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Discovery Forward  
**Providence Research  
Strategic Plan**

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/21-26





### **Mission**

Inspired by the need for health and wellness of patients and communities, Providence Research integrates teaching, knowledge creation and translation to discover and deliver disease prevention and dramatically improve care.

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### **Vision**

A place where patient-centred research is driven by social justice, and redefines better health and care globally.

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### **Values**

**Providence Research shares the same values as Providence Health Care:**

**Spirituality** We nurture the God-given creativity, love and compassion that dwells within us all.

**Integrity** We build our relationships on honesty, justice and fairness.

**Stewardship** We share accountability for the well-being of our community.

**Trust** We behave in ways that promote safety, inclusion and support.

**Excellence** We achieve excellence through learning and continuous improvement.

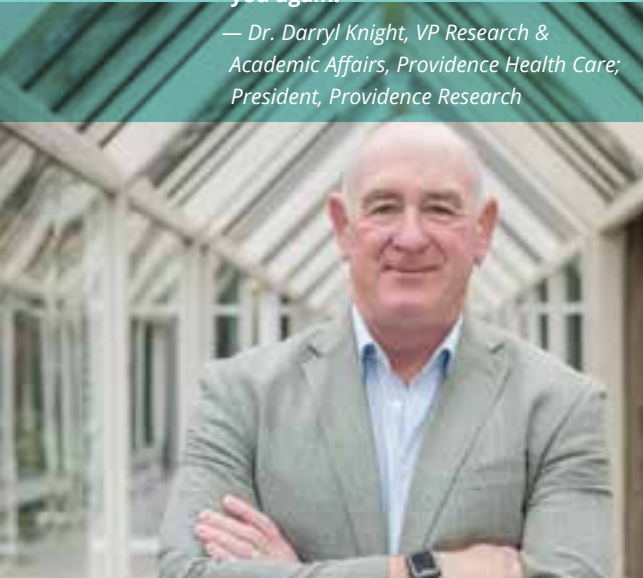
**Respect** We respect the diversity, dignity and interdependence of all persons.

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## Looking Back: **A History of Discovery at Providence**

“We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to every single person who participated in the consultations and who shared your ideas, your passion and your energy. Your commitment to your research and our collective work as a research organization was evident and we hope that you see your thoughts and your words reflected in this document. Thank you again.”

— Dr. Darryl Knight, VP Research & Academic Affairs, Providence Health Care; President, Providence Research



**At Providence Research, we honour the history and expertise of Indigenous peoples and are inspired by their dedication to knowledge-seeking. While brief in comparison, the 100-year innovation history at St. Paul’s Hospital and Providence Health Care is filled with stories of courageous people overcoming massive obstacles to save lives.**

The stories are both old and new. They include St. Paul’s fight to become one of the first hospitals to buy its very own X-ray machine, purchased around 1906. This was just three years after the machines were shown to save lives in European trials. Then, shortly after World War II, St. Paul’s Hospital broke ground again when it opened one of the first ICUs in Canada and the first in BC.

With a century of scientific discovery as a backdrop, developing our five-year strategic plan during the most challenging pandemic in a hundred years, helps underscore one particular Providence tradition: one of putting people in the greatest need at the centre of our research priorities. Another critical backdrop for *Discovery Forward* is the dramatic shift over the past five years in awareness and our collective responsibility — particularly in health care — to grapple with colonialism past and present, and move towards reconciliation with Indigenous people and communities.

## Present Tense: **Seizing the Day**

**It's been a decade and a half since the founding of the Providence Health Care Research Institute in 2008. Research and innovation are now crucial pillars of growth at Providence Health Care. With new leadership and with the springboard offered by the new St. Paul's Hospital redevelopment, many of us felt the time was right to re-think the institute model; the name itself implying "institutional" boundaries and walls. As a symbol of breaking down silos and barriers, we are re-emerging as Providence Research.**

Our simpler name is less about walls and buildings implied by the word "institute" and more about cultivating an ethos of collaborative research at Providence; a research culture that makes learning and improving a part of everything we do.

