Successful Interface Project Proposals
Submitted by: Tricia Hutchison, Provincial Coordinator, Community Cancer Support Network

The Community Cancer Support Network is pleased to announce that the 2012 Interface Projects have been awarded to five exciting and diverse Alberta projects. With the generous funding from the Alberta Cancer Foundation and the Canadian Cancer Society we have been able to provide five proposals with a $10,000.00 award to assist in the progression of their projects. The overall goal of the Interface Projects is to enhance access to supportive, person-centered oncology care for individuals with cancer and their families across Alberta at any point in the cancer journey from prevention through end-of-life or survivorship. As you will see below the topics chosen are diverse in focus and as well address diversity in populations.

The successful projects are as follows for January 2012 are:

- **Advanced Cancer Patients’ Perspectives of a French Translation of the Revised Edmonton Symptom Assessment System (ESAS-r).”** – Dr. Cheryl Nekolaichuk, Edmonton
- **Building Sustainable Community-Based Physical Activity Programs in Pediatric Oncology** – Dr. Nicole Culos-Reed, Calgary
- **The Better Living Programme – Improving Cancer Care in Rural Settings** – Dr. Rob Wedel, Taber
- **Before Breast Surgery Information Sessions – For Women and Men with Newly Diagnosed Breast Cancer.** – Shelley Cloutier, Edmonton
- **Hope Connections Cancer Support Group – Connecting rural cancer patients, their families and caregivers in collaboration with healthcare professionals and peers to offer patient-centered cancer care and support.** – Trish Delisle, Camrose

Again we congratulate these Projects and look forward to following their progress over the coming year!
It is well-established that physical activity (PA) is an important component of care and rehabilitation throughout the cancer journey, and helps to enhance patient physical functioning, psychosocial functioning and symptom management. The purpose of this project was to increase PA awareness and provide programs specifically designed for the clinically underserved populations of brain and head and neck cancer. We took a multipronged clinic-based approach. First, working with Integrated Symptom Relief Services (ISRS, Tom Baker Cancer Centre), we educated health care providers about the benefits of PA and established a referral system based on the screening for distress tool. Second, we developed educational materials and delivered bi-weekly seminars for newly diagnosed patients on PA promotion. Third, we developed a 12-week PA program, ENHANCE, for head/neck and neuro patients, on and off treatment. Finally, we trained almost 100 kinesiology student volunteers to help supervise patients at the Thrive Centre at the University of Calgary, a free fitness centre for cancer survivors. All of these methods were designed to facilitate enhanced awareness, remove barriers, and most importantly, build sustainability in offering a clinical service to head/neck and neuro-oncology survivors.

Within the clinic, if patients reported issues with symptom management, including fatigue, weight management or mobility issues, they were referred to the 12-week ENHANCE program, and received an assessment, behavior change education, an individualized exercise program, home equipment and supportive weekly group exercise classes. Participants were also encouraged to use the Thrive Centre to reach the recommended 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week. Clinic referral was strong, with 91 patients referred in a 4-month recruitment period. Participant interest from the referral was high, with 53 patients registering for the program (many people could not attend the daytime sessions). Preliminary results indicate improved upper and lower body strength, as well as increased aerobic capacity. Patients also reported a significant decrease in overall tiredness, depression, and drowsiness, and improvements in overall well being. Patients reported that ENHANCE helped them meet their health and wellness goals, manage symptoms, and gain motivation for PA participation. Health care team members also commented on improved patient recovery.

This program has been very successful in terms of clinic support, patient referral, patient reported outcomes, and overall feedback. The program is currently operating in the neuro-oncology tumour group (now called B-On-PACE) as a clinical service through ISRS. In the head/neck tumour group, the Alberta Cancer Foundation’s donor-directed funding (Joe’s Team) will support continued research on lifestyle interventions impact on fitness, physiological and psychological outcomes.
Being diagnosed with cancer is always an unexpected event and how each individual and family experiences this event is varied. The term “distress” has been adopted to characterize the overarching experience of concerns that accompany the diagnosis of cancer and its treatment, and includes physical, psychosocial and practical concerns. Early identification of distress ensures patients are connected to the right supports and services, reducing the potential negative impact distress can have on patient and family wellbeing.

In 2010, AHS-Cancer Care partnered with the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer to be one of nine provinces involved in the implementation of Screening for Distress (SFD). This project was designed as a quality improvement initiative and to act as a driver to shift cancer care delivery towards being more person-centered.

Three sites, each representing a unique subset of the AHS-Cancer Care organization participated: a Community Cancer Center site (all chemotherapy patients at Fort McMurray), an Associate Cancer Center site (the Breast RT group at the Jack Ady Cancer Center in Lethbridge), and a Tertiary site (the Head and Neck Tumor group at Cross Cancer Institute in Edmonton). This demonstration project focused on four main areas: screening and early identification of distress, staff education and training, teamwork and collaboration and patient engagement.

