

# **Carolyn Thomas**

**Speaker, Blogger at Heart Sisters**

Victoria, BC, CA

Carolyn Thomas is an expert on women, heart disease, and the patient experience.

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## **Biography**

In 2008, Carolyn Thomas of Victoria, B.C. was a longtime public relations pro who suddenly became a heart patient. She managed to survive what doctors call the "widow maker" heart attack, despite being initially misdiagnosed with indigestion and sent home from the E.R. with textbook Hollywood Heart Attack symptoms. That same year, she became the first Canadian ever accepted to attend the annual Science & Leadership Symposium for Women With Heart Disease at the world-famous Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Since graduating from this prestigious patient advocacy training program, she has spoken to thousands of women (and quite a few men!) about what she learned at the Mayo Women's Heart Clinic. Her presentations have been described as "part cardiology bootcamp and part stand-up comedy". Audiences include women living with heart disease (and many more who just want to learn how to avoid becoming one!) as well as health care professionals at medical conferences ranging from the Philippines to Boston. Carolyn is best known, however, for her award-winning blog HEART SISTERS, which has attracted over 8 million views so far from 190 countries. Her writing has been republished internationally, including in the British Medical Journal. She also serves as a Patient Reviewer for cardiology papers submitted to the BMJ for publication. Few topics attract as much media interest as her powerful essays on the known gender gap in women's heart health diagnosis and treatment. Her story of misdiagnosis and survival was featured in the launch video accompanying the Institute of Medicine's 2015 landmark report on diagnostic error called "Improving Diagnosis in Health Care" (which she hastens to add does not mean she endorses the report's perplexing failure to recommend mandatory reporting of such errors - "...now is not the right time..."). Carolyn's very active on social media such as Twitter (@HeartSisters) and is also working on a new book based on her blog posts called "HEART SISTERS: A Survivor's Take On Living With Heart Disease" which will be launched by a major U.S. academic publisher in early 2018.

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## **Industry Expertise**

Health Care - Services, Women

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## **Areas of Expertise**

Women's Health, Public Speaking, Media Relations, Patient Advocacy, Patient Safety, Heart Disease, Patient Experience

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## **Accomplishments**

**10 Best Heart Disease Blogs**

Named by Healthline

**ePatient Scholarship winner**

Medicine X conference, Stanford University School of Medicine

**Top 10 Online Influencers**

Named by ShareCare

**Women's Health Hero**

Our Bodies, Ourselves. One of 20 inductees from seven countries honoured for women's health activism

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