This ethos underscores the point that Providence Health Care and Providence Research operate hand-in-glove. While Providence Research is an independent legal entity reporting to a Board of Trustees, we are aligned with Providence Health Care through every facet of our work.

Our vision over the next five years is to become the primary nexus to accelerate the translation of research into superior health and healthcare for the communities we serve. Nexus refers to a link or intricate set of links between two or more things or a collective of linked things. We want to be that nexus for Providence and all research stakeholders; one that connects us all and creates an environment where research and researchers can pursue excellence.



# Discovery Forward: A Strategic Time for a Strategic Plan

We have now entered 2021 with this unique confluence of new leadership, a significant new infrastructure and building project, and a global pandemic; the latter underscoring more than ever, the need for flexibility and collaboration among researchers. We also recently underwent an external review that recommended we prioritize a new strategic plan to frame our path forward. Additionally, the newly released report *“In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care”* challenges us to reflect on both personal and systemic biases in the research aspects of the health care system.

In late 2020 and early 2021, we consulted our community, asking for input from a broad range of stakeholders. We analyzed these inputs and identified four common work themes that arose consistently across surveys, consultations, meetings and discussions. These overarching pillars reflect the passions and talents of our research community and acknowledge emerging global trends that are sculpting the health research environment.

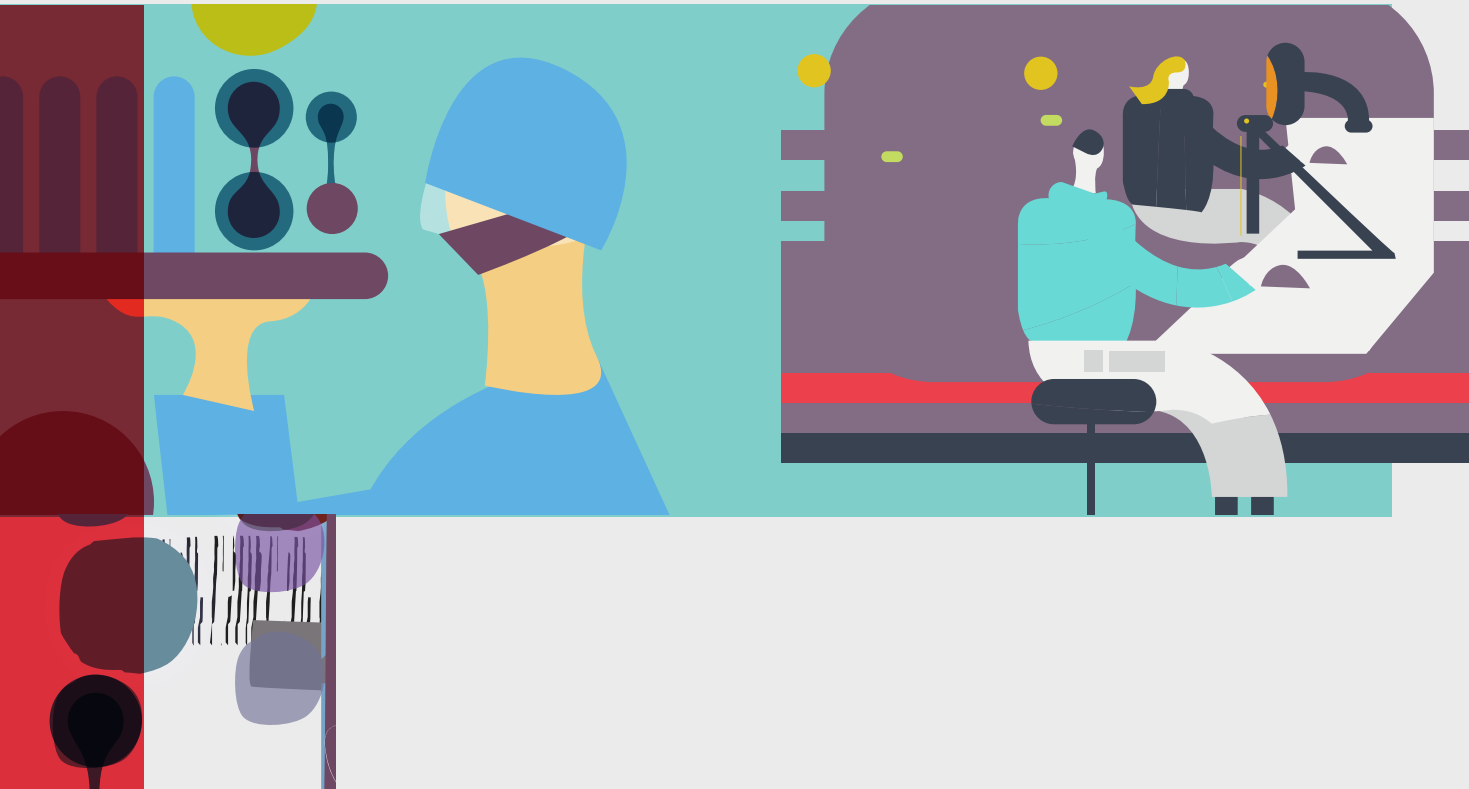
In addition to these themes called Strategic Directions, we have also pledged ourselves to a series of Foundational Principles — a set of values that were also expressed by our people.

