 8 VCU faculty researchers.
- The Institute for Women's Health sponsors an **Annual VCU Women's Health Research Day**. The 2nd Women's Health Research Day was held on March 29, 2006. The event included 71 poster presentations, 33 of which competed for the Elizabeth Fries Young Investigator Award. More than 175 faculty and students registered for the event, which also included a keynote presentation by Dr. Jerome Strauss, Dean of the School of Medicine, and a panel of women's health researchers at VCU.
- The **Women's Health Research Core within the Office of the Vice President for Research** was established in 2005 to support researchers throughout the University. The Women's Health Research Core assisted with women's health related grant applications and publications and offered grant-writing training and mentoring. The Women's Health Research Core participated in quarterly NIH proposal writing workshops with individual follow-up mentoring (171 attendees); matched junior & senior investigators for targeted "micro-mentoring"; and facilitated new collaborative initiatives across departments & schools.
- The **Women's Health Research Listserv** is used to announce grant opportunities, workshop dates, and other grant-related policy and/or news, and links researchers from across the university to the Institute for Women's Health. The listserv, with more than 160 members, is used to announce Institute Research Committee meetings and other Institute for Women's Health events to as wide a distribution as possible.
- **Show Us the Money: Unlocking the Doors to Women's Health Funding** workshop was held in partnership with the Virginia Department of Health to help VCU faculty and state employees establish collaborative research workgroups and learn strategies for applying for federal, state, and private grants related to women's health.
- The Institute for Women's Health established collaborative research working relationships with **St. Paul's Baptist Church**, which has nearly 10,000 members, most of whom are African American, the **Virginia Department of Health** (Division of Maternal and Child Health), Richmond Enhancing Access to Community Healthcare (**REACH**) and **CrossOver Ministry**, which resulted in the submission of grant applications.

- From September 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006, Institute for Women's Health personnel submitted or assisted with the submission of more than **58** grant applications, 18 of which were funded, and 14 of which are still pending. Institute personnel and affiliated members published more than **55** peer-reviewed articles in biomedical journals, and members of the Institute leadership alone gave more than **44** invited presentations to professional audiences.

Community-Based Research

In 2006, the Institute developed a focus on building community-based research, with the following goals:

- Address community needs through interdisciplinary collaboration;
- Engage faculty and staff in the community through community-based research and other community-based activities;
- Generate opportunities for scholarly and creative work;
- Provide seed funds for community-based projects that generate pilot data for additional and more substantial funding;
- Increase community visibility of the Institute for Women's Health as a model for university-community partnerships;
- Collect and disseminate information on the activities of faculty and students to promote greater awareness of their contributions;
- Promote the development of junior women health professionals as leaders in areas of community-based needs and partnerships;
- Create a mechanism for funding future small grant projects by highlighting the accomplishments of faculty in community-based research.
- Contribute to improving the health of women and girls in our communities.

The Institute has garnered funds and support to spearhead this new community-based research initiative. An Institute **Women's Health Community-Based Research Grant Program** will be launched in early 2007. Faculty and students will be encouraged to apply for competitive grants to conduct pilot studies addressing pressing community needs in the area of women's and girls' health. Research support will be provided primarily to fund newer faculty members in projects that are likely to lead to extramural funding and a continuing research program. The maximum amount to be awarded for an individual grant will be \$10,000. The research proposal must have a clearly stated defined and testable hypothesis, sound and well-designed methodology, adequate statistical analysis and sample size, and a clear path to further studies. The future studies must appear to have a high likelihood of attracting extramural support. A Women's Health Small Grant Advisory Committee will be developed to evaluate and prioritize grant applications.