This project demonstrated that implementation of standardized SFD as a part of routine patient care; could reduce the potential for suffering and provide timely interventions as needed that would enhance their quality of life. SFD also proved to promote effective team collaboration, documentation and community engagement. As well as creating new opportunities for synergist relationships with similar projects in portfolios outside of cancer care such as: primary care and chronic disease management. The positive impact of the pilot project to both providers and patients was significant enough to secure two years of additional funding from the Alberta Cancer Foundation to implement SFD across Alberta cancer centers. We are still in the planning stages of how this expansion will look.

Stay tuned for next steps as we bring Screening for Distress to a Cancer Centre near you…

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Sexuality and Prostate Cancer
Submitted by: Amy Hampton, Susan Tran, and Dr. John Robinson

How do I help my patients address the sexuality issues associated with prostate cancer treatments?

Prostate cancer (PCa) is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in Canadian men, with a life-time risk of one in seven. Survivors of PCa are now living for a significant amount of time post treatment. Unfortunately, prostate cancer survivors are constrained by the debilitating side effects associated with life-saving treatments. One of the most difficult survivorship issues, as reported by patients, is adjusting to changes in sexual functioning, specifically erectile dysfunction (ED). Most treatments for PCa are associated with high rates of ED, with an estimated prevalence rate of 70-85% of men experiencing this side effect as a result of treatment.

ED has been correlated with lower self esteem, loss of autonomy, loss of masculine identity, increased depression, anxiety, and in general, a lower quality of life for the patient. Furthermore, partners of patients also struggle with these issues and report feeling less attractive, undesirable, insecure, and isolated. Many couple's sex lives are abruptly and unexpectedly altered; at times couples become immensely overwhelmed by these major changes causing them to abandon their sex lives, which has a profound negative impact on dyadic intimacy levels and relationship satisfaction.

One of our current projects examines the role of health care professionals in informing patients about the various side effects associated with androgen deprivation therapy and management strategies that they endorse. Preliminary data suggest that 98% of physicians surveyed felt it was essential/important to inform patients about ED, and 68% endorsed PDE5i (medications, such as Viagra, Cialis, Levitra, etc.) to manage this side effect. Unfortunately, the empirical evidence indicates that medical treatments of ED demonstrate high discontinuance rates. We hypothesize that this is due to the nature of medical treatments, which do not address the psychosocial problems that accompany ED (e.g., loss of masculine identity).

To address these issues, we have implemented a workshop for PCa patients and their partners that embraces the multifaceted construct that sexuality truly is. We encourage that ED should not result in the death of a couple's sexual life, but perhaps a redefinition and reframing of sexual activities that will help to keep the intimacy, desire, and passion within the partnership alive.

The workshop is sponsored by Calgary's Prostate Cancer Institution. Couples may call Amy Hampton at (403) 305-5992 for more information.

CancerBridges
Submitted by: Michael Lang, Survivor Network Coordinator

"CancerBridges is a large provincial collection of professionals and survivors with special interest in researching and delivering evidence-based survivorship care. Our goal is to provide Alberta cancer survivors with the information and resources they need to make the rest of their life the best of their life. In addition to a strong research component, CancerBridges has created a number of educational and supportive care initiatives around the province and continues to create partnerships to provide supportive care for cancer survivors.

The www.CancerBridges.ca website is the hub of cancer survivorship in Alberta with a calendar of supportive and
educational events around the province, resource pages, a weekly blog, a special "Myths of Survivorship" video series and opportunities to provide feedback and ask questions. In addition to this CancerBridges hosts a monthly Survivorship Education Session in both Calgary and Edmonton on relevant topics, such as brain fog, decreasing feelings of isolation and understanding the complex emotions that occur during the survivorship phase of a cancer experience. These sessions are filmed and will be available to associate cancer care sites and rural communities. "Please visit www.CancerBridges.ca and sign up for the monthly Survivor Network E-newsletter to learn more or contact Michael Lang (Survivor Network Coordinator) and Dr. Janine Giese-Davis at cbridges@ucalgary.ca”

Bust a Movers Break a Sweat in Support of Breast Health
Submitted By: Ashton Paulitsch, Communications & Marketing Associate, Alberta Cancer Foundation

What does 400 Bust a Movers, 800 pink shoe-laced running shoes, 114 volunteers, 21 sponsors, six hours of fitness and one unforgettable workout with Richard Simmons equal? One incredible day at the Alberta Cancer Foundation’s inaugural Bust a Move for Breast Health™ that raised more than $400,000 towards a promise of progress for our mothers, sisters, and friends across the province!