During our consultations we were mindful of the role research can play to advance Providence Health Care’s *Mission: Forward Strategic Plan*, particularly its third Strategic Direction — “Discover, Learn and Innovate for Impact.” We will work cooperatively with Providence to ensure that our data strategies, our people strategies, and our commercialization strategies are aligned and integrated.



## Foundational Principles

Many research organizations are all “business” — focused on outcomes. It’s how researchers are trained and incentivized. But at Providence Research, we’re different. Taking time to define our Foundational Principles is a reflection of our belief that how we go about our work is just as important as what kind of work we prioritize. These Foundational Principles create a lens through which all of our research work will be filtered. This booklet is a high-level overview of *Discovery Forward*. We are now developing a more detailed plan to bring these goals to life. You can visit [DiscoveryForward.ca](http://DiscoveryForward.ca) for updates on the plan as we move forward.



01



## Reconciliation

Our reconciliation efforts with Indigenous people and communities start with learning about how research must change to reflect their rights and needs. We will seek guidance from Indigenous partners as well as several national and international reports, with a particular emphasis on the newly released *In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care*.

**Goal: Genuine and meaningful efforts to advance reconciliation with Indigenous People**

**Our plan includes these actions:**

1. Develop a research agenda that advances the evidence-based implementation of TRC, MMIWG, and In Plain Sight reports and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
2. Create an inclusive, safe, and empowering environment for active and meaningful research collaborations with local sovereign First Nations, Indigenous organizations, and Indigenous scholars, and patients.

02



## Advocacy

Data and evidence are the pillars of our work, but they can't change the world. People change the world. We know from those we serve that health research has not helped everyone in our society equally. That's why we have committed to advocate in particular for research that can benefit underserved populations. We hope that, through building mutual trust and respect, these individuals and communities will also advocate for us.

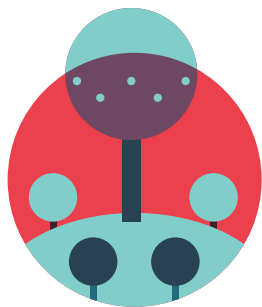
**Goal: Champion research that is person-centered and advances social justice**

**Our plan includes these actions:**

1. Advocate for and promote research that will benefit underserved populations.
2. Be a strong and proactive voice to aid in the communication and implementation of new knowledge that could support underserved populations.

## Foundational Principles

# 03



### Sustainability

As stewards of our past, present and future, we see sustainability two ways. The first is about protecting the environment. The second is from the perspective of preserving our capacity to contribute to the greater good.

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**Goal: Proactive stewardship and protecting our planet**

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**Our plan includes these actions:**

1. Promote processes to aid researchers in assessing the environmental impact of their research programs and support them to reduce their overall environmental footprint.
  2. Investing in our vision into the future, create a long-term, sustainable financial plan.
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# 04



### Ethics

As a mission-driven organization, we hold ourselves to ethical standards that surpass the norm. But to date, in the research context, this has lacked specifics. We will codify this philosophy and infuse it throughout our research enterprise.