Community Outreach

To ensure that the health needs of women are being met in the communities where they live, the Institute works to implement a comprehensive community outreach strategy, which includes preventive screenings and health education, and which extends to all women, including those in rural and other underserved areas. The Institute for Women's Health partners with many nonprofit agencies, including REACH (Richmond Enhancing Access to Community Healthcare) Women's Health Virginia, the YWCA, St. Paul's Baptist Church, and other churches, local libraries, and women's shelters. These community outreach efforts specifically target African American and Latina women throughout Central Virginia. Outreach activities reflect the multifaceted approach the Institute is taking to work with university and community partners to address the needs of women and girls. Partnerships with the new VCU Center on Health Disparities promise future activities, which will develop programs and enhance community partnerships aimed at addressing the inequities faced by women, minorities and underserved populations in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Community Outreach Highlights

- The **Institute for Women's Health Website** (<http://www.womenshealth.vcu.edu>) provides a simple way for community members to navigate all women's health services throughout the VCU Health System and to locate health information on topics important to them. The site receives over 10,000 hits a month.
- The Institute for Women's Health developed the bilingual **Women's Health Network** for Consumer Health Outreach. The Network was established in October 2001 through a contract from the National Library of Medicine to provide health education to minority women in ways that meet their cultural and linguistic needs.
- A special half-hour program (WTVR-TV) called "**Women's Wellness**" in April 2005 highlighted women's health issues and emphasized the significance of the Institute for Women's Health's designation as a National Center of Excellence.
- The **Divas and Dudes Out Walking** project, with support from US Office on Women's Health Region IV Women's Health Coordinator, kicked off a 6-week walking and health education program for St. Paul's Baptist Church during National Women's Health Week.
- The Institute obtained a **Jenkins Foundation grant** that is providing health services in three area domestic violence shelters. The project utilizes a nurse to provide an on-site health assessment and education program for residents and their children, using best practice protocols to assess physical and mental health needs and assists them in establishing a 'medical home' for ongoing health services.
- The Institute obtained funding from the **Philip Morris Employee Community Fund** to establish an on-site domestic/sexual violence advocate at the VCU

Medical Center Emergency Department and to renovate and furnish a safe designated space for victims to receive services in the emergency room.

- The **Perinatal Passport Program** is a partnership of VCU (Institute for Women's Health, Patient Access Services, Women's Health and Community Outreach), REACH, and CrossOver Ministry working to improve birth-related outcomes for non-Medicaid eligible pregnant Latinas and their families.
- The **Latino Cultures and Beliefs in Health Care** conference was held on November 16-17, 2006 at the Richmond Convention Center. Sheryl Garland, Institute Director of Community Outreach, spearheaded the effort as part of the new VCU Center on Health Disparities. Janett Forte, Institute Program Director served on the steering committee for the development of this conference for health care providers, community leaders, and individuals involved in the provision of health services to Latino populations in Central Virginia.
- **Young Women's Health Day at Huguenot High School** was jointly sponsored by the Institute for Women's Health, the Women in Medicine Student Organization and the VCU Health System, and was held on November 10, 2006. This program provided over 600 adolescent girls with information on health topics chosen by the students and also on health careers.
- Institute for Women's Health staff is involved in the **Annual Women and Girls' Health Expo** organized by Women's Health Virginia.
- Institute for Women's Health participated in the **VCU Women's Health Fair: Mind, Body & Spirit** on March 2, 2006, with more than 35 community, local, state, and national organizations exhibiting on all aspects of women's health.
- The Women's Health Resource Center at Stony Point participates in the **Community Outreach Information Network**, sponsored by the VCU Tompkins-McCaw Library, which won the state-level competition for the 2006 Health Information Awards for Libraries held by the US National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.
- Organized by the Institute for Women's Health, faculty, staff, and students from Virginia Commonwealth University and VCU Medical Center kicked off American Heart Month by participating in **National Wear Red Day** to show their support for women's heart disease awareness. More than 400 students, faculty, and employees dressed in red gathered in the courtyard outside of the Hermes A. Kontos Medical Sciences Building on Feb. 3, 2006 to form a red heart.

Professional Education

Integrating women's health topics into the professional and continuing education of health care providers represents an important goal for all Centers of Excellence. The Institute for Women's Health has worked to infuse women's health education across disciplines, departments, and schools at VCU – encouraging the development of

culturally competent curricula that address both wellness and illness across a woman's life span.

The Women's Health Residency Track was first offered within the Internal Medicine Residency Program in 1997 to address the complex issues across a woman's lifespan with attention to physiologic, hormonal, and psychosocial factors. Residents acquire a solid foundation in Internal Medicine through inpatient care, extensive critical care training, emergency medicine, and ambulatory care. Novel components include training in bone health, breast health, reproductive health, mental health, and community medicine. Residents are also strongly encouraged and given time to pursue research and academic expertise in their desired area of interest. VCU also developed and has maintained the Directory of Women's Health Residency and Fellowship Programs since 2002.

