

Cancer Strategic Clinical Network

Quarterly Update July - September 2021

The Cancer Strategic Clinical Network (CSCN) is committed to providing our Core Committee and stakeholders with updates regarding our projects and activities. Copies of these updates and other reports can be found on our webpage: www.ahs.ca/cancerscn

Alberta Cancer Diagnosis (ACD) Initiative and Cancer Diagnosis Pathways

The CSCN is co-designing a cancer diagnosis program with single-point access for all cancer diagnosis pathways, timely access to appropriate diagnostic work-up and referrals, and supports for primary care and patients. In addition, tumour specific cancer diagnosis pathways are being developed and implemented.

- Alberta Cancer Diagnosis initiative governance established with a Steering Committee and an Engage-To-Design Working Group co-chaired by family advisors, primary care and the CSCN.
- An ACD project team has been recruited.
- Initiative launch was scheduled for September but was deferred due to ongoing COVID pressures on clinical staff.
- Planning is underway to begin engaging with sub-populations to inform and co-design ACD program elements. Initial sub-populations include: rural Albertans, newcomers, seniors, Indigenous people, and LGBTQ2S+.

Lymphoma Diagnosis Pathway

- Lymphoma Diagnosis Pathway is implemented in Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary, Medicine Hat, and Lethbridge.
- Implementation in Grande Prairie is on-hold due to COVID-19 impacts.

Colorectal Cancer Diagnosis Pathway

- Colorectal Cancer Diagnosis Pathway is implemented in Edmonton and Calgary. COVID-19 impacts on surgical capacity and endoscopy has limited the number of patients entering the pathway.
- Implementation options are being developed for areas outside of Edmonton and Calgary due to COVID-19 impacts

Cancer Unknown Primary Diagnosis Pathway

- Design work for the Cancer Unknown Primary diagnosis pathway has started with an evidence review and documentation of current state.



CSCN Research

The CSCN research team supports priority initiatives of the CSCN 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.

- A CIHR Health System Impact Fellowship has been awarded to Dr. Fay Strohschein, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Calgary. Under the co-supervision of Barbara O’Neill and Dr. Sandra Davidson, Fay will conduct research to support improvements in cancer diagnosis and care for older Albertans. Fay started her two-year collaboration with the Cancer SCN on September 1st, 2021.
- CSCN is supporting students at the School of Public Health, University of Alberta, with a practice project opportunity. Students will help determine health service use indicators for vulnerable populations. This project is related to the health equity component of the Future of Cancer Impact in Alberta report and will inform discussions about health service planning and the definition of strategies to address the needs of under-served populations in Alberta.
- CSCN is partnering with Cancer Care Alberta, Arnie Charbonneau Cancer Institute, Cancer Research Institute of Northern Alberta, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry UA, University of Lethbridge, and Alberta Cancer Foundation to deliver the Alberta Cancer Research Conference - the first provincial cancer conference held in Alberta since 2013. The conference (Oct 25-27, 2021) will showcase how research and innovation can be woven throughout the continuum of care to improve outcomes and experiences for people facing cancer.

Future of Cancer Impact (FoCI) in Alberta

One in two Albertans will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime. The rising incidence of cancer and the growing numbers of cancer survivors, coupled with an ageing population who want to live well closer to home, are changing the way we think about cancer and the care people receive.

- FoCI Working Group has completed projections of future incidence, mortality, and survival, and is synthesizing what is currently known about cancer in Alberta. A draft report will be shared with AHS stakeholders this fall and more broadly this winter.

CSCN Innovation Pipeline

The CSCN Innovation Pipeline is a process to help identify and invest in innovative ideas aligned with our strategic directions. The Pipeline framework describes five steps for innovations to progress in the health system: idea generation; proof of concept testing; implementation test in Alberta; implementation work to scale; and implementation for sustainability.

- CSCN is revising the innovation pipeline funding competition to ensure operations, clinicians and other staff across the cancer continuum have an opportunity to share ideas and bring forward challenges requiring innovation.