

# Cancer Strategic Clinical Network

Update October 2022 to March 2023

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](http://www.ahs.ca/cancerscn)

## Community Assets Supporting Cancer Diagnosis

The CSCN is working to identify strengths and assets within rural/remote and newcomer-dense communities that contribute to improved cancer diagnosis outcomes. Clinical decision support tools and educational materials will be co-developed with Primary Care providers to enable better patient experiences.

- In partnership with Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research (SPOR) and Physician Learning Program (PLP), we will identify and engage with four rural/remote communities and four newcomer-dense communities. Through this engagement, the CSCN and PLP will carry out qualitative research, Cognitive Task Analysis and use co-design principles to achieve two high-level goals:
  - 1) Understand and document community strengths and assets that affect access to cancer diagnosis in rural/remote and newcomer-dense communities.
  - 2) Co-develop clinical resources and decision support tools for Primary Care in these communities to better detect and appropriately support patients during diagnosis.
- The project is supported by the Community Assets Supporting Cancer Diagnosis (CACD) Advisory Committee.
- Study participant recruitment has started and will continue into the Fall.

## Future of Cancer Impact (FOCI) in Alberta report

- The FoCI report is a comprehensive exploration of cancer in Alberta. It 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. A first draft of the report was released in Spring 2022.
- A survey was circulated to the cancer community. More than 1500 stakeholders with various areas of expertise provided their feedback on the report and its recommendations in Fall 2022.
- Survey feedback was used to validate and refine the report and recommendations. The revised report and summary of the recommendations is available on our webpage.
- Next steps include broader dissemination of the report.



## Transformational Roadmap (TRM)

- The Cancer SCN's current TRM describes our strategic directions for 2020-2024. Together with our Core Committee, the CSCN will begin refreshing its Transformational Roadmap for 2024-2028. The FOCI in Alberta report is a foundational document to guide our new strategic directions.
  - As part of this work, we are developing a research strategy for 2024-2028. It will be embedded in the refreshed TRM.

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

### The ACD Program

- With support from Alberta Health and pharmaceutical companies, the CSCN is designing and implementing an ACD Program a. The ACD program will be a centralized, coordinated provincial diagnosis program co-designed by people who live in Alberta, primary care and system stakeholders. The program will anchor all new diagnosis pathways linked to central intake programs such the Alberta Surgical Initiative and Diagnostic Imaging and will provide a single point of access for patients and primary care.
- Engagement with a broad range of people began in January 2022. The team met with 250+ people: newcomers, people who are older and younger, people from rural and remote communities, people with Indigenous perspectives, people with disabilities, gender and sexual minorities. We asked them how they see the world, how they use the health system, what would better look like for them and their community, and what could we do to make cancer diagnosis easier. From all of these stories, insights were catalogued and will be used to create design principles and the ACD Program.
  - For more detail about the engagement process and an overview of the design principles, you can listen to Dr. Fay Strohschein's presentation here: Alberta Cancer Diagnosis Initiative - Engagement Methods & Design Principles here [https://youtu.be/mcMoeaUQR\\_U](https://youtu.be/mcMoeaUQR_U)
  - Detailed and rigorous analysis of information collected in engagement with Alberta's newcomer/immigrant population is underway. A report describing their perspectives, experiences and particular needs during the cancer diagnostic process is being developed.
  - A team in Health Systems Knowledge & Evaluation was commissioned to do the evaluation of the engagement and codesign process involved in the creation of the ACD program. An evaluation report will be available in the near future.
- Primary care are active collaborators and will continue providing input into the ACD Program design.
- Next steps include development workflow processes and a report for organizational endorsement and implementation.

### Cancer Diagnosis Pathways

In addition to ACD Program, tumour specific cancer diagnosis pathways are being developed and implemented.

#### Colorectal Cancer Diagnosis Pathway

- The Iron Deficiency Anemia (IDA) and High-Risk Rectal Bleeding (HRRB) pathways have been implemented in Edmonton and Calgary.
- Discussions underway to initiate expansion provincially.
- The Cancer SCN is looking at potential solutions to improve pathway uptake within the ACD initiative.

#### Other Cancer Diagnosis Pathways

- Pathways are being developed for Cancer of Unknown Primary (CUP), Head and Neck cancer, and Bladder cancer. Metrics and pathway algorithms are being created and will be tested with patient and provider groups.
- The Cancer SCN and CCA Operations are co-leading the development of an operational plan for approval to implement a Metastatic Cancer diagnosis pathway. This pathway will expedite flow of later stage cancer patients within the cancer system (Palliative care and systemic therapy).

### Cancer SCN 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 SCN Scientific Office Annual Impact Report for the 2021-2022 fiscal year has been released, and can be accessed here:  
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/about/scn/ahs-scn-cancer-highlights-2021-22.pdf>