



Cancer Matters

C A N C E R C A R E A N D R E S E A R C H

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BC Cancer Agency
CARE & RESEARCH

BC Cancer Foundation
Supporting research & care at BC Cancer Agency

Power to the people: population-based screening saves lives

This year in British Columbia, 18,000 people will be newly diagnosed with cancer. That's the bad news. The good news is that for some cancers – particularly breast, cervical, and colorectal – an early diagnosis means a good chance of survival.

Population-wide screening programs are one of the best ways to ensure the people of B.C. receive early diagnosis and treatment. Since 1948, the BC Cancer Agency has been leading the way in cancer screening programs, with new and innovative testing being developed.

"Screening programs are one of the major methods available to detect cancer earlier," says Dr. Andy Coldman, head of Population and Prevention Oncology. "These screening programs at the BC Cancer Agency have long-standing, proven benefits."

B.C. had the first screening program for cervical cancer in the world, and since it began in the late 1940s, the mortality rate from this cancer has dropped by 66 percent. For breast cancer, through the Screening Mammography Program (SMP) – the first of its kind in Canada – the mortality rate has dropped 30 percent in the last 15 years.

Good results, yes. But there is always room for improvement. The BC Cancer Agency is still leading the way in finding better ways to detect cancers at an early stage, through research projects and new programs that target the most common cancers.

In 2002, the BC Cancer Agency launched a clinical trial to test a new method for cervical cancer screen-

ing, called the "optical wand," a thin probe that shines light onto the cervix, and measures the amount of light that comes back. This returning light can be analyzed by a computer to identify cancerous or pre-cancerous abnormalities in the cervix. If adopted for general use, it would mean that

women with cervical cancer, or pre-cancerous conditions of the cervix, could be diagnosed immediately.

Cervical cancer is the third leading cause of cancer death for women world-wide. While survival rates for women in the developed world are excellent, approximately 190,000 women in developing nations die from the disease every year. Of all the cervical cancers world-wide, 80 percent occur in developing countries.



The "Optical Wand"

DID YOU KNOW:

B.C. HAD THE FIRST SCREENING

PROGRAM FOR CERVICAL

CANCER IN THE WORLD

In the future, there will be added advantages for women who now get their annual "Pap" test: a new method of taking the sample will allow cytologists to screen for both cervical cancer and the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) at the same time. A recent BC Cancer Agency study found that there has been an increase in the incidence of vulvar cancer among young women, and it is strongly linked to the presence of HPV.

While cervical cancer poses an enormous threat around the globe, within B.C., breast cancer is the most common cancer in women. In 2001, the SMP provided its millionth mammogram, a milestone in a program which has helped reduce the mortality rate from breast cancer by 30 percent.

In the past year, the BC Cancer Agency launched a "fast-track" program for those women who need a follow-up to their screening mammogram. By giving these women the option to be directly referred to a diagnostic centre for a second, more thorough procedure, those who need care and treatment can be diagnosed much more quickly.

Dr. Coldman predicts even more improvements to the SMP. Using digital films could become an important advancement for the program, because it will allow health care professionals to quickly transfer images from one centre to another by computer, rather than waiting for hard copies to arrive.

With the success of these two population-based screening programs well-proven, the BC Cancer Agency is looking forward to a province-wide program to detect the third most common cancer in B.C. residents – colorectal cancer. In 2003, about 2,000 new cases of colorectal cancer will be diagnosed in B.C.

Recommendations for the structure of the colorectal screening program are currently under discussion at the BC Cancer Agency.

Screening genes: Finding the DNA fault lines

Michelle Kelsey peers into a microscope at the BC Cancer Agency's cancer genetics lab. A piece of DNA is the object of her scrutiny – DNA belonging to a woman whose family has a strong history of breast cancer.

But even a strong family history doesn't mean that a person has an inherited gene mutation that causes a specific cancer. In fact, only about five to 10 per cent of all cancers have a hereditary cause. And not all family members with a pre-disposition towards hereditary cancers are at risk. The Hereditary Cancer Program (HCP) at the BC Cancer Agency helps about 700 people each year to determine and define their risk from cancer.