First offered in 1999, a major success of the Institute has been the annual Women's Health Conference, which provides physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and other health care professionals from all over the US with evidence-based presentations on a broad range of topics relevant to women's health across the lifespan. The Conference has sold out during early registration since 2001 (registration capped at 415), leading to its relocation to a larger venue capable of accommodating more attendees starting in 2006.

Professional Education Highlights

- The 7th Annual Institute for Women's Health CME conference, entitled ***Women's Health: Translating Research into Practice***, covered a broad range of women's health topics across the lifespan (pregnancy, adolescence, child-bearing years, menopause, old age). The 2006 conference represented a transition from a traditional continuing medical education event toward the promotion of translational research and evidence-based practice guidelines. The Institute for Women's Health obtained grant funding from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to support the conference, including conference scholarships for 11 Centers of Excellence and Community Centers of Excellence personnel (with preference given to women from underrepresented minority groups). In addition, the **22 conference presentations** are available online for educational purposes, accompanied by audio of the live lectures. www.womenshealth.vcu.edu/wh2006lectures
- The Institute for Women's Health assisted with the creation of a new Bachelor of Arts undergraduate major at the College of Humanities and Sciences, in Women's Studies with two tracks: General Interdisciplinary and Women, Health and Science. As part of this effort, the Institute developed a new and innovative undergraduate women's health course, WMNS 392: "**Women's Health Issues Across the Lifespan**", which is being offered in the Spring 2007 semester. Pat Selig, PhD, a Nurse Practitioner faculty member from the School of Nursing and member of the Institute Professional Education Committee, serves as instructor and course coordinator.

- The **How to Treat a Woman: Strategies for Healthcare and Self-Care Discussion Series** for health care professionals at VCU Medical Center is organized and hosted monthly by the Institute for Women's Health.
- The multi-disciplinary **Women's Health Residency Track** in Internal Medicine is one of ten in the country and has graduated 25 board certified internists who are able to provide comprehensive care for women
- The VCU Board of Visitors approved a **Certificate in Gender Violence Intervention** program in the Department of Sociology on May 20, 2005.
- Dr. Jill Rowe-Adjibogoun was hired as professor of **African American Women's Health** (appointment in the Department of African-American Studies).
- The Institute maintains a **Women's Health Curriculum Inventory** as an up-to-date, stand-alone, Web-based resource for the University.
- The Institute staff created a **Latino Health Resources Guide** with the VCU Center on Health Disparities for the Latino Health Summit, which is posted on our websites.
- The Institute for Women's Health partnered with the **Perinatal Education Program to Prepare Childbirth Educators**, accredited by Lamaze International, to provide a fiscal and executive home for the Program.

Leadership

The Leadership Component works to fully implement a Women's Health Academic Medicine Leadership Plan for Health Professionals. At VCU, such leadership is provided by the Committee on the Status of Women and Minorities (COSOWAM), a standing committee that reports to the Dean of the School of Medicine; Women in Science, Dentistry, and Medicine (WISDM), a faculty and student organization; and the Office for Faculty and Instructional Development in the School of Medicine. The Institute for Women's Health uses this existing infrastructure and its resources to address the issues of recruitment, retention, promotion, and equity for women and minorities in the health services professions on both campuses.

Established in 1992, the Women in Medicine & Science Faculty Organization (expanding to become the Women in Science, Dentistry, & Medicine or WISDM organization in 2003) works to advance the professional goals of women clinicians and scientists at VCU. As a sponsor of forums for open communication, the organization facilitates networking, mentoring, and collaboration among women faculty, housestaff, and medical and graduate students. The Organization established the Annual Professional Achievement Award in 1993 to acknowledge the special contributions and accomplishments of women faculty in the VCU School of Medicine. First offered in 1993, the Pathways to Leadership Conference has grown from a regional event to a nationally recognized and well-attended meeting with partners from throughout the Commonwealth. The success of this conference and other activities in nurturing and developing leaders among women in the biomedical sciences led to their receipt in 2000

of the prestigious Women in Medicine Leadership Development Award, making the VCU School of Medicine one of only three medical schools to receive this award from the Association of American Medical Colleges.

