Calling all kids: enter Willow’s My Hero contest!

Willow Breast Cancer Support Canada invites children (8-12 years old) from across Canada to write a short essay about why they consider someone they know, who has had breast cancer, their hero.

The national grand prize winner will receive $2,500 towards their post-secondary education and four regional winners will be awarded $1,000 each. To find out more or to apply, visit: www.myherocontest.ca.

Coping With Your Financial Concerns When You Have Breast Cancer

Coping With Your Financial Concerns When You Have Breast Cancer is a province-specific resource which addresses the financial challenges that may be experienced during or after treatment.

The second edition has just been printed and is currently being distributed throughout the Alberta cancer care system. This guide is free of charge for anyone affected by breast cancer in the Province of Alberta. Below is the link to this resource.

http://www.willow.org/pdfs/Coping_Alberta.pdf

Join us in Welcoming Dr. Kim Adzich, Rimbey AB to the Network

Kim Adzich obtained his MD from the University of Alberta in 1981, and completed his Family Medicine residency at the Holy Cross Hospital in Calgary in 1983. Since then, he has practiced in a variety of locations, including solo practice in rural Nova Scotia, a First Nations community on the Queen Charlotte Islands, a small town on the South Island of New Zealand, in a World Vision feeding centre in Ethiopia, and for the past 16 years, in the central Alberta farming community of Rimbey. Coming from rural Alberta roots, he has always enjoyed the challenges and rewards of rural practice. In addition to full scope family medicine with his colleagues at the Rimbey Medical Clinic and Rimbey Hospital, he is involved in rural palliative care delivery and interprofessional education as a medical advisor for the regional palliative care program, co-facilitating a workshop designed to build palliative care capacity in rural communities, as well as acting as a LEAP Facilitator in Alberta. He has just completed a Certificate in Adult and Continuing Education through the U of A and U Vic, and has participated in online learning programs in bioethics (PHEN) and psychosocial oncology (CAPO/IPODE). He is currently on a committee assessing bereavement services in Central Alberta (Red Deer Hospice/Canadian Mental Health Association) and is working with the regional PC program to develop a proposal for a Pain and Symptom Clinic at the Central Alberta Cancer Centre. He is married and has two children. He enjoys travel and combines it with a passion for landscape photography whenever possible (www.kimadzichphotography.com).

Dr. Kim Adzich Email: kadzich@telusplanet.net
**Cancer Related Brain Fog**

By Heather Palmer, PhD

Health care professionals and researchers are all starting to accept that cancer can cause ‘Brain Fog’, or ‘Chemo Brain’ as it is often called.

Once affected by cancer, no matter how successful the treatment, some still struggle with changes in themselves that neither medications nor therapy seem to overcome. These are the cognitive changes, or changes in the way we think. This cognitive disruption affects as many as 75% of cancer patients and can happen not only after treatment but also as soon as the cancer is first diagnosed or first appears. Those affected describe a loss in mental sharpness that is both frustrating and life-changing. The symptoms of cancer related brain fog include changes in memory, trouble finding and using the right word, poorer attention and concentration, trouble doing more than one thing at a time, and changes in mood or general feelings of psychological well-being. Each of these symptoms, either alone or in combination, can have a huge impact on how a person functions from day to day.

The mechanisms for cognitive changes following cancer diagnosis and treatment are largely unknown. One culprit may be the chemotherapy itself. Some studies have shown that patients receiving high-dose chemotherapy are at greater risk for cognitive problems after treatment than patients receiving low-dose chemotherapy. However, the role of chemotherapy is unclear because cancer patients can experience brain fog in the absence of any chemotherapy treatment. Other studies have shown that some patients experience “brain fog” symptoms even before any form of chemotherapy treatment has been given or after other forms of treatment such as radiation. This suggests that the cancer itself or other factors (such as anxiety, depression, post traumatic stress disorder, fatigue, genetic factors, targeted therapies, etc.) may also play a role. Long term cognitive changes after treatment is completed seem to persist in only a subset (17%-34%) of cancer survivors. However, studies that look at brain fog over a long period of time have yet to be conducted.

Despite the lack of evidence pointing to a specific cause, efforts are being placed on rehabilitation for these changes. Formally referred to as ‘neuro-cognitive rehabilitation’, cognitive enhancement programs teach people how to improve their thinking capacity. Unlike the many baby boomer inspired brain fitness programs newly on the market, cognitive enhancement programs for cancer patients seem better suited for face-to-face seminars that teach specific strategies.

