

GroYourBiz Honours Three Canadian Clinical Leaders as 2026 'Champions of Change'

GroYourBiz (GYB) is proud to announce the recipients of its 2026 Champion of Change Award.

BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA, June 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [GroYourBiz](https://www.groyourbiz.com/) (GYB), a leading organization supporting female senior leaders and women-owned businesses, is proud to announce the recipients of its 2026 Champion of Change Award, three exceptional clinical leaders whose innovation and determination are transforming patient care in Canadian hospitals and influencing healthcare practices internationally.

The 2026 honourees are:

- Professor Stephanie Smith, Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases at the University of Alberta and Director of Hospital Infection Prevention and Control at the University of Alberta Hospital / Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute
- Dr. Claudia Malic, Plastic Surgeon at The Ottawa Hospital and Associate Professor at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Medicine



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Barbara Mowat, President of GroYourBiz



Barabara Mowat (President of GroYourBiz) Carolyn Cross (CEO of Ondine Biomedical) Dr. Claudia Malic and Kate Duke (Champion of Change Award recipients)

- Kate Duke, RN, Director of Perioperative Services and Surgical Care at The Ottawa Hospital

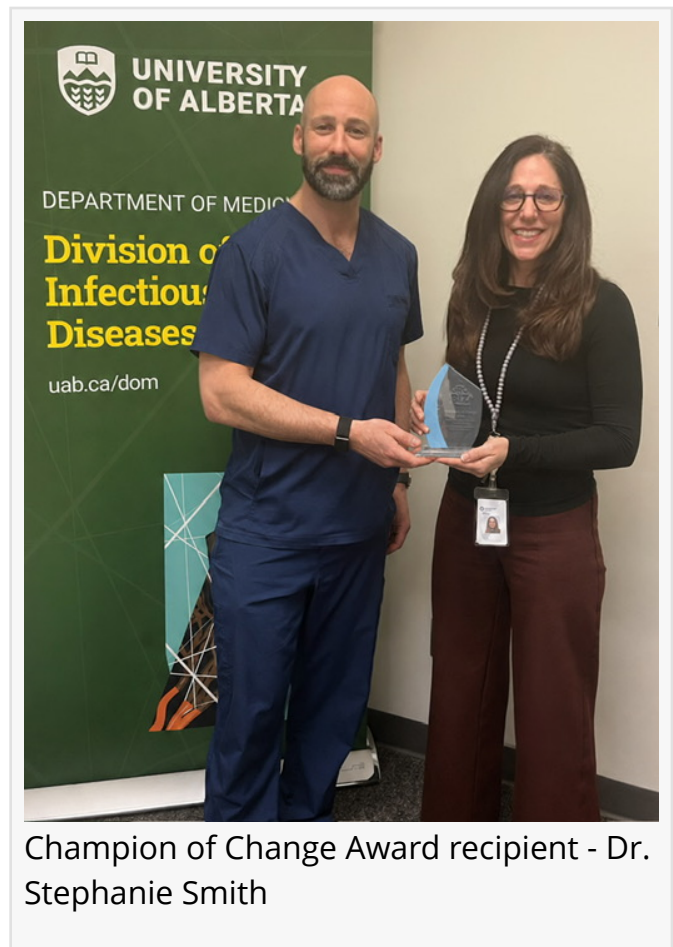
Professor Smith received her award at a GroYourBiz event in Calgary, while Dr. Malic and Ms. Duke were recognised in Ottawa during The Ottawa Hospital's recent Collins Day celebration.

These accomplished healthcare leaders were nominated by Ondine Biomedical Inc. in recognition of their courage

and leadership in advancing innovative infection-prevention protocols within their institutions. Their work that has generated significant improvements in patient care, contributed meaningful clinical data, and helped shape best practices beyond their own hospitals.

Driving Measurable Change in Patient Outcomes
The Champion of Change Award recognizes women who challenge convention, lead with evidence, and create lasting impact in complex environments. This year's recipients exemplify that spirit.

At the Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute, Professor Stephanie Smith championed the replacement of a traditional five-day pre-surgical antibiotic treatment with a novel five-minute light-based nasal treatment (Steriwave®) designed to eliminate infection-causing germs from the nose before surgery. The change resulted in a 32% reduction in infections following cardiac surgery. Her leadership has helped reduce reliance on antibiotics while improving patient safety and lowering costs.



Champion of Change Award recipient - Dr. Stephanie Smith

At The Ottawa Hospital, Dr. Claudia Malic and Kate Duke championed the integration of the same innovative infection-prevention protocol, resulting in patients' length of stay and readmission rates decreasing by approximately half, alongside substantial decreases in antibiotic use and emergency room visits. Their collaborative leadership has positioned their hospital as a model for evidence-driven surgical infection prevention.

The clinical data generated through their efforts has not only improved patient outcomes locally but has also sparked broader interest across Canada and internationally, encouraging other healthcare institutions to explore similar approaches.

Recognizing Leadership That Inspires Systemic Change

"Champions of Change are women who see an opportunity to improve outcomes and take decisive action even in the face of entrenched systems," said Barbara Mowat, President of GroYourBiz. "Professor Smith, Dr. Malic, and Kate Duke exemplify the kind of leadership that transforms institutions and sets new standards for patient care. Progress depends on leaders who are willing to recognize and act on sound solutions early, creating the evidence and pathway others will follow."

Carolyn Cross, Founder and CEO of Ondine Biomedical, added:

"We are deeply grateful for the leadership, rigor and courage these remarkable women brought to advancing new infection-prevention protocols within their hospitals. Their commitment to improving patient safety has not only strengthened care at their own hospitals but also generated important clinical data that is helping inform healthcare systems in Canada and abroad. We are thrilled to see Professor Smith, Dr. Malic and Kate Duke recognized as true Champions of Change."

A Broader Impact

By embracing innovation and rigorously measuring outcomes, these honourees have helped elevate the national conversation around antimicrobial resistance, surgical site infection prevention, and the importance of clinical leadership. Their work continues to open doors for collaboration, research, and improved patient care across healthcare systems.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About GroYourBiz (GYB)

GroYourBiz is a leadership and business-growth advisory organization for women business owners and senior women business leaders across Canada and internationally. Its members are presidents, owners, and executives committed to exceeding performance expectations and building resilient enterprises.

Through its Champion of Change initiative, GYB recognizes influential women whose leadership and vision drive transformative progress across industries, including healthcare. Under the guidance of Barbara Mowat, GYB serves as a catalyst for growth, impact, and positive change across Canada and internationally.

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