Alberta Cancer Line

Have you ever had a question about the care of your cancer patient and were not sure whom to consult with? The Alberta Cancer Line is a provincial toll-free telephone line which supports health professionals and serves as a conduit to information and many services provided by Cancer Care. Our staff can quickly assist callers in identifying the most appropriate person, service, or department to connect with. Examples of where we can assist you include connecting with specialists for phone consultations or obtaining contact information.

Allison Cann is the voice of the Alberta Cancer Line. She is a Certified Health Information Management Professional whose experience includes several years working in oncology with the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. Ali has also honed her skills while working in an acute care setting in Victoria, BC. Her most rewarding career path has brought her to Alberta to work with us at the Cross Cancer Institute. Allison has been part of the Cancer Care family for two years; this last year providing valuable leadership as the Assistant Manager of the Electronic Medical Record Transition team in Health Information Management, and her first year was spent serving as the Alberta Cancer Line Coordinator. Ali returned to her role as the Alberta Cancer Line coordinator on August 24th, much to her delight, and provides fast and efficient information access to oncology services for all health care providers in the province. In her personal time Allison enjoys playing ringette, spending time with her husband and her 150 pound Newfoundland dog, Bernie.

Please join us in welcoming…. We are pleased to introduce Daena Lamoureux MSc., R.D., as the Provincial Coordinator of the Nutrition and Rehabilitation Oncology Network, Alberta Health Services – Cancer Care. Daena has just completed her Post-Graduate Dietetic Internship which included a Studentship in Palliative and Supportive Care at the Cross Cancer Institute in Edmonton. Daena also has been working as a Research Assistant with Dr. Vickie Baracos at the CCI for the past 2 years recruiting and communicating with cancer patients for involvement in clinical nutrition trials in palliative care. We are excited to have Daena join the Community Cancer Support Network team and bring her unique nutrition perspective to the networks! Daena can be reached at 780-643-4485 or daena.lamoureux@albertahealthservices.ca

The Comprehensive Breast Care Program welcomes Teresa Skarlicki into her new role as clinical social worker for the program. Teresa has worked in urban and rural settings, has over 7 years of psychosocial oncology expertise and has just completed her Masters in Social Work.
The Cross Cancer Institute’s (CCI) Department of Rehabilitation Medicine is comprised of occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech-language pathology. We hope to share with you some of the wisdom of practice that our experience in rehabilitation oncology has allowed us to collect (and, through this newsletter, invite you to share your resources with us).

There are many wonderful free online resources for healthcare providers and their patients. We would like to highlight a few that we have found particularly valuable in our clinical practice:

The Canadian Cancer Society ([www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)) has some excellent publications available. These can be downloaded or if you contact your local chapter of the CCS, they will send you booklets free of charge. All patients undergoing breast surgery at the CCI receive pre-operative teaching about shoulder range of motion and lymphedema risk reduction. We utilize “Exercises after Breast Surgery: A guide for women” as our teaching resource. Another valuable publication is “Sexuality and cancer: A guide for people with cancer”. Our occupational therapists have found this booklet to be a helpful tool.

For lymphedema information, it is worthwhile to familiarize yourself with the Lymphovenous Canada website: [http://www.lymphovenous-canada.ca/](http://www.lymphovenous-canada.ca/).

In addition to information about the status of lymphedema management in Canada, this site provides a link for the International Lymphedema Framework’s International Consensus document “International Consensus: Best practice for the management of lymphoedema”. Written and produced by an international panel of lymphedema experts, this is an excellent overview of research evidence and recommended standards of practice. The International Consensus document can be downloaded free of charge.

Cancer-related fatigue is experienced by the majority of cancer patients. It is defined as “a distressing persistent, subjective sense of physical, emotional and/or cognitive tiredness or exhaustion related to cancer or cancer treatment that is not proportional to recent activity and interferes with usual functioning.” The “NCCN Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology: Cancer-Related Fatigue” is a good starting point for understanding cancer-related fatigue and some strategies that attenuate it. Online registration with the National Comprehensive Cancer Network is free ([http://www.nccn.org/index.asp](http://www.nccn.org/index.asp)) and their Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oncology are also free for registered users.

Healthcare providers working with patients with cancers of the head and neck will find helpful materials by the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health. Materials are available under Educational Resources: [http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/](http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/). The speech-language pathologist at the CCI recommends: “Head and Neck Radiation Treatment and Your Mouth” and “Chemotherapy and Your Mouth”.

The Brain Tumor Foundation of Canada ([http://www.braintumour.ca/braintumour.nsf/eng/home](http://www.braintumour.ca/braintumour.nsf/eng/home)) offers a variety of free resources for healthcare providers and patients/families including the Brain Tumor Patient Resource Handbook.

We recognize that there are many other excellent online resources available to healthcare providers and their families and that this is by no means an exhaustive list of websites and materials – it is intended only to start your professional development journey into the rewarding and challenging world of rehabilitation oncology.

