

From the Desk of **Dr. Andrew Padmos,** Commissioner, *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*

Dear Fellow Nova Scotians:

It's been eight years since *CCNS* was established to respond to perceived weakness in the cancer system: lack of coordination, deficiencies in human resources, paucity of cancer research, concerns over the quality of cancer services and a general sense of "failure to thrive". It's also been eight years since I moved with my family from Ontario to make Nova Scotia our home. A lot has happened since then. Today, Nova Scotia is very much home for my family. Today, Nova Scotia is also a pioneer in modern cancer control in Canada with innovative programs, addressing real patient and community needs.

I am immensely proud of the team at *CCNS* who have transformed the Nova Scotia cancer system through individual and collective efforts producing meaningful change and enhancements day-by-day, year-by-year.

Among the areas with the most dramatic growth and long-term impact is the Surveillance & Epidemiology Unit (SEU) of *CCNS*, which grew from the Nova Scotia Cancer Registry. It collects data related to cancer diagnoses (age, gender, type of cancer, where in the province the individual lives, etc..), and analyses it to help government and health administrators plan and monitor cancer services.

Another focus of impressive growth and satisfaction is the truly remarkable development of cancer research activities in Nova Scotia over the past few years. In 1998 there were one or two individuals in the Faculty of Medicine who held research grants for cancer studies; now, there are dozens. Moreover, we have one of the most innovative and integrated training programs for cancer research students and trainees, as well as the Norah Stephen Oncology Scholar Program, which cultivates research and clinical cancer interests among

undergraduates in health sciences.

Not only are more scientists and researchers in Nova Scotia universities turning their talents to the cancer challenges, but we have created, through partnerships, the largest number of university endowed chairs dedicated to cancer research in Canada. The next few years will certainly see exponential growth in cancer research grants, awards and recruitments as these resources take root and support ever-increasing plans and applications.

At every turn, *CCNS* staff are involved in key programming and planning to improve the cancer system, whether it be guidelines for practice management in specific areas to cancer medicine or education programs to ensure committed health professionals have the information and skills

they need to manage cancer patients closer to

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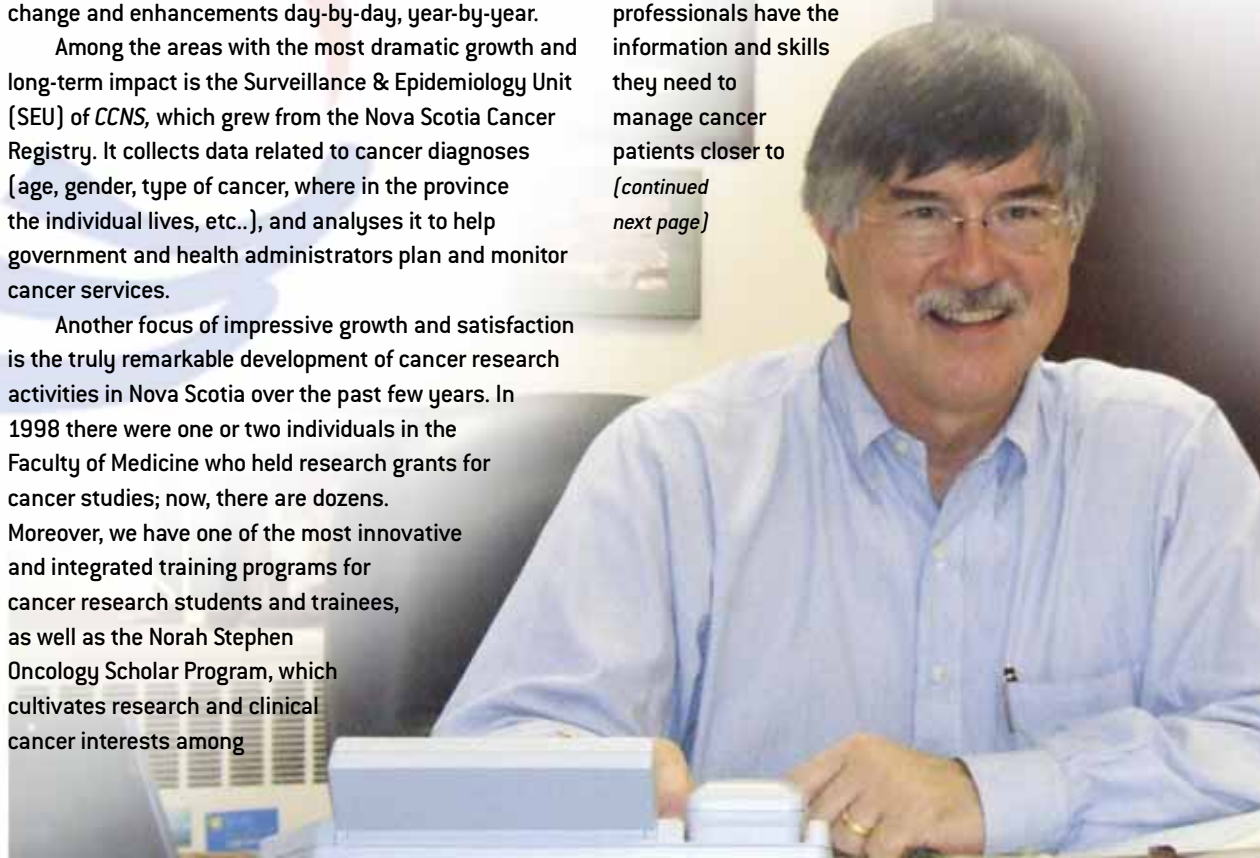
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home, in concert with local resources. Activities in quality and provincial cooperation in guideline development and standard setting are growing quickly with the strong support of District Cancer Committees and Provincial Cancer Site Teams.