"Most families don't have an inherited risk of cancer, and many people can be reassured by reviewing their family history with the HCP," explains Mary McCullum, nurse educator. "For people whose family history does suggest hereditary cancer, the HCP provides information about specific cancer risks and recommendations for cancer screening. In some cases, the HCP can arrange genetic testing for interested family members and will provide support as people learn and live with the results."

Testing for the BRCA 1 and 2 genes – which are responsible for most hereditary breast and ovarian cancers – was suspended in July 2001, when Myriad Genetics, a U.S. company, said it owned the rights to such testing under its patent. The federal patent act allows patent holders on genetic material to control all use of the genes in testing, research, and treatment.

In February, Health Services Minister Colin Hansen said testing would resume while the provincial and federal governments wrestled with the legal and ethical issues around the patenting of genetic material.

"This is very good news for the families in British Columbia who have a strong family history of cancer, who need this testing, and for families who have already given blood samples and have been waiting to have the testing done," says Dr. Doug Horsman, director of the Agency's Hereditary Cancer Program.

In February, the lab received more than \$500,000 in new equipment, including a state-of-the-art robotic device to prepare samples. The new equipment, funded through the Provincial Health Services Authority and \$60,000 from the BC Cancer Foundation, will lead to improved, faster and cheaper testing.



Photo: Ken Smith

Looking for cancer causing mutations at the Cancer Genetics Lab.

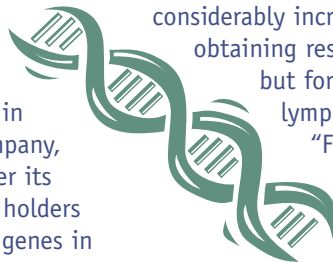
Up until now, most of the testing in the lab has been done manually, which is labour and time intensive. "It's like going from riding a horse and buggy to driving a Maserati," says Dr. Horsman. "This whole new generation of equipment will considerably increase our capacity, and our speed in obtaining results, for not only hereditary cancers, but for testing blood results for leukemia, lymphomas and brain cancers.

"For instance, right now we might be able to process 10 samples and get the results the next day. When the new equipment is fully operational in three to six months, we could process 100 samples and get the results within a few hours."

The equipment can also yield more detailed results, helping with cancer diagnosis and treatment planning. "With the old system, we could only say whether or not disease was still present, but with the new equipment, we can more closely monitor a patient and say precisely how much disease remains, so clinicians can tailor a specific treatment for that patient," explains Dr. Horsman.

The new equipment also opens the door to additional research possibilities. "We have an incredible opportunity to interface with what researchers are doing at the BC Cancer Research Centre and the Genome Sciences Centre, and to engage in clinical research at Agency centres.

"We have entered a whole new era, with the acquisition of this equipment."



\$1.75 million raised from the BC Cancer Foundation Presents... benefit concert and A Gala Unplugged

A star-studded benefit concert, and gala dinner and silent auction, both featuring Bryan Adams, Jann Arden, Barenaked Ladies, Chantal Kreviazuk and Sarah McLachlan, surpassed everyone's expectations, raising \$1.75 million for the new BC Cancer Research Centre. At *A Gala Unplugged* on October 9, the artists performed acoustically, to an intimate dinner crowd of 625 people. The following night the performers sang their hearts out for over five hours to more than 18,000 people at GM Place, the same number of people who will be diagnosed with cancer in B.C. this year.

The gala dinner and auction will become an annual event, scheduled this year for October 10. The artist

line-up will be announced in the summer.

Shane Bourbonnais, the event organizer, deserves enormous thanks and credit for helping the BC Cancer Foundation get closer to its vision of "a world free from cancer," in honour of his late wife Michele, who died October 10, 2001 at the age of 31 from cancer.



Photo: Jeff Vinnick

Sarah McLachlan and Bryan Adams on stage at the BC Cancer Foundation benefit concert.

BC Cancer Agency lures two world-class scientists back home

The reputation of the BC Cancer Agency as a world-leader in cancer care has attracted two top names in science back to Canada. Exciting new research programs will be gearing up at the Genome Sciences Centre (GSC) in Vancouver and at the BC Cancer Agency's new research centre on Vancouver Island. In November and January, respectively, Dr. Rob Holt and Dr. Brad Nelson officially joined the research team at the Agency.

