







Cancer Care Nova Scotia

VOLUME III – ISSUE ONE
MARCH 2002

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Many Hearts ❁ Many Minds ❁ One Goal

Patient Navigation Launched

“I remember being diagnosed with cancer. So many questions, so much to learn, so many doctors - It was all very stressful and overwhelming for me and my family,” said Anne Hughes, cancer patient and board member, **Cancer Care Nova Scotia**. “A Patient Navigator would have made things easier.”

“I just learned that I have to go through chemotherapy for the second time,” continued Anne. “But this time I have the support of Charlene, our Patient Navigator. We’ve talked about treatment options and have discussed the community supports that I’ll need to get through my treatment. Because of her, I’m better prepared for appointments with my oncologist. I know the questions to ask and I have a better understanding of my disease.”

Anne’s comments speak volumes. Patients and families have told us time and again that the cancer system is like a maze. Increased complexity of care and treatment options require better patient education and preparation. Patients and their families expect timely access to comprehensive cancer treatment, making efficient referral processes necessary. All patients want as much care as possible close to home and they want their family physicians involved in that care. Patient Navigation, officially launched on February 25, 2002, was established with these goals in mind.

As the newest members of the cancer team, Patient Navigators will help ease the growing pressure on the provincial cancer system.



(Left to Right) Darolyn Walker, Joanne Cumming, Sandra Cook and Charlene Porter review plans for the Patient Navigation launch.

Through their work with family physicians, community-based specialists, patients, their families and communities, Navigators will address issues related to

Premier Hamm recognized Patient Navigation as a “step forward” for cancer care in Nova Scotia

access, clinical practice guidelines, clinical trials, improved monitoring of wait times and enhanced patient / family and physician satisfaction.

Southwest Nova, Pictou County and Guysborough Antigonish Strait health authorities were chosen as the three early adopter sites. A Patient Navigator, hired by each of the districts, with funding from **Cancer Care Nova Scotia** and the Department of Health, is working closely with family doctors, cancer specialists, cancer patients and their families to improve access to and

co-ordination of cancer services. This includes all aspects of cancer treatment, follow-up and support services.


“This Patient Navigation pilot project is a good example of how community-based health care can personalize a system that sometimes seems intimidating and impersonal,” said Health Minister Jamie Muir. “People needing health care want to know someone in their own community is there to help them, and a program like this makes that possible.”

Premier John Hamm, Finance Minister Neil LeBlanc and Ron Chisholm, MLA for Guysborough / Port Hawkesbury, reaffirmed Minister Muir’s comments at the launch held in their respective districts. Premier Hamm recognized Patient Navigation as a “step forward” for cancer care in Nova Scotia, while Minister LeBlanc acknowledged the value of patient-centred care and support at the difficult time of diagnosis. Ron Chisholm spoke about the impact a cancer diagnosis has on patients and families and the value that a Patient Navigator will bring to his community.


“Navigation is already making a huge difference,” said oncologist Dr. Len Reyno. “Since Patient Navigators have been in place, my patients are better prepared for their appointments.

“They have the information they need about community and financial supports. They have a better understanding of their disease and how it is affecting them. They have thought

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 **CCNS will host a roundtable** on the Cancer Patient Family Network on May 30, 2002. The purpose of the roundtable, being held at the Dartmouth Holiday Inn, is to bring together people from across the province to finalize the formal structure of the Cancer Patient Family Network. Patients, family members and health professionals will work to establish a blueprint for evolution of the Network. They'll discuss such questions as: How can the Network best meet the needs of cancer patients and their families? How can members help health professionals who are providing patient care? How can members effect change in the cancer system?

If you are interested in participating in the roundtable, want to become a member of the Cancer Patient Family Network or if members of your community are interested in learning more about the network, please contact Emmie Luther-Hiltz, Coordinator, Cancer Patient Family Network by phone at 902-473-2637 or by email at emmie.luther-hiltz@ccns.nshealth.ca.

 **The Maritime Centre of Excellence for Women's Health** recently recognized individuals and organizations that have made a significant contribution to women's health in the Atlantic Provinces.

Congratulations to Emmie Luther-Hiltz, Coordinator, Cancer Patient Family Network, **CCNS**, and staff from the Cape Breton Wellness Centre, both of whom were presented with a Leadership Award for Women's Health in February.