CCNS staff, along with partners and volunteers throughout Nova Scotia, have tackled challenges and seized opportunities to develop and improve cancer services at every level and in all areas of cancer prevention, early detection, treatment, support, rehabilitation, survivorship and palliation. I can't list all the accomplishments and improvements here, but would like to salute the staff whose efforts and dedication have contributed to these improvements. Overall, progress has been steady and significant.

All in all, it's been exhilarating and intensely satisfying. We have accomplished a great deal, yet many challenges remain. These include: the ever-increasing numbers of Nova Scotians being diagnosed with cancer, mostly because of our aging population, and the fact that more people are living longer and better with cancer because of improved screening and better treatments.

This means that by 2015 the health system will need to meet the complex treatment needs of 50,000 cancer survivors in Nova Scotia. While this is wonderful news for patients, their families and health professionals, it does mean that our province will need to double its investment in staff, facilities and treatments. This comes at a time of rising costs and real need in every sector of government and cancer is just but one piece of the health system.

The solutions will need to be creative and they may mean changing the way we work, but I have every confidence that the team at *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* will continue to work closely with government, district health authorities and all affected parties to ensure that Nova Scotia cancer patients and families continue receiving the very best cancer care possible, based on the most current evidence.

It has been a privilege to be part of *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* and the evolution of the cancer system here. I will watch with continuing interest as the organization and the cancer system, in the province I now consider home, continues to grow and evolve.

Celebrate Life 2006, A Huge Success

Over 600 people hopped over puddles and dashed from their cars through torrential rain to attend Celebrate Life 2006 on June 4th, *Cancer Care Nova Scotia's* signature event, to mark National Cancer Survivors Day.

And what a celebration it was, with just the right blend of celebration and reflection through music, food, an amazing inspirational message of hope from a 23 year-old cancer survivor, Carly Bunyan, and a candle lighting ceremony, honouring all who had been touched by cancer in any way.

The highlight of the afternoon was Terry Kelly's performance of the original song, "Celebrate Life." Commissioned by *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*, "Celebrate Life" builds on the survivorship theme and recognizes the strength of community, friendship, faith and love in the face of challenge. If you haven't yet heard it, check it out on the CCNS website at www.cancercare.ns.ca

Mark your calendar now for Celebrate Life 2007, which will be held on June 3 at Pier 21.





Acknowledging the Contributions of Dr. Andrew Padmos

by Theresa Marie Underhill, Chief Operating Officer, CCNS

Dr. Andrew Padmos is leaving the building. A simple line, a common phrase and yet his presence, leadership and vision will be missed not only by the team at *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*, but also throughout the province.

Recruited as the first Commissioner of *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*, he literally opened its doors in September 1998. In the past eight years, he has shared his vision, diligence, perseverance and tremendous talents to strengthen and enhance the cancer system and we, as Nova Scotians, have been the beneficiaries.

The position of Commissioner was established to ensure integration, where there was none; responsibility, which was lacking; and focus, which was needed. In addition to being Commissioner of *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*, Dr. Padmos is also Associate Dean of Cancer Programs at Dalhousie University's Faculty of Medicine, and Head of the Capital Health Cancer Care Program, the largest cancer program in Atlantic Canada. Also, because of recruitment challenges, Dr. Padmos has, at times, also served as Acting Head of Medical Oncology and Acting Head of Radiation Oncology, exercising due diligence and extreme fortitude during his terms in both positions. Three years ago he was recruited for an additional assignment - Vice President of Research and Academic Affairs for Capital Health. Few believe that anyone other than Dr. Padmos could have achieved so much in so many diverse positions with such extreme demands on his time.

Yet, his accomplishments are legion. He has been

an exceptional leader in cancer control, both provincially and nationally. He has created a compelling and robust cancer research community within the province. He has recruited exceptional oncology specialists. He has developed a national approach for health human resources planning to ensure that specialists are there to provide the care required by patients. These are but a few of his many accomplishments. Suffice it to say, he has changed forever cancer care within Nova Scotia, for through the leadership of Dr. Padmos in *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*, there is now a cancer system within the province. Previous to 1998 there were many reports documenting the lack of services, the lack of coordination, and the lack of all things related to cancer. Today, there is a legacy and, indeed, a future for the continued evolution and strengthening of our cancer system.

