

# Diversity Matters



**BC Cancer Agency**  
CARE & RESEARCH  
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

## “Dual Language Cards at the Vancouver Cancer Centre”



“...715 of interpreter requests were for Cantonese speaking patients and approximately 20% of patients spoke Cantonese”

### Newsletter Goals

1. To share news, resources and initiative about diversity
2. To facilitate inclusiveness for delivering quality patient-centred care
3. To connect people working on this area

### Diversity Planning Committee:

Dr. Maria Cristina Barroetavena  
Dr. Mark Elwood  
Dr. Shirely Howdle  
Allison Mitchell  
Brenda Ross  
Deborah Rusch

In 2001 in the Vancouver Radiation Therapy department, 71% of interpreter requests were for Cantonese speaking patients and approximately 20% of patients spoke Cantonese. In contrast, in 2004, only 7 of 80 radiation therapists could speak Cantonese. The challenges with such a language barrier include:

- Inability to communicate freely
- Limited provision of timely and appropriate advice
- Lost messages
- Delayed referrals
- Reduced comfort and increased anxiety and fear for the patient and family

Patients attend for treatment on a daily basis for several weeks. Due to the high cost of interpreters and scheduling limitations, interpreters are only booked for specific appointments such as 1st treatment and weekly meeting with their Radiation Oncologist.

Due to the difficulties radiation therapists experienced communicating with Cantonese speaking patients diagnosed with nasopharynx cancer, dual language cards were developed. Radiation therapists' recorded commonly asked questions and issues encountered by English speaking patients. This generated a comprehensive list of major symptoms and complaints which were re-written as simple phrases and translated into Cantonese by a volunteer. Three Cantonese speaking patients and one family member who was a professional interpreter reviewed the phrases.

A total of 31 cards, divided into three categories were created.

- Common questions and complaints
- Questions posed by radiation therapists to patients and their potential responses
- Information radiation therapists provide to patients such as self care measures and operational changes.

The cards included both languages. The cards are still available for clinical use though currently there is a higher proportion of Cantonese speaking radiation therapists.

**Further reading:** 'Development of Dual Language Information Cards as a Tool for Communication between Radiation Therapists and Cantonese-Speaking Patients Undergoing Radiation Treatments for Head-and-Neck Cancer' J Soo, S Aldridge, J French, A Mitchell *Journal of Medical Imaging and Radiation Sciences*, March 2008, Vol 39, #1

Please visit our web page where all the Diversity resources are posted, including full presentations for each article

<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/RES/ResearchPrograms/SBR/Diversity+Resources.htm>

## Lessons Learned from Participation in an Aboriginal Women's Wellness Group

Heather Watson, Education Resource Nurse, Vancouver Island Centre

Heather became involved in this initiative after she was invited to an Aboriginal's Women's Wellness conference to speak about breast cancer. Through her involvement with the conference, Heather recognized that this group would benefit from bringing forward issues of concern from their community. With a history of a matriarchal society and lack of self-care, the goal of the conference became to find ways to support women in their communities through education and wellness.



Heather identified key lessons that may help support women attend the conference and provide longevity for the program:

1. Importance of child care. With the rising number of children registered for child care, a new way of providing care is needed for future conferences.
2. Importance of transportation. Some participants do not have access to transportation. Therefore, community shuttles or local transit passes are ways to assist participants.
3. Commitment to continue to provide the program to ensure trust is established and maintained. To gain support from the community, involvement of the community must be recognized.

## Aboriginal Advisory Committee

The BCCA Diversity Committee is at the developmental stages of establishing an Aboriginal Advisory Committee that aims at working collaboratively with the First Nations, Metis and Inuit populations within the Province. The creation of this committee arises out of the recognition of the importance of Aboriginal communities' input and participation in identifying the health issues of concern and the type of health services that will ensure that the service delivery is reflective of what the communities need.

Would you like to be involved? If so, contact Kim Jensen  
[kjensen@preventionprograms.org](mailto:kjensen@preventionprograms.org)

## Peer Navigator

Non-English speaking patients and families have limited access to supportive care resources and navigating the health care system from diagnosis to treatment to survival to palliative care may be a very distressful experience. In response to this need the Vancouver Centre is developing a Peer Navigator Program for Chinese head and neck cancer patients.

For more information, contact Maria Cristina Barroetavena  
[mbarroet@bccancer.bc.ca](mailto:mbarroet@bccancer.bc.ca) or Shirley Tsang [shtsang@bccancer.bc.ca](mailto:shtsang@bccancer.bc.ca)

## Upcoming Events

### AACR American Association for Cancer Research

The Science of Cancer Health Disparities  
February 3 - 6, 2009  
Carefree Resort and Villas, Carefree, AZ  
<http://www.aacr.org/home/scientists/meetings--workshops/cancer-health-disparities.aspx>

### Cancer Patient Education Network

CPEN-Canada 2009 Conference  
4 - 6 June 2009  
Fantasyland Hotel Edmonton, Ab, Can  
<http://www.cancerpatienteducation.org/>

## Quiz:

What percentage of Canadian Citizens reported an Aboriginal identity?

## We want to hear from you!

To submit an article/ story idea or if you have any questions or concerns about anything in this newsletter, please contact:

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## Quiz Answer

1,172,790 out of 31,241,030 (3.8%)  
Canadian citizens identify with an Aboriginal group according to 2006 Canada Census.