



# **Annual Report 2014-2015**

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## Mission Statement

To provide comprehensive education, accurate information, support for sexual expression and reproductive choice, and confidential clinical services that help British Columbians enjoy healthy sexuality throughout life.

## Vision Statement

Options for Sexual Health envisions a society that celebrates healthy sexuality, its diversity of expression, and a positive sexual self-image for individuals throughout life.

## A note about the 2014-2015 Annual Report

This year we have changed the reporting period for the Annual Report. All those contributing were asked to report on the fiscal year rather than the period between Annual General Meetings. We will continue to use this reporting period moving forward.

# President's Report

Submitted by Jill Doctoroff  
President, Provincial Board of Directors

This is my first report as the President of the Board of Directors. I hope you enjoy reading about the inner workings of Options for Sexual Health from a governance perspective. While this report only covers the period from the October 2014 Annual General Meeting through the end of the fiscal year, March 31<sup>st</sup> 2015 it is full of what seems like a year's worth of activity! Opt is an organization that is involved in diverse activities related to sexual and reproductive health in British Columbia.

While Opt is a provincial organization it has also had a national connection. Opt has been a member of the Canadian Federation for Sexual Health (CFSH), formerly Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada, which in turn was a member of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. There has been a significant change to this organization. In November 2014, CFSH amalgamated with Canadians for Choice and Action Canada for Population and Development, to form Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights. This national organization maintains the direct services organizations, like Opt, as members and aims to represent sexual and reproductive health and rights on a national, and international, level while providing a uniform and strong voice.

In order to maintain a strong provincial voice, at the October 2014 AGM three new members joined the board and a few long term members converted to friends of Opt, rather than standing for re-election as board members. The new board members have injected fresh perspectives, expanded areas of expertise and diverse approaches to the Board. I am thrilled to work with the amazing group of individuals that make up the board, all of whom volunteer their time, energy and enthusiasm to Opt, not to mention a broad base of skills and experiences.

In order to ensure the organization is based on a strong foundation, the board development committee embarked on a review of its policy and procedure manual. The process has involved assessing each policy in order to ensure its relevance, accuracy and current source of information. This has been an involved and important project.

Out of some board discussions the idea for program evaluation grew. Opt engaged the services of a consultant to evaluate two key programs: volunteer and education. The evaluation was an initiative of the Board of Directors to better understand the current state, impact and future direction of these programs. The consultant met with and surveyed key individuals: staff, volunteers, program recipients and community stakeholders. These reports will help inform future planning processes.

These are some of the ways that the board has exercised its governance responsibilities. Collectively we remain impressed by the volumes of quality services provided by the Opt's staff and volunteers. They are a relatively small group of committed individuals with a large impact.

Thank you for taking the time to read about Opt's governance and board of directors.

Warm regards,



Jill Doctoroff  
President

# Executive Director's Report

Submitted by Jennifer Breakspear  
Executive Director of Options for Sexual Health

It has been three years since I assumed leadership of Option for Sexual Health and in that time I have grown evermore fond and proud of this organization and the fabulous people who work and volunteer with Opt. Everyone at Opt is committed to advancing our mission and serving our communities. It is that commitment that drives us to improve and refine our operations and services year over year.

A significant change was made to the structure of our Clinical department. At the suggestion of our then Director of Nursing, Nicole Pasquino, we created two new managerial positions (full-time Clinic Operations Manager and part-time Professional Practice Leader) and deleted the Director of Nursing position. This change was made in recognition of how all-encompassing the Director of Nursing role had become and with a view to distinguishing between the actual operations of the clinics and our nurses' clinical practice needs. Nicole moved into the Professional Practice Leader role from which she now concentrates on supporting our clinic nurses in their scope of practice and representing Opt on various external committees and bodies in regards to nursing. Our Clinic Operations Manager, Helena Palmqvist, is responsible for the logistics of the Opt clinics. Together Nicole, Helena, and our Medical Director, Dr. Marisa Collins, manage our Clinical department.

In February we presented our second Sexual and Reproductive Health Day breakfast at the Marriott Pinnacle Hotel in downtown Vancouver. CBC personality Fred Lee hosted a lively fundraiser event that featured the Femme City Choir and the Wet Spots and highlighted our 2015 Sexual Health Champion, sexual health educator and writer Heather Corinna. Watch for an exciting announcement about our 2016 breakfast soon.

