



CANCER

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Major initiatives and achievements, 2021-2022

The Cancer SCN (CSCN) advanced a number of initiatives over the past year that are aligned with our [Transformational Roadmap 2020-2024](#). Our work focuses on improving care across the cancer continuum in Alberta through data, evidence and collaboration.

Future of Cancer Impact in Alberta



The CSCN convened a group of key stakeholders from across Alberta to guide the development of [The Future of Cancer Impact \(FOCI\) Report](#). This report synthesizes existing evidence and describes what is known about cancer in Alberta and what the future likely holds in terms of incidence, prevalence, mortality and survival.

This generous and collaborative group was co-chaired by Dr. Paula Robson (Scientific Director, CSCN) and Dr. Darren Brenner (Associate Professor, Departments of Oncology and Community Health Sciences, University of Calgary) and included Albertans who have experienced cancer first-hand, experts in various cancer-related domains across the continuum, and other key strategic partners. The knowledge contributed by these individuals was further strengthened through the active involvement of many other subject matter experts, contributors, and reviewers.

The FOCI in Alberta Report is a comprehensive exploration of cancer in Alberta, and includes current and projected data, as well as clinical and technical interpretations and recommendations. It identifies gaps and opportunities for knowledge generation and implementation that may inform future priorities for cancer research and cancer care.

With the report now complete, the CSCN will use it as the basis for extensive engagement and consultation with cancer leaders and key strategic partners across Alberta, with the goal of achieving consensus on future cancer-related priorities for the health system.

"Five years ago, I was told I had tongue cancer. As I moved through treatment, I noticed researchers actively evaluating and working to improve the level of care. We all know there is ongoing work to cure cancer, but these researchers were working on every aspect of cancer care and recovery. My interest in their work led me to participating on the FOCI in Alberta Working Group.

I am proud to be one of several cancer patient advisors contributing to this report and to know that communicating my experience is helping to build understanding and ultimately transform cancer care in Alberta."

Adam Brown, Patient advisor, CSCN

Alberta Cancer Diagnosis (ACD) Initiative

Currently, there is no provincial diagnosis program to help coordinate and accelerate cancer diagnosis. Working with patients, families, communities and primary care, the CSCN is co-designing an [Alberta Cancer Diagnosis \(ACD\) Program](#) with a vision to provide (i) timely diagnosis and supports in navigating the cancer system; (ii) consistent processes for accessing appropriate tests and referrals, (iii) enhanced communication to expedite and support patients through diagnosis; and (iv) coordinated and best use of resources (e.g., through appropriate testing and avoidance of unnecessary hospitalizations).

Meaningful engagement with Albertans and diverse stakeholders is a cornerstone of the ACD initiative. Engaging a broad range of clinicians, people, and communities is helping us design a cancer diagnosis program that is inclusive and meets the needs of providers and Albertans in all communities. [Learn more](#) about the engagement process underway, design principles and how to get involved. This work is currently in the design phase. The team is creating the program prototype and will soon test it with stakeholders and start creating a detailed program implementation plan.



"I am proud to be one of several cancer patient and family advisors contributing to the Alberta Cancer Diagnosis Initiative. As one of the working group co-chairs, I am helping shape the work. Sharing my experience is helping to build a program that will transform cancer care in Alberta."
Don Wood, Family Advisor, CSCN

"It has been a pleasure to provide leadership to the Alberta Cancer Diagnosis Program as one of the co-chairs of its Steering Committee. I know having patients and families front and centre, in all aspects of the work - from planning to execution, ensures true co-design."

Lorelee Marin, Family Advisor, CSCN



Alberta Cancer Research Conference 2021 – Zooming Forward: Cancer Research Innovation in our own Backyard

The CSCN partnered with research institutes and leading cancer specialists across the province to deliver the Alberta Cancer Research Conference (October 25-27, 2021), the first provincial cancer conference held in Alberta since 2013. Key partners included Cancer Care Alberta, the Arnie Charbonneau Cancer Institute, Cancer Research Institute of Northern Alberta, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry of the University of Alberta, the University of Lethbridge, and the Alberta Cancer Foundation.

The conference aimed to increase awareness and advance knowledge of cancer research activity in Alberta. It brought together hundreds of scientists and associates from Alberta and beyond to share successes, strategies and explore opportunities for future collaborations. The CSCN ensured that there was a focus on integration of research and practice, and hosted a session on the value of a Learning Health System in accelerating moving evidence into practice.

Other highlights

Cancer diagnostic pathways

The CSCN is supporting symptomatic patients suspected of having colorectal cancer and lymphoma by creating clinical pathways and supporting their implementation across Alberta.

Provincial pathways support standardized, high quality care for all Albertans. They aim to identify patients with lymphoma and colorectal cancer earlier and facilitate diagnostic investigations, patient referrals, education and supports, improving patient outcomes and experience. [Learn more](#)

To date, the Lymphoma Diagnostic Pathway has been implemented at most major oncology sites in the province. Implementation of the Colorectal Cancer Diagnostic Pathway is underway in Edmonton and Calgary.

Impact on health and care

The Cancer SCN is leading transformation to improve care across the cancer continuum in Alberta by developing strong relationships with patients, families, research institutes, clinicians and operational partners to leverage available resources and expertise. We work together with these stakeholders to:

- Improve care experiences for patients with cancer and their families
- Enhance health outcomes for patients with cancer
- Improve efficiencies in the delivery of cancer care
- Ensure patient voices and experiences remain at the centre of all our efforts

Actions and areas of focus

- Build a community that strategically transforms cancer care
- Translate evidence and data to inform priorities, practice, policy and planning
- Enhance experiences and outcomes for patients and families and improve efficiencies across the health system

CANCER

Grants and Publications



19

Peer-reviewed Publications



42

Workshops & Presentations



\$4.0M

Research Grants



180

Research Members

Outcomes and Impact

The current implementation of cancer diagnostic pathways & future implementation of a provincial diagnosis program will result in:

- ✓ expedited diagnostic processes
- ✓ appropriate use of diagnostic tests
- ✓ improved patient & provider satisfaction
- ✓ improved access to patient education resources & supports

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