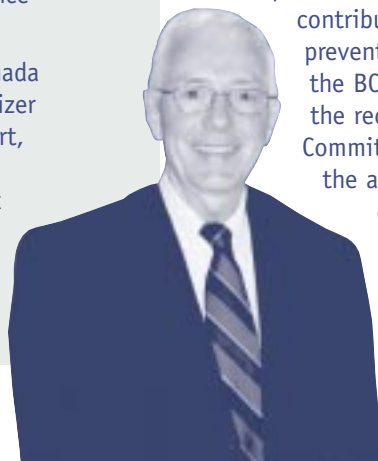
Dr. Holt has taken on the position of head of sequencing at the GSC, while Dr. Nelson will take on the leadership of the research facility at the Vancouver Island Centre.

Terry Fox Medal awarded to Dr. Jack Chritchley

On November 29, friends, family and colleagues from across B.C. gathered at the BC Cancer Agency's annual cancer conference Awards Banquet to recognize Dr. Jack Chritchley's dedication and commitment to cancer care in this province.

Dr. Chritchley, who recently retired from the Agency after serving as vice-president, Communities Oncology, for six years, was presented with the Terry Fox Award, given annually to a person whose contribution has improved cancer care in British Columbia.

The Terry Fox Award is presented by the BC Medical Association (BCMA) to encourage and support the extraordinary commitment, diligence and perseverance of outstanding individuals in their contribution to cancer care, research, or prevention in British Columbia. In 1980, the BCMA's Board of Directors endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Committee that the Association establish the award in the name of Terry Fox who contributed so much to cancer research through his personal heroism and fund raising leadership.



Dr Jack Chritchley

Three new additions to BC Cancer Foundation Board

The BC Cancer Foundation is pleased to announce the following appointments to its board:

- **Shane Bourbonnais**, senior vice-president, Canada music, Clear Channel Entertainment, and organizer of *BC Cancer Foundation Presents* benefit concert, October 2003
- **Pat Jacobson**, chief executive officer, Translink
- **Barrie Hewstan**, president, Coast Capital Real Estate and supporter of the \$6.4 million *Daring to Believe* campaign.

Clinical trial participants gather at information session

Research firsts at the BC Cancer Agency's Vancouver Island Centre aren't unusual – so it wasn't a surprise for participants in a recent clinical trial to be invited back to the centre for a wrap up of the project.

Researchers recruited patients between January and October 2002 to test the effectiveness of radiofrequency ablation (RFA) on breast tumours. Recently, the principal investigators invited the 22 participants and their families to a special session to learn of the results, meet each other and the clinical research team.

"We had an great turnout," says Dr. Ivo Olivotto, a co-investigator and radiation oncologist at the BC Cancer Agency. "More than 100 people attended. The participants brought along their partners, their daughters and sisters."

What made the event unique is that clinical trial participants aren't usually brought together as a group to hear about final research results. In many cases recruitment for trials can last several years, and final results may not be available for many more. Often, participants hear about trial results through the media, once researchers publish their findings in peer-reviewed journals.

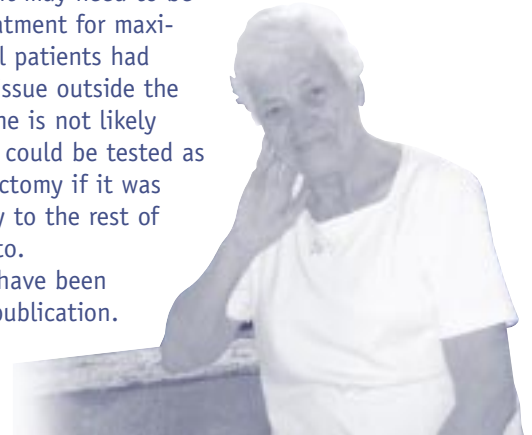
"I thought it was just great that everyone was invited to meet and hear about the results," says Evelyn Margetish, one of the trial's participants. Like many of the patients attending the event, she brought along family members to listen, learn, and ask follow-up questions. "Lots of people wanted more information, and all of their questions were answered."

RFA works by inserting a small probe into the breast, guided by ultrasound. In the clinical trial – funded by the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation – women with biopsy-proven breast cancer were given ablation therapy one week before surgery. The treated tumour was removed during surgery, and examined by a pathologist to confirm that the cancer cells were destroyed. The hope was that RFA would provide a more effective and less invasive treatment for breast cancer.