In Nova Scotia we believe that we deserve the best and we have had it in Dr. Andrew Padmos. We thank him for all that he has done. We acknowledge his many contributions and we wish him well as he moves on to his new role as Chief Executive Officer of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, headquartered in Ottawa.

Dr. Padmos is leaving the building, but Nova Scotians can be confident there is a strong foundation and the keys are in hand to ensure the best possible outcomes for cancer patients through a strong and integrated cancer system. This vision remains at the heart of everything that is *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*.

Clinical Research Fellowship Program Established

The recent establishment of the Roche Fellowship in Clinical Oncology at Capital Health and Dalhousie University will serve to strengthen cancer research in Nova Scotia," said Dr. Andrew Padmos, Commissioner, *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*. "It will add to the body of knowledge in such areas as lymphoma, lung, breast and gastro-intestinal cancers."

The development of the fellowship program was made possible by a generous donation to *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* from Hoffman LaRoche Limited. It provides funding for the recruitment and salary costs of one Clinical Research Fellow, in each of the next three years, to join the medical oncology team at Dalhousie University's Faculty of Medicine and Capital Health.

Roche Clinical Research Fellows will be newly certified cancer specialists who opt to enhance their training and qualifications by completing a focused 'fellowship' year of concentrated clinical activity and mentored research.

The clinical and research activities of the first Roche Clinical Research Fellow will focus on breast cancer. The Fellow will join *Cancer Care Nova Scotia's* Breast Cancer Site Team and will dedicate 50 per cent of his/her time to support a medical oncologist in treating and caring for breast cancer patients. The remaining 50 per cent will be dedicated research time with an assigned mentor and supervisor to conduct a clinical research project in breast cancer.

R E S E A R C H





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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
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contact us at the above address
with the number of newsletters
you need.

The deadline for articles and
story ideas for Volume VII, Issue
Four is August 8, 2006.

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Attention: Users of the *CCNS* Guidelines for the Management of Cancer-Related Pain in Adults


Please note that there is a typographical error in one table of the guideline: *Management of Cancer Related Pain in Adults*. In the Opioid Equianalgesic Dose Conversions table (top of page 4 in the Quick Reference Version and in Figure 10.4 on page 111 of the Full Version) the parenteral dose of Hydromorphone should be 2 mg (not 1 mg, as it appears in the text). We apologize for this error and

any inconvenience it may have caused. We would remind health care professionals, however, that equianalgesic conversions serve only as a starting point for proper dose titration in the ongoing management of cancer pain.


Larry Broadfield, Manager,
Provincial Systemic Therapy Program, *CCNS*


News and Notes


 A special thank you to *CCNS* board member, Ms. Jane Mealey, who recently resigned from the *CCNS* Board. As Vice President Children's Health at the IWK Health Centre, Ms. Mealey represented the interests of pediatric oncology on our board. We thank her for her vision, passion and many valuable contributions and wish her well in all future endeavours.


 Congratulations to Pictou County Health Authority whose Cancer Patient Navigation program was highlighted in the Leading Practices section of a recent annual Canadian Health Accreditation Report. It noted, "The role of the navigator that accompanies cancer patients is a model for the province and the country."

CCNS introduced Cancer Patient Navigation in 2002. It is currently available in five health districts.

 Congratulations to Dr. Grace Johnston, Epidemiologist with *CCNS*' Surveillance and Epidemiology Unit and Associate Professor in the School of Health Services Administration at Dalhousie University and Dr. Fred Burge, Department of Medicine, Dalhousie University, and their research team, who were awarded a grant from the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR). The award in the amount of \$850,000, over five years, has a goal of building research capacity that can be translated into policy setting and program development for end-of-life care.

 Congratulations to Dr. Eva Grunfeld, Ms. Amy Lewis and their team, who received an NCIC grant in the amount of \$750,000 over four years. The grant is to fund a randomized trial of a patient-centred strategy to facilitate transition of breast cancer survivors' routine follow-up from specialist to primary care. The study will explore the benefit and outcome of developing and implementing a process including patient education, patient guidelines and family practitioner guidelines to facilitate breast cancer patients' transition to follow-up care after completing active treatment. Local collaborators on the project include Drs. Geoff Porter, Daniel Rayson and Dorianne Rheaume and Ms. Dianna Shreuer.

 *CCNS* congratulates Ms. Donna Smith, Patient Navigation Community Liaison, and Ms. Judy Simpson, Coordinator, Palliative and Supportive Care who were honoured for their contributions to the health care. Ms. Smith was presented with a Leadership Award from the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health for her work in improving women's health. Ms. Simpson was recognized by the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia with the 2006 Excellence in Nursing Award.

 Congratulations to Dr. Rob Rutledge, Radiation Oncologist with the Capital Health Cancer Care Program, who was presented with the Doctors Nova Scotia Health Promotion Award, recognizing his work in the fields of psychosocial oncology and professional caregiver health.