



Cancer Care Nova Scotia

VOLUME III – ISSUE THREE
JULY 2002

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A CELEBRATION TO REMEMBER



SIGNALS – CANCER CELL GROWTH



C.B. CANCER SYMPOSIUM



PATIENT & FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Many Hearts ❁ Many Minds ❁ One Goal

Engaging communities –Taking action against tobacco

Tobacco kills. Its impact extends far beyond the 1,650 Nova Scotians that die each year of tobacco-related illnesses. Consider the issue of second-hand smoke, the third largest cause of all lung cancers, and its impact on our friends, our family and our children. In Nova Scotia, 29 per cent of people smoke and 31 per cent of those are teens. Smoking compromises our health as individuals and communities. For these reasons, efforts to educate, raise awareness and support people in taking action against tobacco must be embraced at the community level if they are to be successful.

Cancer Care Nova Scotia identified reducing the use of tobacco and reducing exposure to second-hand smoke as key areas of prevention and worked with the Canadian Cancer Society – Nova Scotia Division and others to develop Action in your Community against Tobacco (ACT). The ACT tool kit was designed to support individuals and groups in taking action against tobacco in their own communities.

Since ACT was launched in October 2001, tool kit coaches from across the province have been working with local volunteers to implement activities to help prevent smoking, support people in quitting and work toward smoke-free public places. As part of the ACT initiative in the St. Peter's / Lower River area, students shared their ideas with fellow class mates, their families and friends in January 2002 when they participated in a project to mark National Non-smoking Week.

"This project was an example of true community spirit," said Treka Burke,

ACT Coach and Health Promotion Coordinator for the Dr. Kingston Memorial Clinic Health Project in L'Ardoise (near St. Peter's).

"Teachers at the participating schools, our Community Health Board members, three community volunteers and a local pizza shop all got involved.

Students from Grades Primary to eight worked on poster and pin campaigns to promote non-smoking behavior. Grades Primary to four were asked to create posters, focusing on better things to do instead of smoking, while students in grades five to eight were challenged to create lapel pins with an anti-tobacco message. Three community volunteers judged the posters and pins and presented one student in each class with an award. Each class celebrated the end of the project with a pizza party.

With support from the Community Health Board, calendars using the winning students' artwork, were produced and distributed to students, teachers, Community Health Board members, District Health Authority executive and members of the local chapter of the Canadian Cancer Society.

"These exercises were very successful," said Treka. "The students enjoyed the project and it got them thinking. They talked about their ideas in the classroom and I'm sure there was talk about the project at home. The calendars are a year-long reminder to us all of the impact tobacco has on our communities." ❁



Kiley MacDonald, Grade one student from East Richmond Education Centre, poses for a photo with her poster, describing better things to do than smoking.

Treka Burke is one of 27 ACT coaches located in communities throughout Nova Scotia. To learn more about the tool kit or how you might become involved in your community, contact the ACT Administrator, Canadian Cancer Society – Nova Scotia Division, by phone at 902-423-6183 or toll-free at 1-800-639-0222 or by email at actadministrator@ns.cancer.ca

In addition to Cancer Care Nova Scotia and the Canadian Cancer Society – Nova Scotia Division, ACT is supported by Public Health, Capital Health; Addiction Services, Districts 1, 2, and 3; Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia and the Department of Health – Tobacco Control Unit.

A Celebration to Remember



Norah Stephen,
CCNS Board Member
and cancer survivor.

Imagine the impact of nearly 600 candles flickering in a darkened room to the soothing sounds of Terry Kelly on the keyboard. It was the beginning of a celebration to remember. Six hundred people, from all walks of life, gathered at Pier 21 to celebrate National Cancer Survivors Day on June 2, 2002. Each had their own reason for coming, but everyone shared a common bond. Cancer had touched each of us in some way.

"The afternoon was tremendously powerful," said Emmie Luther-Hiltz, cancer survivor, event coordinator and Coordinator, Cancer Patient Family Network, *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*. "The reverence during the candle lighting ceremony was both emotional and heart-warming, as we recognized and honored those living with cancer, caregivers and health professionals and remembered our loved ones who live on in our hearts."

The afternoon began with an inspirational message from Raylene Rankin, performer and cancer survivor. It was followed by a candle lighting ceremony, led by CBC's Bruce Rainnie, Master of Ceremonies. Eight individuals were invited to come forward and light a candle in recognition of a specific group of people affected by cancer.

Lindsey Cousineau represented children living with cancer; Joe Robichaud represented adult survivors of childhood cancer; Helen Densmore Cleary represented adults living with cancer; Cathy and Leo Brooks represented those who have loved and cared for family members with cancer; Norah Stephen represented long-term cancer survivors; Joanne Cummingier represented health professionals who have cared for cancer patients and Dr. Mark Nachtigal represented hope for the future through research.

Then Bruce invited everyone to light their own candles as he read the names of 240 loved ones people wanted to remember.

