



**BC Cancer Agency**

CARE & RESEARCH

An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

## Fraser Valley Centre Accomplishments

**1996** Fraser Valley Centre partners with the Canadian Cosmetic Toiletry and Fragrance Association to provide workshops on skin care and make-up techniques for women suffering from treatment side-effects.

**1997** A CT Simulator and a HDR (high dose radiation) machine become operational. The CT Simulator is a state of the art treatment planning system which allows radiation oncologists to more accurately plan radiation treatments. The HDR brachytherapy unit installed at FVC means patients no longer have to travel to Vancouver for treatment.

**1997** The Fraser Valley Centre, in partnership with the Surrey Memorial Hospital, receives the Cultural Diversity Award from the Surrey Chamber of Commerce and Surrey Delta Immigrant Services for its Interpretation Services Program, which provides language interpreters for patients during medical appointments. It later becomes a model for a Fraser Health Authority interpreter program.

**1999** The Fraser Valley Centre Patient and Family Counselling staff develop a new art and activity workbook, *Time for Me*, for children with a family member living with cancer. The book is being used by therapists across North America.

**2000** Construction begins on a new vault to house a fifth radiation therapy machine. The centre opens in 1995 with four machines, and quickly grows to full capacity.

**2000** The Fraser Valley Centre installs a state-of-the-art fiber-optic network to electronically share patient records among provincial cancer centres and to access the most sophisticated planning systems for radiation therapy.

**2001** Researchers launch a new project – the first in BC – to understand the experiences, and education and support needs of Punjabi-speaking women who have breast cancer.

**2001** The Centre adds four new patient chemotherapy treatment chairs for a total of 14 chairs. The expansion is required to accommodate the increasing demand for services in the Fraser Valley.

**2001** Fraser Valley Centre staff are part of a Lower Mainland team planning the Agency's fifth regional cancer centre in Abbotsford in 2008. The new centre will provide radiation, chemotherapy and support services for one of the fastest growing areas in the province.

**2001** Researchers begin recruiting Fraser Valley women in a Phase III National Cancer Institute of Canada trial to test the effectiveness of three drug therapies for pre-and post menopausal women following surgery. More than 60 women are enrolled with results due in Spring 2005.

**2001** A patient nurse help line – the first to be staffed full-time Monday to Friday – is established at the Centre to answer patients' questions while they undergo treatment. It sets a model for help-lines at other BC Cancer Agency treatment centres.

**2001** Preparation and follow-up for brachytherapy implants for prostate cancer patients can now be done at the Fraser Valley Centre. Brachytherapy is the placement of "radioactive" seeds directly in, or next to, a tumour. This means patients only need to make one trip to Vancouver for the implant itself.

**2002** The clinical trials program at the Centre receives a major boost with a \$250,000 donation from Mr. Ed Miller, a former patient. The gift allows the centre to expand clinical research and educational activities.

**2002** More than 50 staff and patients artistically express their experiences with cancer by painting ceramic tiles as part of Revlon's *Art in Medicine* Program. Tiles from the Fraser Valley are featured in the *Cancer and the Art of Healing* book.

**2003** The Fraser Valley receives a state-of-the-art dental laser, which delivers a high-energy light source, to treat dysplasia (pre-cancerous cells) and small localized cancers of the mouth.

**2003** Fraser Valley radiation therapists receive training as part of a national program to counsel patients to stop smoking. The program addresses the negative effects of tobacco, including its association with longer recovery periods for wound healing after treatment.

**2003** Patient and Family Counselling staff – in collaboration with their provincial colleagues and UBC School of Social Work and Family Studies – develop and teach a graduate course in Psychosocial Oncology at UBC. The course focuses on issues faced by cancer patients and their families.

**2004** Patient and Family Counselling staff develop a workshop to help teachers, counsellors, and child care workers to support children with a family member living with cancer.

**2004** With national shortages of trained professionals, the centre attracts three new medical oncology recruits, increasing the number of medical oncologists on staff to 12. The centre also employs 10 radiation oncologists.

**2004** Researchers discover that treating prostate cancer patients with a full bladder may not offer a clinical advantage. It was previously believed that a full bladder would cause fewer side-effects to surrounding bladder tissue and the small bowel which are in close proximity to the prostate gland. However, keeping a full bladder while waiting for, and during treatment, is uncomfortable for patients and not necessary.

**2004** Researchers begin enrolling colorectal cancer patients whose disease has metastasized (spread to other parts of the body) in a National Cancer Institute of Canada research trial to test a targeted drug therapy for patients who produce a specific type of protein.

**2004** Based on a literature review and an examination of patient care practices in the country, BC Cancer Agency nurses change provincial guidelines for Amifostine, an agent that can protect the body against harmful treatment effects. Now patients, who will benefit most from the drug, routinely receive it to minimize radiation treatment side-effects.

**2004** Scheduled replacement of the Fraser Valley Centre's major radiation therapy equipment begins. Three linear accelerators, one CT simulator, and a standard simulator will be replaced with state-of-the-art equipment by the Fall of 2005.

**2005** The Fraser Valley Centre celebrates 10 years of providing care and treatment for the patients in the Fraser Valley. More than 2,800 new patients, and more than 19,000 follow-up patients are cared for by staff each year.