"A lot of patients who participate in clinical trials do so to make things better for future patients," says Dr. Olivotto. "The women were very appreciative to have been invited to the event, to meet each other, to hear the results and have a chance to ask questions. The researchers were glad to have a chance to say thank-you to the women for participating, present the results and let them know how their contribution may help others."

The results indicate that RFA is a reliable method to kill cancerous cells, but it may need to be combined with another treatment for maximum effectiveness. "Several patients had cancer cells in the breast tissue outside the RFA ablation zone. RFA alone is not likely sufficient local therapy but could be tested as an option instead of lumpectomy if it was combined with radiotherapy to the rest of the breast," says Dr. Olivotto.

The results of the study have been submitted for peer-review publication.



Eve Margetish

Lung cancer prevention study screens ex-smokers for disease

Former smokers are still at risk for lung cancer long after they have quit, but have a chance to try and stop the disease before it starts, through a clinical trial at the BC Cancer Agency.

"Many people who have quit smoking don't realize that they are still at risk for lung cancer," explains Suzan Ross, a coordinator of the BC Cancer Agency's Lung Health Study. "Cell damage occurs during the first 20 years of smoking, and can continue to occur even after quitting."

In fact, one half of newly diagnosed lung cancers occur in former smokers. While there are important and immediate health benefits to quitting – such as the reduction in risk for cardiac disease – the risk of developing lung cancer only decreases marginally.

This current study is testing the effectiveness of an ancient herbal remedy for lung cancer prevention. The agent being studied, ACAPHA, is a combination of six herbs (Sophora tonkinensis, Polygonum bistorta, Prunella vulgaris, Sonchus brachyotus, Dictamnus dasycarpus and Dioscorea bulbifera) and has been used for disease prevention in China for centuries. The efficacy of botanical extracts in Western medicine is gaining increasing recognition.

There are several benefits to participating in this study, says Ross. Former smokers get an excellent work up and screening; by taking the medication, they have a chance to prevent lung cancer; and if cancer is present, the important advantage of early diagnosis and careful follow-up if problems are discovered. For information about participating in the study, please call 604.877.6190.

Real people making a real difference

Fraser Valley and Vancouver schools lop locks and raise \$29,000

East Vancouver David Thompson High School's Christmas Cancer Cut raised more than \$20,000 for the BC Cancer Foundation. Students from Vancouver Technical Secondary School's Hairdressing program donated head shaving services to 56 students and seven staff participants. Dane Clarke, grade twelve teacher, and event organizer for the past two years says, "I feel fantastic doing something that might have an impact, something that matters. It teaches the students to do something for others.

I wish the whole school would shave their heads. It's something we all can do to make a difference."

In the Fraser Valley, Holy Cross High School's Cancer Research Week raised \$9,000. Organized by teacher Ralph Gabriel, the events involved all 38 staff members and 750 students, and culminated



Holy Cross - Sandra Bachleitner, Holy Cross staff member (upper right) gives her boss, Nancy Bean, Learning Assistance teacher (middle), the first buzz while salon staff member supervises.

with 32 students and six staff members shaving their heads. Holy Cross hopes to make this a bi-annual event.

Thank you David Thompson and Holy Cross high schools, for inspiring us all.

BC Cancer Agency staff raise \$145,000 for United Way

With a co-ordinated effort around the province, more than 527 Agency staff participated in this year's United Way Campaign. One of the most successful Agency employee campaigns in years, the staff donated over \$145,000 across British Columbia and designated almost \$69,000 back to the BC Cancer Agency for research and care. The Agency's dedication was noticed by United Way as well. The Agency's Vancouver Centre received a United Way silver award. The Fraser Valley Centre received a gold award, and the centre for the Southern Interior received a United Way Excellent Campaign Award for achieving an outstanding increase in dollars raised.

Medical Foundation awards \$150,000 grant to BC Cancer Foundation Southern Interior

The South Okanagan Similkameen (SOS) Medical Foundation awarded \$150,000 to the BC Cancer Foundation Southern Interior, on behalf of an anonymous donor wanting to support cancer research and care in the Okanagan.