Programs that are evidence-based, emphasize individual style, teach how to apply techniques into daily life, and are multi-dimensional are most likely to be effective and have a positive impact on the lives of individuals affected. The goal is to return to previous levels of cognitive function (or better), recognizing that different people may need different methods to do so.

For more information on cognitive enhancement, please contact Dr. Heather Palmer at 416 219 1586 or visit [www.maximumcapacity.org](http://www.maximumcapacity.org)


Yoga Thrive
Therapeutic Yoga for Cancer Survivors

New Classes Coming This Fall…

Are you interested in a 7-week yoga program for cancer survivors (on and off treatment) and your support person?

Yoga Thrive is a research-based therapeutic yoga program aimed at helping cancer survivors transition from surviving to thriving. No previous yoga experience is required. Registration is required.

Please see below for locations and contact information. More details coming soon!

Calgary
(multiple classes and locations)
Culos-Reed Health & Wellness Lab
More info at www.kin.ucalgary.ca/healthandwellnesslab

Canmore
Daena Blixhavn
E. themountainpod@gmail.com

Cochrane
Katherine Paterson
E. kpaterson@travelmasters.ca

Edmonton
Irene Chan
E. chanid@telus.net

Grande Prairie
Candace McKim
E. gpyogazone@gmail.com

Lethbridge
Gina deBoer,
Susan Drblik,
Vickie MacArthur
Becky Brezoyski
E. yogathrivelethbridge@hotmail.com

Jasper
Alana Jessen
E. alanakj@uvic.ca

Medicine Hat
Dawn Olson
E. dawn.erin@hotmail.com

St. Albert
Angela Wiens
E. awiens@meridiancom.ca
Comprehensive Breast Care Program Welcomes Shannon Gil

The Comprehensive Breast Care Program welcomes Shannon Gil to their program. Shannon has taken on the role of a nurse navigator specializing in breast cancer and breast health. She has a BScN and national certification in oncology. Her extensive background includes acute care, oncology, palliative care, homecare, case management, and emergency nursing. In addition to her clinical experiences in both urban and rural settings, she leads an athletic lifestyle which includes national levels of competition in team sports.

(Pictured: Shannon Gil)

Dr. Dabbs Receives Women of Distinction Award

The Comprehensive Breast Care Program (CBCP), Edmonton Area is pleased to announce that Dr. K. Dabbs, Medical Lead of CBCP, received the “Women of Distinction Award” on June 11th in the category of health and medicine. The goals of CBCP are to provide a seamless integrated patient – centered approach to diagnosing and treating breast abnormalities and to expedite access to breast cancer services.

(Pictured) Dr. K. Dabbs with her award

Social Work Competencies for Practice in Hospice Palliative Care – 2008

Social workers play an important role in the delivery of hospice palliative care in many diverse settings. In time, most social work practitioners encounter adults, children and families who are facing progressive life limiting illness, dying, death, or bereavement. The profession of social work brings a unique perspective to end-of-life care that reflects and supports the holistic philosophy of hospice palliative care.

Despite the prominent and longstanding position of social work in hospice palliative care, the role and functions of social workers had not been clearly defined. Therefore, a national task group of social work practitioners and educators came together to identify competencies that are essential to social work practice in hospice palliative care. They used a modified Delphi process to consult front line clinicians across Canada, and thereby achieved consensus regarding the identification and description of eleven core competencies.

The result is a comprehensive, descriptive document outlining the core competencies for social work practice and education in hospice palliative care. These competencies are relevant for the novice, intermediate and advanced social work practitioner across care settings. They can also inform education curricula and professional development, job descriptions and evaluation processes.

Click on the link below to access the document. Please note that this document is currently available only in English, but will soon be available in French as well. This link can also be found on the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association Website.

Social Work Competencies for Practice in Hospice Palliative Care – 2008

For more information please email: scope@lakeheadu.ca
**Dr. Solomon Levin Memorial Award**

The Dr. Solomon Levin Memorial Award Program was established by the Department of Symptom Control and Palliative Care at the Cross Cancer Institute and the Alberta Cancer Foundation (ACF) in 2007 in the memory of Dr. Solomon Levin. The initial fund was created through the generosity of Dianne and Irving Kipnes in support of the award, as well as additional funds received in memory of Dr. Levin. This fund is now managed as an endowment fund by the ACF.