A talented lineup of entertainment followed the candle lighting ceremony. From eight-year-old Jacob Huskins of Liverpool, who kicked off the afternoon with a few upbeat fiddle tunes to Rebeka Reed, who just released her debut CD, *Pharaoh's Daughter*, and celtic tenor Tom MacDonald, there was something for everyone. One hundred elementary students from Ecole Rockingham had the audience spell-bound as they performed *Under the Sea*, from Disney's *Little Mermaid* and *Imagine* by John Lennon. Alicia Putnam, a 15-year-old fiddler from Brookfield finished off the set and Terry Kelly extended the party mood with a few rollicking tunes of his own.

All in all, it was an amazing celebration of life! Plans are already underway for National Cancer Survivors Day 2003. Mark June 1st in your calendar today. It promises to be another celebration to remember! ✨

RESEARCH COLUMN

Understanding signals that regulate cancer cell growth

Dr. Christopher McMaster, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Dalhousie University and Senior Investigator, Atlantic Research Centre, and graduate student Marcy Wright are working to understand lipids (fats), one kind of signal that regulates cell growth.

Dr. McMaster's lab first became interested in cancer research after learning of research published in the 90s, which suggested that farnesol, a byproduct of the cholesterol-synthesizing pathway, preferentially killed tumors or cancer cells by directly inhibiting an enzyme, cholinphosphotransferase (CPT), required to make cellular membranes. Since Dr. McMaster's lab was the first in the world to clone the gene for CPT, this relationship was very interesting.

In working to understand the relationship between farnesol and CPT, Dr. McMaster's lab realized that although farnesol was playing a role, the interpretation of the data in the published research was flawed. He and his team continued working and are now on the verge of pinpointing an enzyme called protein kinase C alpha (PKC) as the cellular target for farnesol.

"The ultimate goal is to understand how farnesol kills cancer cells at a molecular level, so we can design a cancer therapeutic drug that does the same thing," said Dr. McMaster.

"We know PKC is responsible for mediating cell growth and farnesol appears to be inhibiting PKC mediated cell growth. Because farnesol is telling cells not to grow, they die. Next we need to determine if farnesol is directly inhibiting PKC or if it is affecting a process that is then inhibiting PKC. Our preliminary evidence suggests farnesol is inhibiting PKC directly. If this is the case, the next step is to figure out precisely how. Then we can begin designing a drug that will work in a similar manner to preferentially kill cancer cells."

If all goes according to plan, Dr. McMaster's lab could be at the testing stage for a new drug, likely a chemotherapy drug, within the next couple of years.

Funding for this research is provided by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, GlaxoSmithKline, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), IWK Health Centre, and Cancer Research and Education in Nova Scotia (CaRE). ✨

Cape Breton Cancer Symposium to focus on Colorectal Cancer

The fifth annual Cape Breton Cancer Symposium will be held on October 4, 2002 in Sydney. The focus is colorectal cancer. The Symposium will be held at Centre 200 in Sydney.

Speakers include Dr. Avi Ostry, a pathologist from the Cape Breton Health Care Complex who will discuss the genetics of colorectal cancer. Dr. Robert Sers, a surgeon from St. Martha's Hospital in Antigonish, will discuss colonoscopy screening and Dr Richard Schabas, VP Medical Affairs for Glyco Design out of Toronto and formerly Director of the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control for Cancer Care Ontario, will share his thoughts on colorectal screening based on staining.

In the afternoon, Dr. Neena Abraham, a clinical scientist with the Division of Gastroenterology at the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre (QEII) and assistant professor of medicine at Dalhousie University, will explore evidence around the potential link between diet and colon cancer. Dr. Geoff Porter, a surgical oncologist, also from the QEII, will address the surgical management of recurrent colorectal cancer. Dr. Malcolm Moore, professor of Medicine and pharmacology at the Princess Margaret Hospital, University of Toronto, will discuss chemotherapy management of colorectal cancer.

The registration fee for the Cape Breton Cancer Symposium is \$50 for delegates and \$70 for physicians who register for continuing medical education. For more information about the Symposium or to obtain a registration package, contact Mona Baryluk by phone at 902-567-7772 or email her at barylukm@cbdha.nshealth.ca or Debra MacDonald by phone at 902-567-8074 or by email at macdonalddebra@cbdha.nshealth.ca ☺



News and Notes



The Canadian Virtual Hospice National Executive Committee requests your participation in an on-line national survey to help build a Canadian Virtual Hospice Web site.

The Web site, designed by Canadians for Canadians, will provide easy access to credible information and support. It will enhance communication between and among cancer patients, families, and their care teams.

Visit us at www.canadianvirtualhospice.ca before July 31, 2002 to complete the survey. Your input will help to improve the quality of Canadian palliative care for cancer patients and families.



