# Cancer Strategic Clinical Network Quarterly Update October - December 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: <a href="www.ahs.ca/cancerscn">www.ahs.ca/cancerscn</a>

## Alberta Cancer Diagnosis (ACD) Initiative: Program and 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.

- Together with Primary Care and Family Advisors, the CSCN officially launched the Alberta Cancer Diagnosis Initiative on December 13, 2022. This event provided an opportunity to discover what is possible for a cancer diagnosis program and provide some examples of how specialist and primary care collaboration, using patient voice to change the system, and tackling systemic issues, is achievable and can improve the outcomes of patients, providers, and the system.
- Meaningful and diverse engagement is a cornerstone of the ACD initiative. We are intentionally engaging a broad range of sub-groups including newcomers, older adults, adolescents and young adults, Albertans living in rural and remote areas, Indigenous peoples, sexual and gender minorities, people with disabilities, and people experiencing homelessness. This diverse and inclusive engagement will help us design a cancer diagnosis program to meet the needs of 'edge populations' as well as the average Albertan. Gender-based Analysis Plus methods are being used to inform the cancer diagnosis program design.
- A current state document, or visualization of the current cancer diagnosis experience in Alberta, has been created.
- The CSCN is seeking inspiration from other non-health related industries to inform the
  design of a cancer diagnosis program. An environmental scan documenting innovations
  from non-health industries was completed.
- A research protocol will be submitted to the Health Research Ethics Board of Alberta Community Health Committee. This protocol will ensure engagement meets ethical requirements and protects the welfare of participants.
- Initial conversations have occurred with brokers from newcomer communities and older Albertans. Planning is underway to engage all other sub-groups listed above.



Networks™



 A rapid review of evidence was completed to inform engagement with older adults with cancer and their families. In addition, an age analysis of the 2021 Ambulatory Oncology Patient Satisfaction Survey (AOPSS) highlighted decreasing satisfaction and increasing unmet needs among older adults with cancer, particularly with respect to coordination of care, physical comfort, and access to care. Results were presented at the Alberta Cancer Research Conference, the Canadian Cancer Research Conference, and the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology Conference.

#### Lymphoma Diagnosis Pathway

- Lymphoma Diagnosis Pathway is implemented in Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary, Medicine Hat, and Lethbridge. COVID has limited the use of this pathway; however, preliminary data has shown good patient and system outcomes.
- Implementation in Grande Prairie is being explored in January to determine if and how this pathway will be expanded to Grande Prairie.

#### Colorectal Cancer Diagnosis Pathway

- Colorectal Cancer Diagnosis Pathway is implemented in Edmonton and Calgary. COVID
  has affected surgical capacity and endoscopy volumes, which has limited the number of
  patients entering the pathway.
- Implementation options are being explored for areas outside of Edmonton and Calgary; however, progress has been slowed by COVID and clinician availability.

### Cancer Unknown Primary Diagnosis Pathway

- Design work for the Cancer Unknown Primary diagnosis pathway has started with an evidence review and the development of interview guides for both primary care and tertiary care.
- Interviews with primary and tertiary care will inform the current state; however, COVID
  may limit the ability to engage with these groups and alternatives are being explored to
  ensure the project progresses in a timely way.

#### Head and Neck Cancer Diagnosis Pathway

CSCN has initiated 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.

The CSCN partnered with Cancer Care Alberta, Arnie Charbonneau Cancer Institute,
 Cancer Research Institute of Northern Alberta, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry of the

University of Alberta, 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) brought together hundreds of scientists and associates from across the province and beyond, to share successes and foster future collaboration.

- An overview of all the research conducted as part of the ACD initiative was presented at the Cancer Epidemiology Prevention Research rounds (Nov 18, 2021).
- The CSCN is developing a partnership with Alberta Registered Nurses Educational Trust to involve nurses in research related to the perspectives of colorectal cancer patients diagnosed in emergency departments and hospitals.
- The CSCN supported five students at the School of Public Health, University of Alberta, with a practice project opportunity. Students helped determine health service use indicators for vulnerable populations. This project informed 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.
- The CSCN has published the article: Pujadas Botey, A., GermAnn, K., Robson, P. J., O'Neill, B. M., & Stewart, D. A. (2021). Physician perspectives on delays in cancer diagnosis in Alberta: a qualitative study. CMAJ Open, 9(4), E1120-E1127. doi:10.9778/cmajo.20210013.

\Last updated: Jan 2022