

Drug Therapy for Cancer in Nova Scotia

Cancer can be treated by drug therapy, either alone or combined with other treatment types, such as surgery or radiation therapy. Drug therapy is known as “Systemic Therapy” and includes the use of chemotherapy and other drugs.

*A provincial program to standardize how these drug therapies are given has been started by **Cancer Care Nova Scotia**. This program is called the “Provincial Managed Systemic Therapy Program”, or PMSTP for short.*

The PMSTP will make sure that:

- 1. Cancer patients across Nova Scotia will have the same access to drug therapy, no matter where they live.*
- 2. New kinds of drugs will be made available in Nova Scotia when good scientific evidence proves they are safe and that they work. Cancer specialists will make these decisions.*
- 3. The use of drug therapy will include both promising new therapies and older tried-and-true therapies, to offer the most effective choices to Nova Scotia cancer patients.*
- 4. The use of drug therapy will be available through hospitals, clinics and in the home, depending on what is best for each patient and type of therapy. For instance, some types of therapy may be limited to specific hospitals, whereas others may be given much closer to home at a local clinic or hospital. Still others can be taken at home, such as pills from the local pharmacy, depending upon the type of cancer and where a patient lives.*
- 5. A formal process for trying new therapies will mean that each new therapy is considered on the same basis as the present ones. The process is called “Clinical Practice Guidelines”. The use of these Guidelines will mean that each patient can get the best therapy possible for their personal treatment.*
- 6. The PMSTP will work to get a good information system in place, to record the therapies given, and the benefits each patient received.*

The PMSTP will use the people and systems already in place, wherever possible. The plan is to make the best use of all existing services and funds, including private prescription insurance plans, and to recommend new funding or services only where necessary.

The ultimate goal is to make sure all cancer patients in Nova Scotia receive the best drug therapy possible.

For more information, please contact:

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