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**Goal: Uphold and exceed ethical standards for health research**

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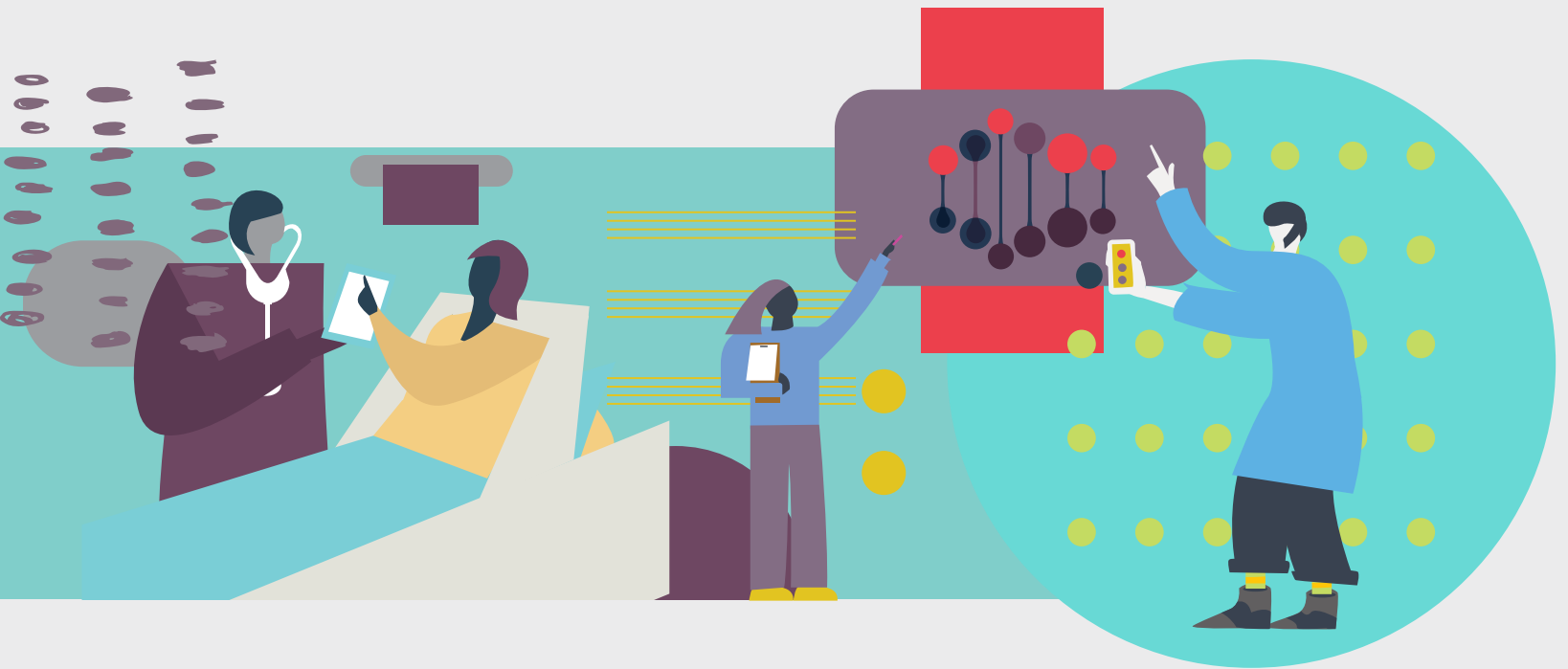
**Our plan includes these actions:**

1. Develop a Providence-specific research ethics philosophy to encourage and communicate a shared understanding of our ethical practices, values and expectations.
  2. Work with Indigenous partners to meaningfully incorporate Indigenous health research ethics into our research ethics philosophy.
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## Strategic Directions

At Providence Research we spark better ideas by bringing diverse people together. In our view, a diversity of opinions, people, training, and backgrounds leads to better teams and more impactful research. We are also humble learners of Indigenous health research practices and priorities and seek guidance from local Indigenous peoples and territory owners about their health research priorities. We fiercely care about our research and the people it touches and are relentless in our advocacy for them. Our 2021-2026 Strategic Directions will help us bring these priorities to life. Please visit [DiscoveryForward.ca](https://DiscoveryForward.ca) for more detail.