This money will help purchase a piece of radiation therapy equipment called Amorphous Silicon Electronic Portal Imaging or "HiView" for short. The HiView will be used in research to discover how the positioning of the body affects the success of tumour treatment.

Good things come in small packages

Seven-year-old Nina Millaire realized that even at a young age, she has the power to change the world. Not having a direct brush with cancer, Nina learned about the disease at school and decided she needed to help. In her last few weeks of summer holiday, Nina canvassed her neighbourhood for used items and held her own garage sale raising \$761.28 for the BC Cancer Foundation. Nina is proof we can all do our part to improve cancer research and care, and the world we live in.

Seven-year-old Nina Millaire, pictured with her garage sale donations, inspires our fight against cancer.



Photo: Evan Seal, Surrey Leader

A gift for the future

Donation of securities benefits Vancouver Island multiple myeloma study

Sometimes a gift is more than the sum of its parts. Such is the gift that Sylvia and Rudi Hoenson have made to the BC Cancer Foundation, to support research at the BC Cancer Agency's Vancouver Island Centre.

"Just being part of this important work is giving us more in return than we could ever have imagined," say Sylvia and Rudi Hoenson, donors of a \$100,000 contribution to the BC Cancer Foundation. It will help fund a multiple myeloma research project at the BC Cancer Agency's Vancouver Island Centre. "We know our gift will translate into better cancer cures and treatments."

Multiple myeloma affects bone marrow, and can involve severe bone, nerve or kidney problems. According to Dr. Nicol MacPherson, a medical oncologist at the Vancouver Island Centre, "Seed money, like that provided by the Hoensons, creates momentum and is critical in attracting the additional funding necessary to carry out and complete a study." He adds, "I have been lucky enough to get to know Rudi and Sylvia, which is rare. It's not often we get to meet the people who provide research financing."

"This research project was of particular interest to me," explains Rudi. "Years ago I was one of a group of people who were exposed to a large amount of radiation. Since then a number of them have developed cancers, including multiple myeloma."

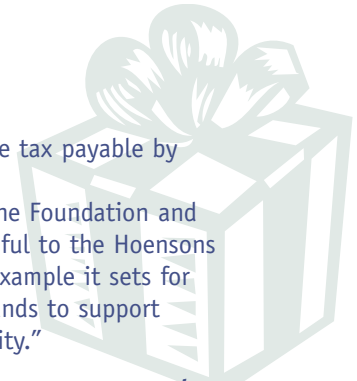
The Hoensons knew that ongoing support would be needed to fuel related research initiatives after they supported the BC Cancer Foundation's *Daring to Believe Campaign*. They realized that using appreciated publicly listed securities was a convenient way to make their current gift because of the additional tax benefits.

Laura Walsh, the BC Cancer Foundation Vancouver Island's director of development explains: "The most important tax benefit is that the donor's capital gain tax is cut in half when publicly listed securities are donated. This is in addition to the tax credits that the donor receives for the value of the shares. The tax credits then offset the remaining capital gains

tax payable as well as some of the tax payable by the donor on other income.

"It's a real win-win for both the Foundation and the donor. We are extremely grateful to the Hoensons for their generosity, and for the example it sets for others, as we continue to raise funds to support research projects at our new facility."

For information about supporting cancer research on Vancouver Island, please call Laura Walsh, director of development, Vancouver Island, at 250.519.5554.



Support cancer care and research through a planned gift and save taxes

There are many ways to support crucial advances in cancer research and patient care at the BC Cancer Agency, through the BC Cancer Foundation. By choosing from a variety of planned giving methods donors can not only help the BC Cancer Agency but also help themselves, with significant tax savings. Planning a gift will reduce taxes and, at the same time, can make it possible to provide a lasting contribution toward our vision – a world free from cancer.

Here are just a few examples. Someone may be unable to make a gift today, but want to support cancer research. Plan instead for the future by making a gift through a will, life insurance or even a combination of the two. Gifts of RRSP's, RRIF's or securities are other options to consider. As a result of tax savings, the cost of the gift maybe reduced to as little as 35 cents on the dollar.

To get more information on these options, please call the BC Cancer Foundation's director of

planned giving. The BC Cancer Foundation recognizes gifts in ways that best meet donors needs: in their own name, the name of a loved one, or we will respect those who wish to remain anonymous.