Within the Provincial Office renovation was completed on our atrium and it is now used regularly as a clinic waiting room but also as a large comfortable meeting space.



*Before and after shots of our Atrium at the Opt Provincial Office*

Fiscally we have continued to find efficiencies however supplier costs have continued to grow and our funding has not kept pace. We have requested an increase in our core funding from the Provincial Government and remain hopeful that this will be realized before next fiscal.

I am very proud of everyone on the Opt team. In our clinics our nurses, doctors, staff and volunteers provide accessible high quality sexual and reproductive health care to individuals and communities in desperate need. Our sexual health educators ensure that children and adults throughout BC and beyond receive the most inclusive and comprehensive sexual health education. The staff on our Sex Sense line respond to more people every year helping them with all their sexual health questions. And our Provincial office staff and management tirelessly work to support the efforts of all the departments. And our Board of Directors continue to guide and support the organisation and the advancement of our mission. I thank everyone for their hard work, commitment, and passion. I feel honoured to share this journey with you all.



*Our fabulous Sexual and Reproductive Health Day Breakfast host Fred Lee snapping a picture of Jennifer, 2015 Sexual Health Champ Heather Corinna, and Kristen Gilbert, our Director of Education*

# Medical Director's Report

Submitted by Dr. Marisa Collins, BIS MD MHSc CCFP FCFP  
Medical Director

For years I've been looking for a continuing education program that addresses the breadth of my clinical interests and practice. I was sure I wasn't alone in seeing need for a program that expands the clinical conversation about sexual health - because this is relevant to clinicians in almost all types of practice.

After a couple years of quiet persuasion, plus collecting needs assessment data to support my contention, Options for Sexual Health (Opt) and UBC Faculty of Medicine's Division of Continuing Professional Development (UBC CPD) agreed to take a chance on my idea. *Sexual Health 2015: Building Clinician Confidence & Competence* was held at UBC Robson Square, Vancouver on May 29 – 30. The planning committee developed a program with an impressive range of topics and excellent presenters. We were "Sold Out" three full months in advance. About 250 people, mostly physicians and nurses, were in attendance and the enthusiasm and buzz was palpable. Participant evaluations were extremely positive. Opt benefitted from a small amount of revenue. And by next spring I should be sufficiently amnesic about the time it required, to begin the next planning cycle for a repeat event in 2017.

Following on the conference success, the *Sexual Health Forum: Online Journal Club and Practice-Based Dialogue* was launched in August, sponsored by the UBC Rural Continuing Professional Development (RCPD) program. I have also received a Janus CPD Grant from the College of Family Physicians of Canada to support this pilot. Capped at 65 physician and nurse practitioner participants, this online space has again demonstrated that there is need - not just for clinician education in sexual health, but also for a community of practice. Six journal club sessions x 5 weeks each offer study credits, and a Dialogue section provides a venue for discussion on anything that is sexual health practice related.

On the same theme, this week I delivered a ½ day Sexual Health workshop to the second cohort of "practice ready" immigrant physicians who will serve rural and remote regions of BC after passing a rigorous education and assessment process. Kudos to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC and to UBC CPD for recognizing that sexual health education is among the learning needs of these culturally diverse physicians. It is an honour to have been invited to lead these sessions.

In addition to expanding Opt's already outstanding reputation in sexual health education, I expect that all clinical education efforts contribute to recruitment of new physicians and nurses to Opt. Thank you to all of my colleagues who contribute to the success of these efforts.

# Clinical Services

submitted by Nicole Pasquino and Helena Palmqvist  
Professional Practice Leader and Clinic Operations Manager

Clinical Services has continued to grow and see an increased demand for its services over the last year, especially for STI services. We often hear from our clients seeking confidential sexual and reproductive health services that Opt comes highly recommended from their peers or they have seen our ads on the bus.

It is an ongoing challenge to keep up with the increased demand for services without an increase in funding and while we continue to do our best to see as many patients as possible within our current hours and staffing abilities, our clinicians are often faced with turning clients away, or clients face long wait times to receive services (ranging from two weeks to ten weeks). Over the last fiscal year Opt saw just over 23,000 patients across our clinics in BC. Over the past three years, we have seen a significant increase in male-identified clients, demand for STI screening and treatment services, pregnancy testing, and Intrauterine Contraception insertion services. Please refer to our infographic for more information.