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**CCI Rehabilitation Oncology Department Contact Info:**

- Physical Therapy: 780-432-8716
- Occupational Therapy: 780-432-8798
- Speech-Language Pathology: 780-432-8288

Front Row (left to right): Risa Margolus, Leila Sidi, Elaine Gobeil, Janice Yurick, Mara Shular
Back Row (left to right): Stacey Fortin, Anna Sytsanko, Leanne Daneyko, Judy Poon, Patricia Hauck, Rita Wannechko-Koenig
Update from the Alberta Cancer Foundation on the Tomorrow Project
Submitted by: Phoebe Dey, Manager, Communications, Alberta Cancer Foundation

We are pleased to share Alberta Cancer Foundation news with the Community Cancer Support Network. As we start a new year, we continue to raise dollars and invest in research that pushes the boundaries of medical knowledge, while supporting patients facing cancer and offering programs that help Albertans reduce their cancer risk.

One such Alberta Cancer Foundation-funded study, the Tomorrow Project, hopes to answer the “why me?” question that often accompanies a cancer diagnosis.

The largest population study in Canada, this project, started in Alberta and now the lead of a national study, is investigating the role genetics, behaviour and environmental factors have on an individual’s cancer risk. Over the next few years, five main researchers and their host agencies across the country will work together to recruit 300,000 Canadians--35 years and older who have never been diagnosed with cancer--for this “population laboratory.” Researchers will collect biological samples to examine gene-environment interactions and identify the biologic mechanisms responsible for cancer and other chronic or long-term health conditions.

The idea is to collect as much information as possible from participants and track them until they are 85. Throughout the study researchers compare almost everything about the lifestyle and history of those who develop cancer through the course of the study with those who do not.

While it is now generally accepted that as many as 50 per cent of cancers may be attributable to modifiable behaviours such as smoking, physical inactivity and poor diet, researchers suspect there may be more to the story.

Heather Whelan, research manager of the project, says the Tomorrow Project is relentlessly focused on the Alberta Cancer Foundation’s vision of a cancer-free future. “We hope to inform cancer prevention strategies and reduce the incidence of cancer we’re seeing in Alberta right now,” she says. "The most exciting thing is the possibility of what we can do with all the information we are collecting. This rich source of information will help us answer so many important questions."

To become a volunteer in the study, go to www.albertacancer.ca and choose Volunteer.

Community Cancer Support Network Web Survey of Network Members
Submitted by: Tricia Hutchison, BSW, RSW, MSW Student, University of Calgary

The Community Cancer Support Network (CCSN) team would like to extend our sincere appreciation to those Network members who completed our web survey in November 2009.

A few highlights:

- 86 network members from a variety of professional designations completed the survey.
- Responding network members were representative of all levels of health care from front-line providers to management level positions, and were located across the province including rural, remote and urban locations.
- Respondents were employed in a variety of health care settings ranging from tertiary cancer sites to community health centres and community agencies.
- Overall, respondents were very satisfied with the activities of the Network and were able to provide suggestions as to ways to better engage and support members in our current healthcare climate. Specifically, members would like to see increased educational activities which would assist in meeting professional development requirements, and would also like to have the CCSN facilitate the provision of peer support.
- The survey results confirmed that the Network provided a much needed and appreciated local forum for interdisciplinary team education and support.

We look forward to incorporating your suggestions and information offered through the survey into future Network activities. The CCSN will continue to work towards improving the Network and its activities in order to remain a valuable resource to supportive cancer care professionals in Alberta and beyond.

In an effort to improve our communication with members each newsletter will pose a new question to help us continue to meet your professional supportive cancer care needs. Please respond via email to Glenda Armstrong at glenda.armstrong@albertahealthservices.ca with your input.

January Survey Question:

Survey respondents indicated a desire for the CCSN to provide a forum for peer support. Peer support can refer to initiatives where colleagues, members of self help organizations and others meet as equals to give each other support on a reciprocal basis. (Wikipedia). **How could the CCSN best facilitate peer support?**
Update on the Interface Projects

The Community Cancer Support Network is pleased to announce that a request for proposals for Interface Projects will be released early in the New Year. Due to the generosity of the Canadian Cancer Society and Alberta Cancer Foundation, we are able to fund FOUR projects in 2010- each for $10 000! Details coming soon!

Upcoming Telehealth Presentations

February 12, 2009 - Innovations in Supportive Cancer Care in Western Canada
12:00 - 3:00 MST (11:00 - 2:00 PST, 1:00 - 4:00 CST)

Topics & Speakers

- The Virtual Pain & Symptom Control / Palliative Radiotherapy Clinic - Dr. Watanabe & Edie Pituskin, Alberta
- Young Adult Cancer Canada- Geoff Eaton, Newfoundland
- Moving Forward After Breast Cancer - Irene Shapira & Lori Santoro, Manitoba
- Using Groups to Enhance Oncology Nutrition Practice - Cheri Cosby, British Columbia
- Cancer in my Family Website, British Columbia
- What Canadians Want to Know - Lisa Streeter, Manitoba
- Vocational Rehabilitation - Maureen Parkinson, British Columbia
- Canadian Cancer Society, Information & Peer Support - Sandra Krueckl, BC and Yukon Division

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

Articles of Interest


Available Resources

- Below is a link to view a telehealth presentation titled 'Knowing What to Say – Speaking with Patients About Spirituality and Exploring Verbal Responses to Spiritual Pain’ presented by Oceanna Hall, B.Sc., M.Div., M.Ed., CPE Specialist
  http://www.screencast.com/t/ZmlxYWRk

The following presentations are 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
- “Virtual Pain & Symptom Control / Palliative Radiotherapy Clinic Update” presented by Dr. Sharon Watanabe, Dr. Alysa Fairchild, Edith Pituskin, Jill Woods

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