Cecil Akrigg, an avid collector of historical miniatures, has donated to the BC Cancer Foundation through his will and life insurance

For more information on how to plan a gift and reduce taxes please contact: Isabela Zabava, director of planned giving, BC Cancer Foundation, 604.877.6157, or toll free 1.888.906.CURE (2873) or izabava@bccancer.bc.ca.

New unit at BC Cancer Agency makes life easier for Island prostate patients

Prostate cancer patients on Vancouver Island may be able to save time and energy travelling to Vancouver, thanks to a new assessment unit at the BC Cancer Agency's Vancouver Island Centre.

The new ultrasound assessment unit helps determine if a man with prostate cancer qualifies for brachytherapy treatment. Brachytherapy is a procedure used to implant radioactive seeds into a tumour. It is an alternative to external beam radiation, which uses beams of radiation to focus on a tumour and can take as long as seven to eight weeks to complete.

Previously, prostate cancer patients would need to travel to Vancouver for both the ultrasound assessment and the treatment itself. Now, Island residents only need to go as far as Victoria for the assessment.

The key pieces of equipment in the assessment unit are a specialized trans-rectal ultrasound machine and probe, a stabilizer unit to hold and position the probe, and a computer that allows the cancer care team to send images electronically to the Vancouver Centre for sophisticated 3-dimensional computer-based radiation treatment planning.

The ultrasound unit in Victoria was made possible through the vision and support of community

partners. The Vancouver Island Prostate Cancer Research Foundation (VIPCRF) made a \$55,000 donation to the BC Cancer Agency – matched by a grant from the Agency's Esther Brown Fund – to purchase the equipment.

"Brachytherapy is such a popular option for men with prostate cancer that we'd like to have these men treated at the BC Cancer Agency's Vancouver Island Centre," says Ken Willoughby, chairman of the VIPCRF. "We are proud to have taken this first step towards full treatment on Vancouver Island."

Having the unit available at the BC Cancer Agency's Vancouver Island Centre is a one step in the advance toward bringing more state-of-the-art cancer care services closer to home for Island residents.

Establishing the unit is a first step in what the BC Cancer Agency

hopes will be a comprehensive program for prostate brachytherapy treatment in the future – including having the actual treatment available in Victoria, and participation in brachytherapy clinical trials and research.



Dr. Ivo Olivotto (left) and Dr. Brian Weinerman (right) of the BC Cancer Agency, accept a donation from Ken and Jan Willoughby of the Vancouver Island Prostate Cancer Research Foundation

Sold-out Salmon Arm benefit concert raises more than \$5,000

A recent Salmon Arm musical benefit, inspired by musician and cancer survivor, Sandy Cameron, raised more than \$5,000 to support the rooftop garden re-development at the BC Cancer Agency's Vancouver Centre.

Friends, former students, and musicians from around B.C. gathered at the Shuswap Art Gallery for a wine and cheese social and sold-out concert. The 300 attendees were entertained by the Jazz strains of BAAAD Dog, Dixie North,

Executive Suite, the Larry Crawford Quintet, vocalists Debbie Reid and Jeanette Grittani, and even Vancouver Centre's own singing sensation, music therapist Kathryn Nicholson.

Sandy Cameron with his clarinet at the benefit concert he inspired



French Dressing Jeanswear Women's 8K moves to Mothers' Day: *Do it for Mom*



Fleet Fleet Photos

Participants in the French Dressing Women's 8k 2002 event. Join us for the 2003 run and new sports challenge on May 11.

The BC Cancer Foundation's long established *French Dressing Jeanswear Women's 8K*, has moved to a new date: Mothers' Day, May 11, 2003, at 8:30 a.m. Added to it is a new fun skills event for the whole family, the *BC Cancer Foundation Sports Challenge*, open to individuals or teams.

Held at Nat Bailey Stadium in Vancouver, proceeds from both events support a BC Cancer Agency research project to examine what types of exercise programs can benefit women undergoing breast cancer treatment. This study, part of a national program, will use proceeds of *Do it for Mom* to equip a new exercise room.