In order to continue to meet the needs of our clients and remain at the forefront of sexual and reproductive health care, much effort has been contributed to ensure our staff and clinicians have adequate opportunity for training and professional development. Over the early summer of 2014, Opt continued with its annual regional conferences in four regions across BC to provide important education in regards to changing practice and trends in sexual health care. Changes to the structure of the Clinical Management were made in June 2014 in order to meet the increasing needs of our clinics both on a practice and operational level. The Director of Nursing position (which was previously responsible for all clinical operations as well as practice needs) was revamped into two separate positions in order to be able to better support the practice needs of clinicians and also the day to day operations of the clinics. Nicole Pasquino assumed the new position of Provincial Professional Practice Leader, focusing on clinical practice. In February, 2015 Helena Palmqvist joined Opt as our Clinic Operations Manager to dedicate a greater focus on clinic operations and maximizing efficiencies in the day to day operations of the clinics.

Opt's clinical department continues to forge partnerships with outside organizations to ensure sexual and reproductive health care is at the highest standard in the province of BC. Opt's Professional Practice Leader continues to work with BCIT to deliver a high standard of education to RNs seeking Certified Practice Registration in reproductive health. Opt also sits on several other provincial practice committees including the College of Registered Nurses of BC provincial working groups for STI and Contraceptive Care standards, Interior Health's Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health Committee and continues its long standing partnership with Northern Health in order to deliver exception sexual and reproductive health care across the North. In November, 2014, Opt entered into a first partnership with a First Nation band on Haida Gwaii, expanding access to sexual health services in underserved communities.

Opt clinics continue to have an incredible pool of dedicated volunteers, staff and clinicians who provide exceptional front line care and ensure Opt remains a leader in sexual and reproductive health care in BC. Opt could not provide such exceptional care without this amazing group of dedicated frontline volunteers and staff - thank you for your extraordinary contribution.





*Our Finance Director Joan Westman de Carle and Clinic Operations Manager Helena Palmqvist embarked on a Clinic Tour which we affectionately dubbed HeloanWheels. These images are from their visit to the Kaslo Opt Clinic.*

# Financial Report

Submitted by Joan Westman deCarle  
Finance Director

Opt ended the year with a \$55,598 surplus, \$55,598 below budget. We were able to maintain our investments at same level as the previous fiscal.

Sales of contraception continue to drop. Education fees increased by almost 20%, compared to fiscal 2014. Due to the Sexual Reproductive Health Day breakfast, both Fundraising and Donations increased substantially.

It was a year of changes for the finance department. Continuing with the Forward Together initiative, all 18 bank accounts throughout the province held within the name of an Opt 'branch board' were closed in fiscal 2015. All clinics now deposit their funds into our central RBC or CIBC account (except Kaslo clinic which has neither institution in their village, so uses Kootenay Saving CU). Our Support Opt Community Groups, no longer have to manage their finances or accounting.

This allowed Opt to simplify, stream-line and centralize accounting, cutting down on the reconciliation and maintenance of various clearing accounts and bank accounts.

Grants are still applied for at the community level with the support and guidance of the Opt operations team. Cranbrook received United Way funding; Kaslo received grants from Columbia Basin Trust and Regional District of Central Kootenay; in February, Nakusp received over \$50,000 from CBT to renovate the Kinsman Centre to house the Opt Nakusp clinic. Support Opt Salt Spring Island had yet another successful bridge tournament in March!

Opt opened accounts with Vancity in March, and has since moved much of its banking to Vancity. As well, our GIC's have been moved to Vancity, as they offered better rates than RBC. BDO Canada was appointed as our auditor October 24 2014 at our Annual General Meeting. The audit for fiscal 2015 was completed July 2015. The audit recommendations were: more controls for cash sales at the clinics, upgrading of the inventory system, and a more formal approval of bank reconciliations and payroll payments, plus the development of a contingency fund policy.

At the Provincial Office, the atrium in the center of the office, was renovated to make it a more useful space for board and other meetings, seminars, etc. This was capitalized as a leasehold improvement.

Gabriela Rosales, Opt's Finance Assistant, was the main lead in the implementation of OSCAR, a fully featured Electronic Medical Records (**EMR**) software program, for our doctors' MSP billing and for booking of appointments at some of our clinics. pm-volunteer assisted her in putting together a OSCAR EMR pilot project plan. We hope to be implementing the EMR portion of the program in the future.