In 1995, the Dean of the School of Medicine re-instituted the Committee on the Status of Women and Minorities, which monitors the progress of women and minorities in the achievement of their full potential within the School of Medicine. The Committee conducts assessments and recommends the amelioration of such factors as recruitment and retention, promotion and tenure, salary equity, committee representation, involvement and participation of departmental chairs that influence women and minority career attainment. The Committee presents these data to the Dean and Department Chairs. In 2005, the Committee began collecting exit survey data as well as salary benchmarking data to identify the reasons faculty and clinicians leave VCU and to adjust recruitment and retention strategies accordingly.

Leadership Highlights

- Executive Director Dr. Susan Kornstein was named the new Editor-in-Chief of the **Journal of Women's Health**; Senior Deputy Director Dr. Wendy Klein was appointed Deputy Editor.
- The 14th **Annual Women in Science, Dentistry, Osteopathy and Medicine WISDOM Pathways to Leadership Conference** was held in March 2006. This was a full-day conference to promote professional development and included keynote speakers, workshops, and networking. The conference was founded by VCU School of Medicine and expanded with collaborators University of Virginia, Eastern Virginia Medical School, VCU School of Dentistry, Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Medical Society of Virginia, Richmond Academy of Medicine, and the Veterans Administration Dental Association. There were over 200 participants this year from 10 states and Washington D.C.
- **YWCA Outstanding Women Awards** - Dr. Bela Sood, Chair of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and President of the VCU WISDM Faculty Organization, was named an **Outstanding Women of 2006 by the YWCA** in the category of **Health and Science**. She joins many outstanding Virginia women who have been so recognized, including a significant number of CoE affiliated faculty: Janett Forte, Carmen Foster, and Cathy Howard (2004); Charlotte K. Roberts (2003), JoAnne Henry (2001), Sheryl Garland (2000), Susan Kornstein (1998), Joann Bodurtha (1997), Judy Collins (1991), Lisa Kaplowitz (1988), and Grace Harris (1984).
- Dr. Saba Masho, Diane Bishop, and Carol Hampton gave a presentation to the SOM Dean and Chairs on **Benchmarking: Representation of Women and Minority Faculty**. The purpose of the benchmarking report was to describe the status of women and minority faculty at the VCU School of Medicine and compare VCU School of Medicine data to national averages and examine trends.

- Dr. Suzanne Barbour, Associate Professor of Biochemistry, was selected as a Fellow in the 2006-2007 Class of the **Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine Program for Women**. She is the 9th ELAM Fellow from the VCU School of Medicine.
- Michelle Whitehurst-Cook, MD, Associate Professor of Family Practice, was supported as an **Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine Fellow** in 2004-2005. She was appointed Associate Dean of Admissions in the VCU School of Medicine effective June 25, 2006.
- Susan Kornstein, MD, Professor of Psychiatry and Executive Director of the Institute for Women's Health, was supported as an **Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine Fellow** in 2005-2006.
- The Institute's Leadership Committee offers faculty development programs through the **Women in Science, Dentistry, and Medicine Faculty Organization** and supports efforts to increase promotion and hiring of women into senior faculty and administration positions.

Institute Leadership

The Institute's senior leadership plus the Institute Program Director comprise the Executive Committee, which provides guidance, support, and integration for women's health activities across the University and monitors deliverables to ensure compliance with the Center of Excellence contract. The Executive Committee meets weekly to review projects and initiatives, plan publications and presentations, and develop and approve priorities and policies.

The Executive Committee plus the Evaluation Director and the leadership of the five main components of the Institute – Clinical Care, Research, Community Outreach, Professional Education, and Leadership – meet monthly to review progress and opportunities for collaboration among diverse activities ongoing within the Institute. Committees for each of the five components, all of which have membership from throughout the University, meet bimonthly to plan, prioritize, and implement specific Institute for Women's Health projects.