A breast cancer survivor, Emmie is best known for her work in the cancer volunteer community. A strong advocate for women's health, she has served as Chair of Breast Cancer Action Nova Scotia for many years. She is an active Board Member of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation – Atlantic Chapter and was a member of the Inaugural Board of **Cancer Care Nova Scotia**. In fact, Emmie's experience on the **Cancer Care Nova Scotia** board inspired her to change her career so she could dedicate her efforts to advocating for cancer patients on a full-time basis.


The Cape Breton Wellness Centre was recognized for a number of community health initiatives including: the Registered Nurse Pap Community Educator program; a perinatal smoking cessation program called Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies; a teen parenting education program offered in high schools and the development of sexuality education models for youth.

 **Mark your calendar** and register today for the Survivorship workshop being held during the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology (CANO) conference. The workshop will be held from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. in Halifax at the Westin Nova Scotian on May 1, 2002. The guest speaker is Dr. Karen Hassey Dow. Registration is \$50. For more information, contact Carol Card by phone at 902-473-2361 or 902-492-0109. You can also reach her by email at ccard@ns.sympatico.ca or by fax at 902-473-3365.





News and Notes

Family." For more information, contact Shauna Blundon, Conference Planner at shauna.blundon@ccns.nshealth.ca.

 **CAPO is welcoming new members.** An interdisciplinary organization focusing on excellence in psychosocial research, education and clinical practice in oncology, the association provides a national network for the exchange of ideas between clinicians, researchers and educators. It actively fosters and encourages interdisciplinary collaboration in oncology clinics and service; establishes and promotes sound research and clinical practice guidelines; promotes and encourages psychosocial research; provides and promotes ongoing education programs; promotes and encourages multi-centre collaboration; and offers advice and/or consultation services.

For membership information contact Jill Taylor-Brown, Membership Chair, by phone at 204-787-1325 or by email at jill.taylor-brown@cancercare.mb.ca. As a member, you will receive a discounted rate when you register for the CAPO conference being held in Halifax in May.

 **Congratulations to Angela McFadden**, Palliative Care nurse at the Dartmouth General Hospital, who was nominated for the 2001 Award of Excellence through the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association. Out of the many names submitted from across Canada, Angela was just one of 11 nominees, singled out for special recognition. Angela works half-time on the medical inpatient units and spends the rest of her time as Palliative Care Consult Nurse.

 **The Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology (CAPO)** conference will be held at the Westin Nova Scotian in Halifax between May 1 and 4, 2002. The theme is "Cancer and the

Patient Navigation... (continued from page 1)

through the questions they need answered in order to make the right decisions for them. Because of the Patient Navigator, I'm able to focus my time on patient care and treatment issues."

Patient Navigators are currently accepting referrals in each of



Anne Hughes (left), cancer patient and board member, CCNS, speaks with a reporter from CJFX, following the launch of Patient Navigation in Guysborough Antigonish Strait. Charlene Porter, Patient Navigator, listens to her comments.

their respective districts. Darolyn Walker is working in Southwest Nova; Joanne Cumming is working in Pictou County; and Charlene Porter is working in Guysborough Antigonish Strait.

Family physicians, cancer specialists, cancer patients and their families can contact their Navigators, toll-free, at 1-866-524-1234. Patient Navigators may work with children, adolescents, adults and their families. They will help newly diagnosed patients, as well as those already in the cancer system, under treatment and in follow up.

Patient Navigation will be evaluated after one year and will be modified, based on lessons learned, before being implemented across the province. For more information about Patient Navigation, contact Sandra Cook, Patient Navigation Project Manager, by email at sandra.cook@ccns.nshealth.ca or by phone at 902-473-3675. ☘

Clinical Practice Guidelines

essential to quality cancer care

The development of clinical guidelines and standards is priority one for **Cancer Care Nova Scotia (CCNS)**. They have to be because they are essential components of a quality cancer system. They provide information critical to ensuring consistency in treatment and care for patients. They also provide a solid foundation for outcomes measurement.

Clinical guidelines and standards are of value not only to cancer specialists, but also to health administrators, family physicians and other health professionals, as well as patients and their families. Since each of these groups require specific information, guidelines and standards must be tailored, according to user needs and preferences.

Cancer Care Nova Scotia's 13 Cancer Site Teams, with members from across the province, are leading guideline development. Supported by our Guideline Resource Team, they are working to complete several detailed guidelines for cancer specialists. The development of guidelines includes researching current medical literature, assessing current clinical practice and conducting discussions about the precise management of each type and stage of cancer. As work on comprehensive guidelines nears completion, the information is tailored for general practitioners and other health professionals. The final step is to customize guidelines for patients and the lay public.