01

**Amplify**

The research that flows from Providence Health Care has made a global impact in many fields including HIV/AIDS, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, sepsis, cardiac valve procedures, renal care as well as mental health and addictions, to name just a few.

**Desired Future State: Providence Research is recognized internationally for outstanding people and cutting-edge technology which together, fuel our global impact.**

**Goal: Define inclusive themes that optimize resources, build on our expertise, and create new opportunities**

In order to amplify our existing strengths, *Discovery Forward* has prioritized these actions:

**Chronic Disease Research**

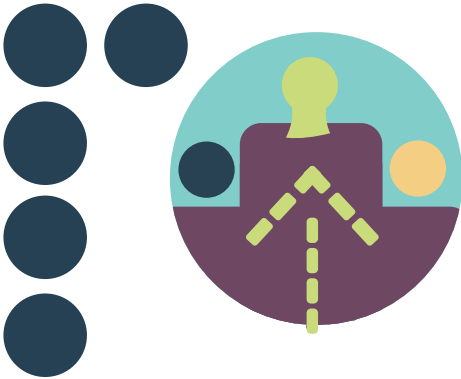
1. Promote and support research partnerships that focus on the prevention and treatment of the chronic complex conditions that contribute to local and global illness burden.

**Emerging Health Issues**

2. Create the best possible environment to allow our researchers to pivot to address emerging health priorities of critical importance to British Columbians.

**Technology & Data**

3. Strategically invest in and embrace technology to drive research excellence and innovation including data management platforms, big data/artificial intelligence/machine learning, patient registries, and biobanking.



## 02

### Build

In this context “Build” is about giving our people the opportunity to learn, grow and feel part of something important; something worthy of their time and talent. For this five-year plan, building also means taking a strategic approach to shaping our physical environment to meet the future needs of our research community, a chance offered to us through the new St. Paul’s Hospital redevelopment project.

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**Desired Future State: We proactively leverage strengths and opportunities to ensure Providence researchers and research teams continue to push the boundaries of excellence.**

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**Goal: Grow and strengthen our research enterprise**

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**In order to build for the future, *Discovery Forward* has prioritized these actions:**

#### People

1. Support the recruitment and retention of diverse researchers and staff to enrich our perspective and understanding, to enhance our productivity, and enhance our research excellence.

#### Indigenous Research Knowledge

2. Structurally embed Indigenous governance and decision-making, research methodologies, and principles throughout the research cycle.

#### Infrastructure

3. Minimize barriers to research and streamline our administrative processes to better support research excellence.
  4. Optimize current and future research space (in the Clinical Support & Research Centre) to create an environment that fosters the sharing of skills, tools and ideas.
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# 03

## Integrate

We believe that a research community that can successfully integrate a diversity of viewpoints, expertise and experience is a stronger one. Over the next five years, our goal is to make our interdisciplinarity and diversity our superpower.

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**Desired Future State: Our interdisciplinarity, partnerships and diversity contribute to both our productivity and our research excellence.**

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**Goal: Build an inclusive community for stronger research questions and answers of relevance to patients, participants and residents**

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**To better integrate people, teams and partnerships, *Discovery Forward* has prioritized these actions:**

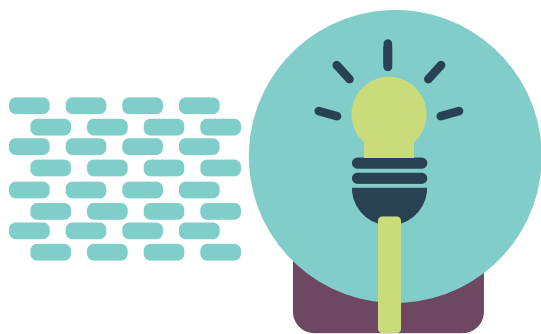
### Internal Partnerships

1. Encourage and facilitate Providence-wide research collaborations and partnerships with clinical staff and other Providence entities to inform research priorities and increase opportunities for knowledge sharing and cross-disciplinary involvement in research.