The Institute receives external oversight and guidance from the Steering Committee, which meets quarterly and is chaired by Judy Collins, Professor Emeritus of the VCU Schools of Nursing and Medicine and founding director of the Women's Health Center at Stony Point. The Steering Committee builds alliances and networks by providing a working forum for individuals from throughout the Commonwealth who are concerned about women's health and by sharing the resources and expertise of committee members toward achieving the Institute's goals and objectives. Members help each other's work in advancing women's health in Virginia through open discussion and collaborative agreements. At each meeting, a formal presentation is made by an Institute Director on a component or specific project to highlight achievements to date and strategic goals set. Committee members discuss how they and their organization can contribute to the success of the effort presented.

2005-06 Leadership

Executive Director

Susan Kornstein, M.D., Professor, Dept of Psychiatry

Senior Deputy Director

Wendy Klein, M.D., Associate Professor, Dept of Internal Medicine

Deputy Director

Dace Svikis, Ph.D., Professor, Dept of Psychology

Program Director

Janett Forte, MSW, LCSW, Assistant Professor, Dept of Psychiatry

Director of Clinical Services

Catherine Matthews, M.D. Assistant Professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology

Director of Research

Robert Downs, M.D. Professor, Internal Medicine – Co-Director

Michelle Kienholz, Director of Women’s Health Research Core – Co-Director

Director of Community-Based Research

Judith Bradford, Ph.D. Director, Community Health Research Initiative

L. Douglas Wilder School of Government & Public Affairs

Associate Professor, Epidemiology and Community Health

Director of Outreach

Sheryl Garland, MHA, Vice President for Outreach, VCU Health System

Director of Professional Education

Wendy Klein, M.D., Associate Professor, Dept of Internal Medicine

Brigitte Sicat, Assistant Professor, Dept of Pharmacy – Associate Director

Director of Leadership

Carol Hampton, MMS, Associate Dean for Faculty and Instructional Development

Director of Evaluation

Saba Masho, M.D., Dr.P.H., Assistant Professor, Preventive Medicine

Chair of Steering Committee

Judith Collins, WHNP, Professor Emeritus, Nursing and Medicine

Support Staff: Megan Edwards – IWH projects coordinator; Stacy Baldwin - Women’s Health Resource Center information specialist

Role as a National Center of Excellence

As one of 20 National Centers of Excellence designated by the US Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health, the VCU Institute for Women's Health must fulfill dozens of responsibilities and document maintenance of multiple standards of quality. The National Centers of Excellence provide for the special needs of women, especially the underserved and minorities. Each of the National Centers of Excellence, including the VCU Institute for Women's Health, provides the following:

- State-of-the-art comprehensive and integrated health care services to women with an emphasis on prevention and early detection of diseases and conditions
- Coordination between clinical services in academic centers and surrounding communities
- Community partnerships and outreach for health screening, services, career opportunities, and educational programs
- A multidisciplinary research agenda focused on women's health issues
- The integration of a women's health focus into the curricula of schools of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry and allied health
- Efforts to foster the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women in academic medical careers

Not all Centers of Excellence maintain their designation due to the rigorous requirements and expectations for participants in this program. The Office on Women's Health ranks VCU as one of the leading models in this program, which includes:

Brown University Medical Center Boston, Massachusetts	University of California, Los Angeles Los Angeles, California
Brown University/Women & Infants Hospital Providence, Rhode Island	University of California, San Francisco San Francisco, California
Magee-Women's Hospital Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	University of Illinois at Chicago Chicago, Illinois
MCP Hahnemann University Doing business as Drexel University Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	University of Minnesota Minneapolis, Minnesota
Harvard Medical School Boston, Massachusetts	University of Mississippi Medical Center Jackson, Mississippi
Indiana University School of Medicine Indianapolis, Indiana	University of Missouri Kansas City, Missouri
Oregon Health and Science University Portland, Oregon	University of Puerto Rico San Juan, Puerto Rico
Tulane and Xavier Universities of Louisiana New Orleans, Louisiana	University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio, Texas
University of Arizona Tucson, Arizona	University of Wisconsin, Madison Madison, Wisconsin
West Virginia University Health Sciences Center Morgantown, West Virginia	Virginia Commonwealth University Richmond, Virginia