

Cancer SCN Quarterly Update

July to September 2018

The Cancer Strategic Clinical Network (SCN) is committed to providing our Core Committee and stakeholders with updates regarding our projects and activities. For more information please visit the website at www.ahs.ca/cancerscn or contact angela.estey@ahs.ca

Provincial Breast Health Initiative:

The Provincial Breast Health Initiative continues to improve care for breast cancer patients with an initial mandate to target 3 areas for improvement, supported by refreshed education materials and a provincial measurement framework.

- One **Provincial Breast Health Initiative Steering Committee** meeting was held this quarter. On September 19th, the Steering Committee endorsed new priorities for a 2019/20 business case:
 - i. Mainstreaming for breast cancer
 - ii. Expansion of the breast health measurement framework (leveraging the provincial portal)
 - iii. Multidisciplinary Care Coordination / Enhanced Navigation
- With implementation of the **Same-Day Mastectomy Pathway**, 41% of mastectomies are now performed as same-day surgery and sites are on track to meet the provincial target of 50% by March 31, 2019.
- With implementation of the **Diagnostic Assessment Pathway**, women with highly suspicious breast imaging findings now receive expedited care in Alberta.
 - From 2016-2018, the wait-time from a highly suspicious finding to referral to a breast program reduced from 22.2 days to 7.5 days in Calgary and 14.1 days to 9.3 days in Edmonton.
- To facilitate more appropriate referrals for **Breast Reconstruction**, we are working with plastic surgeons to develop a referral checklist and provincial inventory of plastic surgeons that describes the types of procedures they do and where they operate. As well, a summary of the clinical practice guidelines was developed and will be shared with all general surgeons performing mastectomies.

Palliative and End of Life Care:

The Cancer, Critical Care, and Emergency SCNs are surveying patients with oncological and non-oncological in advanced or end-stage disease to understand acute care utilization.

- Systematic literature reviews on effectiveness of Emergency Department based-palliative care interventions and screening tools to identify patients in the Emergency Department with palliative care needs was completed; findings will be shared in early 2019.
- The University of Alberta Hospital (UAH) study, which started on March 24, 2018, includes 27 emergency department (ED) physicians and has enrolled 241 patients. The Grey Nuns



Community Hospital study, which started on April 11, 2018, includes 17 ED physicians and has enrolled 60 patients. Study results are anticipated in early 2019.

Accelerating the Diagnosis of Cancer:

This emerging initiative aims to address delays experienced by patients with highly suspicious findings and implement effective symptom assessment and triage. This will be achieved through implementation of facilitated diagnosis pathways.

- As a first step, we engaged the Institute of Health Economics to understand what solutions have been adopted in other jurisdictions. In Alberta, foundational work to expedite diagnostic work-up for lung, breast, and prostate cancer has been successfully implemented.
- A co-design committee with patients was assembled to develop a proposal for the Health Innovation Implementation and Spread Fund and a provincial plan to address diagnostics delays for most cancers. This proposal scales these innovations beginning with colorectal cancer (2350 new cases/year) and lymphoma (850/year).
- The research team worked collaboratively with coordinators of the Patient and Family Advisor Network (CancerControl Alberta) to conduct a qualitative interview study. The goal of the study was to explore perceptions and experiences of patients and family members in the cancer pre-diagnosis period. Analysis of the interviews and report writing are currently underway.

Cancer SCN Research:

The Cancer SCN research team supports priority initiatives of the Cancer SCN as required. It also continues to engage with multiple stakeholders to identify and nurture research-practice partnerships, which will create and apply knowledge that improves cancer outcomes.

- The research team is working on an environmental scan on models of care for cancer patients accessing emergency departments in Canada. Findings will help inform the circumstances in which cancer patients access the emergency department and alternative models of care that could help support them.
 - A review of academic literature and grey literature with a publication date limit of the last 10 years has been completed.
 - Key informants will be interviewed to provide greater insight on Canadian initiatives of interest.
- The research team continues to engage stakeholders and build networks. This quarter, the Assistant Scientific Director is working with the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta to explore opportunities for practicum placements to support the work of the Cancer SCN and the development of its research network.