Reduce your risk of skin cancer and follow the Canadian Cancer Society's SunSense guidelines:

- Reduce sun exposure between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Seek shade or create your own shade.
- SLIP on clothing to cover your arms and legs.
- SLAP on a wide-brimmed hat.
- SLOP on sunscreen with SPF# 15 or higher.
- Keep babies under one year out of direct sun.
- Remember tanning parlours and sunlamps are not a safe way to tan.

Patient & family involvement key to quality cancer system

Patient and family member involvement in health care is not a new idea. In fact, consumer participation is one of the fundamental concepts of Health Canada's framework for Quality Health Care in Canada. Internationally, France, the United Kingdom and New Zealand are considered leaders in consumer involvement.

Through the Cancer Patient Family Network, *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* is a leader in Canada in engaging the participation of patients and families in the cancer system. Although still in its infancy, the goals of the Network include: facilitating information sharing, fostering and promoting grassroots support for cancer patients and offering members a collective voice to ultimately enhance Nova Scotia's cancer system.

One hundred cancer patients, survivors, family members, volunteers, doctors and other health professionals from across Nova Scotia gathered on May 30 in Dartmouth to discuss strategies to help patients and families become more involved in the cancer system.

During the day participants discussed the components of a vision statement for the Network. The importance of

emphasizing community involvement, avoiding duplication of services and ensuring accountability were also among issues discussed. The importance of gathering for a face-to-face meeting at least once a year was also noted.

Following discussions on Vision, participants considered strategies for addressing challenges related to further developing the Network and building its agenda. Becoming known and recruitment and involvement activities were listed as challenges in further developing the Network. Access, service needs, communication and information were among the ideas for the Network's initial agenda.

Information gleaned from the roundtable will be used to finalize the structure of the Network and direct its evolution.

If you would like more information about the Cancer Patient Family Network, please contact Emmie Luther-Hiltz, Coordinator of the Cancer Patient Family Network by phone at 902-473-2637 or by email at emmie.luther-hiltz@ccns.nshealth.ca ☺

The Supportive Care Cancer Site Team

is looking for health professionals and members of the lay public to join its Community Resources and Guideline Development Working Group (CoReGuiDe). Please contact Michele Moore by phone at (902) 473-3152 or by email at michele.moore@ccns.nshealth.ca for more information.



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This is a newsletter for and about the people and issues affected by Nova Scotia's cancer care system. It is produced by Cancer Care Nova Scotia.

We welcome and encourage everyone's input to this newsletter. Please submit your stories or story ideas to:

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If you want to be added to our mailing list, or if you want to regularly receive additional copies of this newsletter for your office or waiting room, please contact us at the above address with the number of newsletters you need.

The deadline for articles and story ideas for Volume III, Issue Four is August 10, 2002.

Cancer Care Nova Scotia is a program of the Nova Scotia Department of Health, in partnership with the Dalhousie University's Faculty of Medicine and the QEII Health Sciences Centre.



District Cancer Program: **UPDATE**

By Jill Petrella, Quality Coordinator, CCNS

May 9th marked an important day in the development of District Cancer Committees as representatives from all nine health districts met in Halifax. Over 80 participants, including representatives from the Department of Health and the Atlantic Provinces Pediatric Hematology Oncology Network met to discuss issues of common concern about District Cancer Committees and to identify strategies to address them. Because the goal of District Cancer Committees is to bring together representatives of the key cancer stakeholder groups, participants included health professionals from across the continuum of care, patients, survivors, family members and volunteers.

The objectives of the meeting were:

- To build enthusiasm and support for District Cancer Committees (DCCs) and District Cancer Programs among potential DCC members;
- To develop a common understanding of the purposes of DCCs;
- To identify next steps for establishing DCCs for each district;
- To identify challenges to establishing DCCs for each district and solutions to address those challenges; and
- To facilitate networking and relationship building among representatives of different constituencies both within and across districts.

As is usual with a CCNS meeting of this nature, participants worked hard and were positive and enthusiastic. While some issues explored were unique to districts due to their geography or other characteristics, most of the issues identified were common across districts. *Cancer Care Nova Scotia's* role in the meeting was to support districts in solving common problems, while learning from each other. By the end of the day, each district had identified the next steps or actions that they would take toward furthering their District Cancer Committees.

Following the meeting, evaluation results indicated that 75 per cent were now more likely to support the establishment of a District Cancer Committee in their district. The remaining 25 per cent indicated that they were already supportive.

A sub-group met on June 6 to finalize the best way to adapt a Terms of Reference template to best meet the needs of each district for District Cancer Committees. These were circulated to all participants in the report of the May 9 meeting.

Another meeting will be scheduled in the late fall to continue discussions. At this meeting, we will develop common approaches and processes to ensure consistency across the province.

Congratulations to Southwest Nova, who has just had their DCC Terms of Reference approved at a Medical Advisory Committee meeting. They will be holding their first meeting in September. Southwest Nova joins Pictou County and Colchester East Hants all of whom are leaders in developing their District Cancer Committees. ☺