In January, Gabriela also coordinated our switch to the Payworks Time Management System, from an older in-house timesheet system we were using. This module is integrated with the Payworks payroll module we currently use. It allows employees to enter their hours in the Payworks system, these hours are then approved by their manager on-line, and then they flow through into the payroll module.

For the current fiscal, budgeting was much more challenging this year. We have already seen unexpected increases in a few expenses, and will most likely see a more modest surplus this fiscal.

Opt employees engaged in a current state assessment in September 2015. The exercise was to provide operational goals for the Board's upcoming strategic planning process. The issue of stable funding was raised many times. This challenge has been present for a number of years, but since the current administration has established the organization on a much firmer financial foundation, there is optimism going forward that stable but more diverse funding can be achieved in due course.

## Communications Report

Submitted by Ashleigh Turner  
Communications Manager

The goal of the Communications department is to increase awareness of Opt, build brand recognition, and provide low barrier access to information. We aim to do this through many mediums, including our website, social media presence, outreach activities, and of course, our Sexual and Reproductive Health Day Breakfast. From April 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2015 we saw marked growth in all of these areas.

During this fiscal year, we gained 260 new followers on Facebook (from 1160 to 1420). Our goal with social media reach for the next fiscal year will be to gain more client following; as a sexual health centre we recognize that not all of our clients want to follow us on social media, however we encourage clients to follow us for things like clinic closures, hour changes, education opportunities, and workshops in their communities.

The Opt website continues to have a large number of visitors annually. This fiscal, we saw over 1.3 million visits to our website; however, we continue to have a high bounce rate, which can be attributed to searches for other sex-related services. Of the people who visited our website, 120,215 visits were direct searches for Options for Sexual Health, with many of those visitors viewing our birth control, pregnancy information, and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) pages. We also see over 1700 visits to our website directly from links on our Facebook page.

One exciting trend has been our media interactions. We have seen an increase in the number of media inquiries over the past fiscal, and expect to see an even larger increase in the 2015-2016 fiscal. Opt has been identified by the media as the sexual health experts and a go to resource for several media outlets including the CBC, Globe and Mail, and The Province.

Opt is invited to many outreach events, including music festivals, health fairs, University and College sexual health week events, community resource fairs, and diversity health fairs. We have seen an increase in the number of people attending our booth at these events; on average we have upwards of 60 people visit our booth over the course of a two to four hour event. Questions asked during outreach events are varied which speaks to the various sexual health needs and knowledge Opt provides.

Several communities attended outreach or initiated their own outreach activities. The Penticton and Revelstoke Opt clinics held very successful sexual health education sessions for their communities. The Squamish Opt Clinic attended the Squamish Valley Music Festival and

handed out safer sex supplies to festival attendees. The Cranbrook and Fernie Opt clinics continue to provide community education sessions through the grants they receive from the United Way.

The Volunteer program evaluation concluded and was very successful. Some of the notable insights from the information gathered:

- The volunteers reported the main reason they volunteer with Opt is the shared values and in support of Opt's mission
- The clinic staff reported high satisfaction with their volunteers, and that the work they are able to do at the clinics is possible due to the volunteer support they receive

The Sexual and Reproductive Health Day Breakfast was very successful. We honoured Heather Corinna as our 2015 Sexual Health Champion, and heard from past education students on the value of our education department. The Fabulous Fred Lee was our MC (look forward to him being our MC in 2016 as well!) and entertainment was provided by the Wet Spots and Femme City Choir. Did you miss out on 2015? Make sure you are there for 2016!

## Education Report

Submitted by Kristen Gilbert  
Director of Education

Opt's field educators are mostly known for their school-based programs, and how they deliver comprehensive sexual health education in the signature Opt style. What is often unseen is the number of hours spent prepping lessons, travelling to communities by car, ferry, and plane, consulting with teachers, parents, and administrators on how to best serve students, and staying on the cutting edge of the latest sexual health information.

In the 2014-2015 fiscal year, Opt educators delivered more than 350 sessions in 39 schools throughout the province. While the 9400 students who attended these classes learned about puberty changes, sexually transmitted infections, birth control, sex and the law, and consent, family members also benefitted from Opt's education services. Hundreds of adults learned to be more knowledgeable and approachable by attending Opt's Askable Adult workshop, complementing the education their kids received at school, and helping to create the healthy communities that Opt is dedicated to building.