The energy, enthusiasm, and excitement at the Northlands Expo Centre on March 24th, 2012 was evident with every kickboxing jab, yoga pose, hip hop move, salsa step and Zumba groove. Joining us on the participant floor was Dr. John Mackey and Dr. Gane Wong who, along with Dr. Andrew Mason, will use the Bust a Move proceeds to fund an innovative breast cancer virus discovery project run out of Edmonton’s own Cross Cancer Institute. The goal of this cutting-edge research is to determine the connections between viral infections and breast cancer. With this important knowledge comes the potential to better evaluate an individual’s risk for the disease, and holds promise for developing a breast cancer vaccine that may aid in preventing some breast cancer cases. Current statistics for breast cancer state that the disease affects 1 in 9 women in Alberta, but with the successful fundraising efforts of events like Bust a Move for Breast Health™, we move that much closer towards finding a cure.

Bust a Move for Breast Health™ will continue to ensure that the Alberta Cancer Foundation takes considerable steps towards a breast cancer-free future, which is why we’re pleased to announce we’ll be moving, shaking, jumping, and jiving again in 2013! Bust a Move will be back on March 9th, 2013 and we’re looking for participants to sweat (or glisten) with us again for six hours of fitness bliss in support of breast health. So grab some teammates, designate a Team Captain, and register for this day-long fitness extravaganza by visiting www.bustamove.ca. Once you register, you can start fundraising right away, planning your awesome Bust a Move outfit, and counting down the days until the big event. We look forward to meeting you at Bust a Move 2013 for another amazing day that will move more than your feet!
Upcoming Events

• Annual Oncology Nursing Spring Update - April 13 - 14, 2012 at the Santa Maria Goretti Centre. 11050 - 90 Street, Edmonton, AB. Registration still open! Admission $50. Please contact Jennifer Noseworthy at 780-432-8746 or jennifer.noseworthy@albertahealthservices.ca

• May 16, 2012, 8:00 – 9:00 - Actualizing Person Centred Care One Patient at a Time: Learning from Each Other presented by Linda Watson, RN, PhD(c), CON(C), Leader, Interdisciplinary Practice, Community Oncology. This session is being offered via telehealth. You can register your site directly by using the videoconference scheduler (https://vcscheduler.ca/schedule20/calendar/calendar.aspx?ID=1268). Should you have any questions please contact Lisa Brook at lisa.brook@albertahealthservices.ca or by phone at 780-643-7108.

• THE POWER OF TOUCH, with Christine Sutherland - June 1st to June 8th, 2012—International Hospice Volunteers and Health Professionals or July 6th to July 13th, 2012 Basic Training for Family and Friends Instructor Training (charter class) Nelson, BC, Canada. Designed for hospice volunteers, health professionals, caregivers, massage therapists, volunteers, family and friends. For More Information Contact: The Canadian Institute of Palliative Massage. Email: info@sutherlandproductions.com Toll Free: 1-800-611-5788 WEBSITE: www.sutherlandmassagproductions.com

• October 29th & 30th, 2012 - 23rd Annual Palliative Care Conference: Education & Research Days - Fantasyland Hotel Edmonton. This two day conference provides professionals and volunteers an opportunity to enhance knowledge in practical aspects of palliative end-of-life care issues and to gather with common interest in caring for patients and their families.

Article of Interest


Available Resources

The following presentation is available on disc for your use. To receive a copy email glenda.armstrong@albertahealthservices.ca

• Research That Never Runs Dry - Outcomes from a RCT on the prevention of xerostomia presented by Dr. Jana Rieger, PhD, CCC-SLP, S-LP(C , Professor, Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology, University of Alberta, Population Health Investigator, Alberta Innovates—Health Solutions

COMING April 2012, a new Canadian lymphedema publication is being launched by the Canadian Lymphedema Framework. PATHWAYS - Canada's Lymphedema Magazine will be Canada’s only magazine dedicated to matters related to lymphedema. This initiative supports the CLF’s mission to improve the management of lymphedema and related disorders in Canada.

The full-colour, professionally produced, 24 - 28 page magazine will be focused on empowering patients and professionals, by providing education and information to those living with lymphedema and the various professionals that support their care.

Anyone interested in this magazine is encouraged to contact and support their local provincial lymphedema association with an annual membership fee in order to receive a complimentary copy. Alternatively direct subscriptions can be purchased through the Canadian Lymphedema Framework directly at canadalymph@live.ca

We encourage your feedback, questions and suggestions for future newsletters! Please contact Glenda Armstrong concerning this newsletter at glenda.armstrong@albertahealthservices.ca or 780-643-4494