To ensure stakeholder needs are met, **CCNS** is involving user group representatives, as guidelines are developed. For example, the Genito-urinary (GU) Cancer Site Team recently

finalized a position statement on the early detection of prostate cancer. The statement reflects current evidence, clinical experience and input from those who attended the Prostate Cancer Consensus Workshop, held in October 2001. Health professionals and representatives from community groups including, but not limited to, the prostate cancer support groups, participated in the workshop.

The major guidelines, by category, **CCNS** is currently working on include: **Disease Management** - Lung Cancer, Colorectal Cancer, Melanoma, Musculoskeletal Cancers (or Sarcomas), Genito-urinary Cancers (starting with testis, prostate and kidney); **Supportive Care** - Nausea & Vomiting, Mouth Care, Spiritual Care; **New & Emerging Drugs** - Interferon for Renal Cell Cancer, Imatinib (Gleevec) for Chronic Leukemia, Aromatase Inhibitors for Breast Cancer.

We will update you on our progress regarding guideline development, as information becomes available. We are also looking for volunteers from across the province, particularly physicians at this point, to help us with different versions of guideline development.

If you are interested in becoming involved in the process or for more information, please contact Michele Moore by email at michele.moore@ccns.nshealth.ca, or call 902-473-3152 or toll-free at 1-866-599-2267. ☼

RESEARCH COLUMN

Health warnings on cigarette packages make a difference

Our health is on the line. Tobacco is the only product sold legally which causes sickness and death when used exactly as intended. In Nova Scotia, 24 per cent of people, 15 years and older, smoke. While this number has declined since last year, it is still far too high. In fact, in the November 2001 public opinion research, conducted for **Cancer Care Nova Scotia**, 58 per cent of respondents indicated that quitting smoking is one of the best ways to prevent cancer. A number of groups are working to discourage smoking. Among them, the Canadian Cancer Society. In January they released results from a study regarding the new health warnings on cigarette packaging.

The full-colour, graphic warnings cover the top 50 per cent of the front and back of the package and include pictures of a diseased mouth, a lung

tumour, a brain after a stroke, a damaged heart and a limp cigarette, as part of an impotence warning. Additional messages inside the cigarette package include tips on quitting smoking.

Results from the 633 smokers surveyed indicated that 90 per cent noticed the new warnings. Forty-three per cent of smokers are more concerned about the health effects of smoking because of the new warnings; 44 per cent said the new warnings increased their motivation to quit smoking and of those who attempted to quit, 38 per cent said the warnings played a role in their decision to do so. Eighty-three per cent of smokers have had people they know mention or discuss the new warnings in conversations. When purchasing cigarettes, 17 per cent of smokers have, on at least one occasion, asked for a different brand of cigarettes because

they didn't like the warnings on their first choice.

"When the new health warnings were launched we predicted they would be successful and these findings show we're off to a good start," said Ken Kyle, Director, Public Issues, Canadian Cancer Society. "It's clear that the warnings work and one result will be improved health for many Canadians."

The study - Evaluation of New Warnings on Cigarette Packages - was conducted for the Canadian Cancer Society by Environics Research Group Limited and was funded by the Institute of Cancer Research of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. The national study, conducted between September 19 and October 10, 2001, surveyed 2,031 Canadian adults, including 633 smokers. ☼



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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 three, Issue two is April 10, 2002.

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



A Celebration of Life

Close your eyes for a moment and forget the bone chilling, icy winds of March. Instead, think warm, sunny thoughts. Let your mind fast forward to June 2, 2002 and a celebration to rival all celebrations. On that day, Pier 21 in Halifax will become home to Nova Scotia's National Cancer Survivor Day Extravaganza.

Terry Kelly, well known Nova Scotian musician and cancer survivor, will headline an afternoon of entertainment. He'll be joined by a notable line-up of Nova Scotia talent. Along with great toe-tapping music, the afternoon will include a candle lighting ceremony in memory of those we have loved and lost and an inspirational message of confidence and hope for the future. The celebration is also an opportunity to recognize health professionals who have provided our families and friends with exemplary care through the cancer journey.

And of course, no family-oriented celebration is complete without face painters, balloons and great food. There'll be something for everyone. So, mark your calendar, gather your family and friends and plan to join us for an amazing celebration of life. Watch for more details in the May issue of this newsletter.

Nova Scotia's National Cancer Survivor Day Extravaganza is being jointly planned by Cancer Care Nova Scotia, the Canadian Cancer Society – Nova Scotia Division and Caring for Cancer Patients.