The Dr. Solomon Levin Memorial Award is designed to promote knowledge and skills in Palliative Care for health care professionals employed within the Cancer. It provides an exciting way for these individuals to develop their ability to provide comprehensive, competent and compassionate patient care.

The funds are to be used to support the professional growth and education of individuals employed within the Cancer Corridor through attendance of educational opportunities related to Palliative Care.

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY:** Any health care professional employed within the Cancer Corridor (tertiary, associate and community cancer centres)

**AMOUNT OF AWARD:** Maximum of $5000

**CRITERIA FOR SELECTION:**
- The proposed training will respond to an important and prevalent patient care need
- There is managerial/departmental support to implement the new training

The successful applicant agrees to correspond following the training to give feedback on how the training has improved patient care.

**DEADLINE:** August 15, 2009

Application forms will become available shortly through Cancernet, e-mail distribution and managers. Further information may be obtained from:

Dr. Sharon Watanabe (sharonwa@cancerboard.ab.ca, tel. 780-432-8318)
Dean England (deanengl@cancerboard.ab.ca, tel. 403-521-3102)
Vivian Collacutt (vivianco@cancerboard.ab.ca, tel. 780-643-4396)

**Coming Soon—New Clinical Practice Guideline**

The Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology (CAPO) and the Cancer Journey Action Group (Canadian Partnership Against Cancer or CPAC) have been working collaboratively to produce a "made in Canada" guideline for the psychosocial care of the adult cancer patient. Through the generous support of CPAC, an expert panel was formed to review the evidence, including existing guidelines, and make recommendations. An external panel of experts reviewed and commented on the resulting recommendation this spring. Once the finishing touches are in place, the guideline will be widely disseminated across Canada to help guide the development, provision and evaluation of psychosocial/supportive care in a variety of settings.

Watch for updates later this summer!

Shelley Currie, MSW, RSW, CSW
CAPO Co-Chair: Pan-Canadian Guideline Expert Panel
Canmore, Alberta
Upcoming Telehealth Presentations

- **Community Cancer Support Networks Telehealth Rounds** - 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm  
  **July 21, 2009** - “Virtual Pain & Symptom Management Clinic”
  Alysa Fairchild, MD, FRCPC, Department of Radiation Oncology, Cross Cancer Institute.  
  Edith Pituskin, RN, MN, Department of Radiation Oncology, Cross Cancer Institute.  
  Jill Wood, RN, Peace River Community Cancer Centre  
  Terri Woytkiw, RN, Palliative Care - Continuing Care, Alberta Health Services, Onoway  
  Sharon Watanabe, MD, FRCPC, Department of Symptom Control and Palliative Care, Cross Cancer Institute

- **October 7, 2009** - “Yoga Thrive: A Yoga Program for Cancer Survivors” - Nicole Culos-Reed, PhD, Associate Professor, Faculty of Kinesiology, University of Calgary, Adjunct Associate Professor, Department of Oncology, University of Calgary

- **December 2, 2009** - “Home Hospice Program” - Ana Meger, Home Hospice Manager, Pilgrims Hospice Society

To register for any telehealth session please contact your local telehealth coordinator. Thank you!

Points of Interest

- Below is a link to access Patient Education Videos  
  [http://www.cancerboard.ab.ca/Treatment/EducationVideos](http://www.cancerboard.ab.ca/Treatment/EducationVideos)

Available Resources

The following presentation is available on CD for your use. Please note that we have a limited number of copies and they will be distributed on a first come first serve basis.

- “Communicating About Sexuality in Cancer Care” presented by Dr. John Robinson, Ph.D., R. Psych  
  Learning Objectives:  
  - Learn strategies for effective communication with cancer patients and their partners  
  - Learn strategies for intervening to improve sexual health of cancer patients and their partners  
  - Learn about new treatments for the sexual concerns of cancer patients and their partners

- Cancer Centre Tour - CD  
  This CD provides a virtual tour of the Tom Baker Cancer Centre and the Cross Cancer Institute for patients.

Articles of Interest


Post-Basic Nursing Practice

- Hospice Palliative Care
- Gerontology

compassion. dedication. leadership.
it's what you have to give.

As our population continues to age, the demand for health care professionals qualified to work with both the elderly and the terminally ill also increases.

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