



Leading researcher and her lab team walk the Walk

Around this time of year, members of Dr. Barbara Vanderhyden's research team start thinking about teal ties and tutus as they look forward to the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope.



Dr. Vanderhyden and her lab team

When Dr. Vanderhyden started her lab in 1991, there were only two other scientists studying ovarian cancer in Canada. But with her help, today's ovarian cancer research community is comprised of over 200 clinicians and scientists across the country. Dr. Vanderhyden's own lab at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute has more than tripled in size over time.

"It's a true privilege to be based in a cancer centre," she says. "It's important to us to have as much patient interaction as possible. My team is eager to bring women and families on tours of the lab at every opportunity."

Dr. Vanderhyden is the Corinne Boyer Chair in Ovarian Cancer Research, a role established by Ovarian Cancer Canada and the University of Ottawa to develop a robust and productive research program focused on this disease.

For years, she and her research team have been a welcome sight at their local Walk. Members wear custom t-shirts and teal accessories, always ready for photos with their fellow participants.

“Hearing their stories keeps us motivated and connected to the meaning behind what we do,” says Dr. Vanderhyden. “We go to the Walk so that people can put faces to the names of researchers who are pulling for them.”

And they are working hard. Given the volume of projects underway at her lab, Dr. Vanderhyden is taking just four days of vacation this year.

“Right now we are running a number of pre-clinical trials in immunotherapy, testing different ways of enabling the body’s immune system to identify and get rid of cancer cells,” she says. “We’re also looking at why ovarian cancer tends to grow in the ovaries, when it often starts in the fallopian tubes. What we learn could mean big news for prevention.”

Join Dr. Vanderhyden and her research team at the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope, coming this September to a location near you. Register and fundraise at ovariancancerwalkofhope.ca.