Pick up an entry form at any London Drugs in the Lower Mainland, or register online at www.bccancerfoundation.com. Regular entry fee is \$30 until April 25, or collect \$100 in pledges and get your entry fee refunded.

The Hot Ticket

Free Chinese Language Lecture Series Ten Most Common Cancers in the Chinese Community April 26, May 31, June 28, July 26, August 30, Sept. 27, October 25

Lecture series featuring BC Cancer Agency specialists followed by Q&A's. Translation in Mandarin and Chinese.

BC Cancer Agency's Vancouver Centre, John Jambor room, 600 West 10th Ave.

Contact: Joseph Li, 604.263.1320 or Rebecca Smith, 604.877.6000 ex. 2524.

Dance Festival Benefit – Surrey Arts Council May 1

Surrey Arts Centre Theatre, 13750 88th Ave, Surrey BC
Supports: breast cancer research

Contact: Melanie Minty, 604.583.0388

Fraser Valley Quilters' Guild "Stretching Beyond our Reach Challenge & Silent Quilt Auction"

May 9-11

Richmond Curling Club, 5540 Hollybridge Way, Richmond BC
Admission \$5.00 or a three-day pass for \$8.50

Supports: cancer research

Contact: Carol Moffat, 604.945.3007

Morgan Creek Charity Pro Am Golf Tournament July 8

Morgan Creek Golf & Country Club, Surrey BC

Contact: Susan Jenkins, 604.531.3181

Drive for The Cure Golf Tournament September 18

Redwoods Golf Course, Langley BC

Supports: equipment & programs at BC Cancer Agency, Fraser Valley Centre

Contact: Rob Jeeves, 604.240.2629

A Gala Unplugged October 10

Venue to be confirmed

Tickets from \$500

Supports: cancer research

Contact: Diane O'Connor, 604.877.6228

Inspiration 2003 Fashion Show November 13

Venue to be confirmed

Supports: breast cancer research

Contact: Diane O'Connor, 604.877.6228

Go to www.bccancerfoundation.com for a current listing of events and information on how you can help us achieve our vision – a world free from cancer.

For more information on organizing an event to support the BC Cancer Foundation, or to volunteer, please call toll-free 1.888.906.CURE (2873).

Care and research options open wide with new dental laser

The BC Cancer Agency's Dental Oncology Program is taking a bite out of pre-cancerous and cancerous areas of the mouth, with a state-of-the-art dental laser, which delivers a high-energy light source.

The \$80,000 CO₂ dental laser is funded by the BC Cancer Foundation Fraser Valley, through donations from two local Rotary Clubs and proceeds from the *Drive for the Cure* golf tournament. "We were asked, if we could wave a magic wand, and get the one thing we wanted most, what would it be," says Dr. Alan Hovan, who is overseeing the commissioning and installation of the laser. "Without a doubt, we thought the dental laser would have the most impact in terms of improving patient care."

The advantages of the CO₂ laser, versus conventional surgery, are less pain and bleeding, quicker recovery time, and a lower risk of infection for patients. Dentists are also able to precisely control the energy delivered, thereby tailoring treatment for each individual case.

"For instance, from a biopsy, we can determine how deep the cancer has spread," says Allan. "We can then program the light source to penetrate at the precise depth required to successfully treat the oral cancer." Dr. Hovan is among the first to receive training to operate the laser. Eventually all dentists at the Agency's four regional cancer centres will be trained to use it. The equipment consists of a box, with a hand-held wand. It will be housed at the Fraser Valley Centre, and patients from throughout B.C. will be referred to the centre for treatment.

Treatment is provided on an outpatient basis. "In most cases, all that is required is one or two treatments," says Dr. Hovan. "We estimate that more than 100 patients a year will be treated with the laser."

Dr. Hovan is also excited about the research possibilities, since the Agency is among a handful of cancer centres in North America to operate the CO₂ dental laser. "This will greatly enhance our dental oncology research at the Agency."

New world-class BC Cancer Research Centre building takes shape

People strolling past the corner of West Tenth Avenue and Heather Street in Vancouver these days are treated to a hive of construction activity at the new BC Cancer Research Centre building site. The concrete has been poured, the construction cranes have been in place for several months, and the building is on schedule to be completed in late 2004.

