

Peggy Davison Cancer Research Scientist Award

Building research expertise in Nova Scotia

Cancer Care Nova Scotia strongly supports research because it brings: new treatments, better access to existing treatment, decisions based on the latest evidence and clinical experience, earlier diagnosis, more information about prevention and a better understanding of the family of diseases we call cancer. In addition, research enhances our ability to attract and retain the best and brightest cancer specialists and scientists.

Peggy Davison, Inaugural Board Chair for *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* (1998-2001), recognized the value of research and facilitated a collaborative and cooperative approach to improving cancer care for Nova Scotians – with research as the catalyst.

Mrs. Davison's appointment as Board Chair ended in 2001; however, her legacy will live on through the Peggy Davison Cancer Research Scientist Award. Established by *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* in 2004 in recognition of her dedication to enhancing the cancer system in Nova Scotia, the Peggy Davison Cancer Research Scientist Award provides \$100,000 in each of the next six years to build cancer knowledge in the area of health services and outcomes research.

"I firmly believe you cannot have good patient care without a focus on research," said Mrs. Davison. "*Cancer Care Nova Scotia* has made great strides in a short period of time. There were 35 of us on the board in the beginning, but we had a single focus. We were determined to make the cancer system better in Nova Scotia. That's what we did and that's what *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* is continuing to do. Through research, Nova Scotians can be confident they are receiving the best possible

cancer care that is based on the most current evidence available."

A career volunteer, Mrs. Davison was no stranger to the health sector when she agreed to chair *Cancer Care Nova Scotia's* Board of Directors. Over a 12-year period, she served as Chair of the Canadian Hospital Association, Chair of the Nova Scotia Association of Health Organizations, Vice Chair of the Board of Commissioners of the Victoria General Hospital and Chair of the Victoria General Hospital Foundation. She 'retired' in 1996 and was persuaded to volunteer her services as Chair of *Cancer Care Nova Scotia's* Board of Directors in 1998.

Mrs. Davison says that timing contributed to her decision to come out of 'retirement'. "My next door neighbour had just been diagnosed with cancer. A member of our bridge group had cancer and another friend's daughter had been diagnosed with cancer. I thought to myself, 'If that's not a good cause, I don't know what is.'"

"My involvement with *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* was very rewarding. It took time for concepts to come to fruition, but we made steady progress from day one. I'm really pleased about the growing emphasis on research and I feel privileged to have a research award named in my honour."

MANY HEARTS MANY MINDS ONE GOAL



**Cancer Care
Nova Scotia**



Dr. Eva Grunfeld

First Recipient of the Peggy Davison Cancer Research Scientist Award

Cancer Care Nova Scotia is proud to announce that Dr. Eva Grunfeld, a clinician scientist and professor in the Department of Medicine at Dalhousie University and Capital Health and a national leader in cancer health services and outcomes research, will be the first recipient of the **Peggy Davison Cancer Research Scientist Award**.

“Dr. Grunfeld’s recruitment is a significant coup for Nova Scotia,” said Dr. Andrew Padmos, Commissioner, *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*. “It’s an example of how a

collaborative recruitment strategy – in this instance with the Department of Medicine at Dalhousie University and Capital Health – can reap huge dividends for all involved.

With funding from the Peggy Davison Cancer Research Scientist Award, Dr. Grunfeld will build an expert team in health services research. Her research will improve the organization of cancer services in communities throughout Nova Scotia – ensuring they are more accessible, more efficient and of the highest quality possible.”

Dr. Grunfeld explains that health services research attempts to bridge the gap between what is and what ought to be. “It examines how people get access to health care – in our case – cancer care; how much the care costs and what happens to patients as a result of that care. It really answers the question, ‘are

patients getting the very best care possible – based on the information we have available?’”

A study examining the issue of follow-up care in breast cancer patients is one of Dr. Grunfeld’s current areas of interest. The study, following breast cancer patients post-treatment, examined whether women who received follow-up care from their family physician had different outcomes than those who received follow-up from a cancer specialist. Results of this study will be published in May 2004.

“The whole issue of follow-up care is a growing area of importance,” said Dr. Grunfeld. “Everyday, through research, we are learning more about cancer. This informs our ability to prevent cancer, to diagnose cancer earlier and to treat it more effectively. The result is that a growing number of people are surviving their cancer. This is wonderful news; however, it does impact our health system in many ways, among them, our ability to provide comprehensive follow-up care.”

“With the Peggy Davison Award, I plan to pursue this cancer survivorship perspective. I’ll begin by translating and sharing the knowledge learned from the follow-up care study, which can be applied to follow-up care for many kinds of cancer. But I’m interested in the entire spectrum of cancer control and will also pursue my work in diagnosing cancer and end-of-life care. Our research will help to improve the cancer patient experience by narrowing the gap between what is and what ought to be.”

Before coming to Nova Scotia, Dr. Grunfeld worked at the Ottawa Regional Cancer Centre and the University of Ottawa.

