The Center for Women’s Health Research (CWHR) was founded in 2000 as a joint effort of the School of Medicine and the Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research. Their mission is to improve women’s health through research focusing on diseases, disorders, and conditions that affect solely women, predominately women, and/or women differently than men. Because the field of women’s health is extremely broad, the Center has adopted the following five topical areas to help focus research efforts over the next ten years: perinatal health; cancer; obesity and diabetes; cardiovascular health; and mental health and substance abuse. CWHR also emphasizes research related to sex-differences across the health-related spectrum and improving the delivery of health and healthcare services to women in the state, nation, and the world. As the focal point for women’s health research efforts on campus, CWHR stimulates scientific endeavors within, among, and across all schools, colleges, centers, and institutes on campus, while also advising the university’s Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development. The organization seeks to identify and link existing efforts in women’s health research with related work in other fields, bringing multiple perspectives to bear on the complex issues inherent in studying and understanding women’s health and wellness. The CWHR director, Wendy Brewster, MD, PhD, conferences annually with the director of the Office of Research on Women’s Health (ORWH) at the NIH to ensure UNC Chapel Hill is best meeting the demands of the continually evolving landscape of women’s health research. The Center also supports the existing/ongoing efforts to develop research opportunities for, and support the recruitment, re-entry, retention and advancement of women in their biomedical careers.

The Center has excellent resources to administer externally funded research projects. CWHR administers a multitude of contracts, grants, and clinical trials for a variety of researchers whose projects require more support, or more sophisticated support, than their home department can or wishes to provide. The Center’s administrative support for funded projects consists of such tasks as personnel actions (hiring and payments), purchasing, travel administration, accounting, financial management, and reporting to sponsor agencies — all administrative tasks that are generally handled at the department level. Principal investigators receive monthly statements regarding their research accounts. The Center will also handle such tasks as conference planning and management, multi-media design, website development, and other administratively intensive tasks that are budgeted for in the grant itself.

CWHR occupies the “B” side of the building at 104 Market Street in Southern Village, a mixed-use community two miles south of the UNC Women’s Hospital. The building contains a lobby, offices, rest rooms, a kitchen, individual computer carrels, and outside porch and patio seating areas. Offices are private and come with plenty of work-space and lockable filing cabinets. The Center conference room seats up to 15 and contains a large pull-down screen, LCD projector/laptop with video teleconferencing capabilities, white boards, and flip charts. The conference room space is available for use by other colleagues in women’s health research for educational and professional meetings. A conference line is available, as is a private office space, with a dedicated phone line, that may be reserved by investigators and research staff as needed. An additional four computers and three network connections for laptops are available for use by students and other UNC-approved users on the School of Medicine secure network. Each computer is, at minimum, built with 4 GB of RAM and an Intel dual core processor. Current software applications maintained by the Center allow for statistical analysis, project management, graphics, web publishing, data management, and database production. Data are housed within password-protected folders assigned to specific personnel on the Center’s dedicated server. The Center’s Internet, print, network, and information technology needs are serviced by the School of Medicine Office of Information Systems.

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