The new building will be one of the largest and most important cancer research centres in Canada. It will house all eight departments of the BC Cancer Research Centre, including the Genome Sciences Centre. Owned and funded by the BC Cancer Foundation, the centre will be operated by the BC Cancer Agency. The new building will enable the Agency to continue to attract and retain top scientists from around the world to collaborate with clinicians across the street at the Agency's Vancouver treatment centre, resulting in research advances that impact directly on the lives of people living with cancer.

The BC Cancer Foundation continues to raise money to complete the construction of the \$95 million structure. For information on supporting the new research centre, please contact Janice Loomer Margolis, senior director, major and planned gifts, at 604.877.6163.



Concrete being poured for the new BC Cancer Research Centre

Southern Interior celebrates five years of service

Looking around the bustling halls of the BC Cancer Agency's Centre for the Southern Interior in Kelowna, it's hard to imagine that these were once echoing corridors, in the months of preparation leading up to the opening day on April 3, 1998.

"We took possession of the building in September 1997, but we had no furniture," laughs Sandra Broughton, regional administrator. "We all sat on lawn chairs. I remember having meetings gathered around a white plastic garden table, and everyone had to bring their own lawn chair!"

On April 3, 2003, the centre's staff celebrated five years of cancer care to the communities of the Interior.

Staff set up a "memory lane" in the main foyer of the centre, with photos and press clippings from the grand opening. Visitors to the centre were also invited to sign a giant "Happy Anniversary" card, and make their mark on the event. Being part of the centre's history has been a rewarding experience for Sheri Aubin, who has worked there since opening day.

"You can definitely feel that the staff is so positive about the work they do here," says Sheri.



Staff and volunteers dive into a celebration cake at CSI's anniversary party.

"We have received many letters from patient about how warm and inviting the centre is, and despite their situation, they have felt comfortable and at ease."

BC Cancer Agency video helps new patients before their first visit

Cancer patients and their loved ones are constantly searching for new sources of information, and answers to many questions about what lies ahead. The BC Cancer Agency's Vancouver Island Centre has produced a video designed to alleviate some of the anxiety faced by newly-diagnosed cancer patients.

"The Most Important Thing," a 17-minute video, gives patients an idea of what to expect before their first visit to the centre.

The video demystifies the process of planning treatment, and the treatment itself, explains Johanna Den Duyf, systemic therapy and community leader at the centre. "It highlights the unique services offered at the centre to patients, their families and friends. It should provide a greater level of hope and comfort to new cancer patients."

Copies of the video have been distributed to libraries, hospitals, Canadian Cancer Society offices, and other cancer-related organizations across Vancouver Island.

"The diagnosis of cancer starts people on a journey that can leave them feeling shocked, frightened, and overwhelmed," says Cathy Parker, case manager with the Breast Health Centre in Victoria. "Learning where their journey may take them can help address some of these fears. 'The Most Important Thing' video does just that. Through the stories of others who have experienced cancer, patients and families will become familiar with the treatments and services offered at the BC Cancer Agency's Vancouver Island Centre, and learn what they can expect."

Johanna Den Duyf with copies of "The Most Important Thing"





Who we are...



The BC Cancer Agency:

Our mission is to reduce the number of people getting cancer, to reduce the number of people dying of cancer, and to improve the quality of life of those living with cancer. The BCCA provides cancer care and control for everyone in the province of British Columbia. BC Cancer Agency scientists and clinicians are world leaders in cancer research, bringing groundbreaking results quickly from the researcher's bench to the patient's bedside. The Agency is a member organization of the Provincial Health Services Authority.

Contact us:

Vancouver Centre: 604.877.6000;
toll-free 1.800.663.3333
Fraser Valley: 604.930.2098
Southern Interior: 250.712.3900
Vancouver Island: 250.519.5500



The BC Cancer Foundation:

We are an independent charitable organization that raises and stewards funds to support cancer research and care at the BC Cancer Agency. The Foundation maintains offices at each of the BC Cancer Agency's four centres.

Contact us:

BC Cancer Foundation Provincial office:
1.888.906.CURE (2873)

Fraser Valley: 604.930.4084
Southern Interior: 250.712.3921
Vancouver Island: 250.519.5552
Vancouver: 604.877.6160

Our Web sites: www.bccancer.bc.ca and
www.bccancerfoundation.com

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