### External Partnerships

2. Prioritize and strengthen external partnerships with Indigenous organizations, patient groups, community groups, non-governmental organizations and other research organizations in alignment with the priorities set out in Direction 1.
  3. Facilitate the functional interaction of biotech, industry, clinical and academic partners to pursue research questions of mutual relevance.
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## 04

### Activate

Given the urgency of actualizing health innovations, we will put our research to work through knowledge mobilization, proactive communications and opportunities to commercialize our research ideas and output.

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**Desired Future State: The new knowledge we generate is applied to real-world settings as quickly and seamlessly as possible.**

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**Goal: Create an express pathway to translate knowledge into practice**

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**To activate our research, *Discovery Forward* has prioritized these actions:**

#### Knowledge Mobilization

1. Make research matter to clinicians, patients and researchers: maximize the benefits through effective translation and exchange of knowledge.

#### Communications

2. Ensure research results and new knowledge are communicated to research participants and clinicians and researchers in a meaningful and timely fashion.

#### Commercialization

3. Improve intellectual property expertise within Providence and create mentorship opportunities.
  4. Identify and nurture activities that lead to commercialization opportunities.
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# Extraordinary Future: Confident, Stronger, Together

*Discovery Forward* demonstrates our determination to tackle the most pressing health challenges, harnessing our unique agility to respond quickly and unconventionally. The challenges are many. We must understand and confront local crises including opioid addiction, deteriorating mental health and debilitating chronic pain. We must also face the confluence of significant global challenges impacting health including a viral pandemic, the climate emergency, global poverty, as well as systemic racism and inequities in our health care system and in our society at large.

Our research is clearly driven by our commitment to those we serve, and in serving them, excellence is the only acceptable outcome. The pandemic and its eventual aftermath, now require that every plan remain flexible and fluid. But with a clear vision and collective priorities, we will stay on course. Our goals and this plan reflect our commitment to causes of local relevance that will also have a significant global impact. Collectively, we boldly embrace our chance to advance the science, empathy, and cooperation that makes us unique. And we must seize this moment to shape the future of Providence Research together.





# Providence Research

We're all in.

## Introducing Providence Research

**Through intense consultations this past year, we were able to not only define our priorities, but also crystalize how to capture and communicate our unique qualities. What emerged from those consultations is our collective desire to express more confidence. There was consensus that now is finally the right time to match our identity to our maturity, our increased global reputation and our impressive track record.**

Beyond our confidence, what really stood out from our consultations is our total dedication to our research as well as our passion for social justice, inclusion and diversity. So, our new tagline *We're all in.* has a double meaning. It refers to our extraordinary, one hundred percent commitment to science and to the people we serve which means that every day we show up to work "all in." It also refers to our inclusiveness and commitment to social justice, diversity and interdisciplinarity; inclusive of patients, residents, research volunteers/participants, community, clinicians, industry, and government. It's a big tent and *We're all in.*

We developed our visual identity from these expressions of confidence, commitment and inclusiveness: The stylized letters (both a P and an R) create a bold shape that celebrates the confidence and strength of Providence Research. The ribbon-like flow of the letters embodies Providence Research's nimbleness and adaptability to address emerging health issues, something few other health research organizations can claim. The various gradients symbolize the seamless integration of the different voices that make us unique. The colours, shapes and gradients also align with the visual identities of St. Paul's Foundation and the new St. Paul's Hospital.

Thank you to everyone involved in helping shape our strategic plan and our refreshed brand platform.





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**For more information:**

**DiscoveryForward.ca**  
**ProvidenceResearch.ca**

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**Our Research Centres**

BC Centre on Substance Use  
Centre for Gender & Sexual Health Equity  
Centre for Health Evaluation & Outcome Sciences  
Centre for Heart Lung Innovation

**Our Collaborating Centre**

BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS

In partnership with the University of British Columbia  
and Simon Fraser University.

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**Providence  
Research**

We're all in.