While Opt educators are often considered the experts in high school sexual health education classes, they are also seasoned professionals when it comes to teaching younger audiences. During the 2014-2015 fiscal year Opt taught 126 high school sessions, but also managed to deliver a whopping 234 "body science" and puberty classes to students in elementary schools throughout BC.

Professionals also benefitted from Opt's expertise, and a record number of teachers, justice workers, pharmacists, nurses and other professionals received training and support from Opt this year. Whether through a multi-day training program or a single conference presentation, Opt educators trained 547 professionals to be more confident and competent with sexual health information and care. Opt proudly supports several

BC school boards by ensuring that their teachers can deliver the material mandated by the Ministry of Education. British Columbia certainly leads the country with its progressive and comprehensive sexual health curriculum; Opt's education services play a crucial role in maintaining this level of excellence.

Opt's Sexual Health Educator Certification (SHEC) program truly hit its stride this fiscal year, and the 2014 cohort was the most diverse group of professionals we have accepted to date. Nurses, teachers, school counsellors, community workers, social workers and a physician all trained to deliver comprehensive sexual health education to their communities across the province. This group is now finishing their practicum period, and will soon be fully certified by Opt to have met the highest standards of sexual health education training. These participants travelled from Nelson, Mill Bay, Powell River, Penticton, Salt Spring Island, Whistler, and as far away as Calgary to attend training modules, as SHEC remains the only program of its kind in Canada.



*The graduating Sexual Health Educator Certification (SHEC) class of 2014.*

# Sex Sense Report

Submitted by Helena Palmqvist  
Clinic Operations Manager

In the 18th year of its existence, the Sex Sense Line experienced a drastic increase in calls, as well as an unprecedented increase in email questions. Average call length has increased slightly.

The Sex Sense Line's hours of operation remain 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday to Friday for a total of 60 hours a week.

Sex Sense responded to 12,842 calls and emails this year. This is a 31% increase over the previous year. 4,681 of these were emails, and increase of 41% from 3,308 emails the previous year.

Females continue to call the line more than males, at a ratio of almost 3:1. Callers between the ages of 20-24 made up 19% of line's users, while 25 – 29 made up 16%, and 17 – 19 made up 13%.

The majority of calls were for information and advice on sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy risk, female sexual health, emergency contraceptive pill and male sexual health. Calls from the area of the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority accounted for 16% of all calls received on the line. Calls from the area within the Fraser Health Authority, the Vancouver Island Health Authority, and Interior Health Authority made up 10%, 3%, and 11% respectively. Sex Sense connect clients with appropriate resources. The number of calls referred to direct medical services (e.g. abortion provider, emergency, local doctor) grew 11%, from 3,785 to 4,187, and now represent 33% of calls and emails. An additional 1,434 calls are referred to other support services (e.g. youth clinic, HealthLink, local therapist), an increase of 31% from the previous year.

The Sex Sense Line continues to be advertised throughout the province through bus advertisements, educators, clinics, the website, and requested mail-outs of cards and posters. The Sex Sense Line continues to ensure that the toll-free number and website is available on all brochures that Opt distributes to the public, including the clinic facts sheets. Clients increasingly use the internet to find Sex Sense. The number of clients who learnt about Sex Sense via the internet grew 387% from 929 to 4,525 and now represent 55% of callers. Sex Sense is also a valued resource for health care providers and the number of callers that were advised to call Sex Sense by their health care providers continues to increase. These calls increased from 1,181 to 1,568, and now represent 19% of all calls.

The Sex Sense Line staff consists of registered nurses, clinical counsellors, and sexual health educators. The Sex Sense staff remain committed to professional development, and both Sex Sense coordinators as well as some supervisors attended the Opt regional conference, where they received the latest updates on contraceptive and sexual health. The Sex Sense volunteer program is running again and currently has 2 volunteers.



*Stylin' in our LinkedIn shades that Jennifer brought back from the 15NTC in Austin, TX where she presented a wildly successful presentation (introduction of the talk on the TV) on the power of connection.*

# Donor Acknowledgement

Donations received in the 2014-2015 Fiscal Year

Options for Sexual Health appreciates the generous contributions of our donors. Our donors make our programs successful, increase client access to sexual health services, and help the organization work towards our mission and vision every day. Everyone at Options for Sexual Health is truly grateful to all of our donors and sponsors who have given generously to support our mission. We would also like to recognize the hard work and dedication of individuals and companies who organized and raised funds through events held on our behalf. Thank you!

## Our thanks to those who donated between \$1 and \$99

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