



Cancer information at your fingertips

Developing a cancer information resource specific to the needs of family physicians is a major project underway through the Family Practice Oncology Network (FPON). The objective is to provide family physicians with the cancer information they need to answer clinical questions (diagnosis or treatment related) that may arise while seeing patients. Physicians will receive “core information” or decision support focusing on various cancer types rather than patient specific information. Physicians will be able to find the information within minutes in the format most useful to them including online Website, PC (or personal digital assistant) or printed manual.

“We learned through the FPON 2003



Dr. Andrew Murray, a family physician based in Nelson, is leading the Network's initiative to ensure cancer care information is readily accessible and tailored to the needs of family practitioners.

Family Physicians survey that there is a necessity for cancer information specific to the needs of family physicians,” states Dr. Andrew Murray, a Nelson-based general practitioner leading the project under the Network's Continuing Medical Education Working Group. “Improved access to authoritative, clinically relevant information will be of tremendous support in helping to improve patient outcomes and assist with cost control”. The initial stage of the cancer information resource project includes developing a special family practice section on the BC Cancer Agency (BCCA) Website. The first module focuses on breast cancer including specific information on BCCA treatment protocols, pain and symptom management and palliative care. Prostate and colon modules are also nearing completion

with others to follow in the coming months. “We are working with cancer experts and medical librarians to produce the best resource possible including feedback from the BCCA Family Practice Group, the Department of Family Practice at the University of BC, the BCCA Tumor Groups, the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation and patient advocacy groups,” adds Dr. Murray. “Evaluation strategies to measure the effectiveness of the resource are also included.” The first module of the project will be launched at the BCCA Annual Cancer Conference on November 5 including a session on the ease of using the Website. Key supporters of the cancer information resource project include: the Lawson Foundation (major sponsor), the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, the BC Cancer Foundation, the BCCA and the University of BC-CME. Contact: Dr. Andrew Murray at murray.a@telus.net

Networks are taking off

The Family Practice Oncology Network is one of seven BC Cancer Agency networks designed to help meet the needs of care providers and the Agency and positively influence cancer outcomes. Other networks include: the BCCA Oncology Advisory Council (including Tumor Groups); the Communities Oncology Network; the Palliative Care Network, the Surgical Oncology Network, the Pediatric

Hematology/Oncology Network; and the Rehabilitation Oncology Network. “These networks provide us with the interconnectivity and informal structure to be more responsive,” says Barbara Poole, the Agency's Provincial Network Facilitator. “They enable the ongoing support and communication with health care providers throughout the province to encourage knowledge generation and the uptake

of clinical research into practice.” A coordinated approach ensures all of the networks' infrastructure needs are met including communications, linked databases, educational support, and management expertise. Emerging provincial networks include Oral Oncology and Nursing. Contact Barbara Poole at bpoole@bccancer.bc.ca Barbara Poole is the BC Cancer Agency's Provincial Network Facilitator ensuring coordination between the Agency's seven networks.



Message from the Chair

Although things may have seemed a little quiet in the FPON world the past few months, we have actually been, just like the oft-quoted duck, very busy beneath the surface.

Great things are occurring with the Cancer Information – Point of Care family practice modules that Dr. Andrew Murray is producing, very ably aided and abetted by Dr. Jack Chritchley providing the critique. Both are being assisted by Jaya Venkatesh so, as I said, with this team on board, great things are happening.

The Breast, Prostate and Colon cancer modules are essentially ready with others running to a tight timeline in the early Summer; a huge effort from which we will all benefit. Further input will be obtained from others including family practitioners and UBC – CME before being finalized.

I am also very much looking forward to the one-day retreat on June 10. This will be a pivotal meeting for FPON from which we will be able to move forward with renewed enthusiasm and vigor.

Both the CME and Preceptorship working groups have been busy, too, and a great



Dr. Philip White, Chair of the Family Practice Oncology Council and GP in Kelowna

agenda was produced for the annual conference which is November 3-5 this year.

I am very pleased to announce as well that Dr. John Rayson from MDS Metro Labs has joined the Family Practice Oncology Network Council in a consultative role. John brings with him a wealth of experience and contacts at administrative and government levels that will help the cause of FPON significantly.

John and I met with Dr. Cathy Clelland from the Section of the General Practitioners and Dr. Dan McCarthy at the BCMA a couple of months ago to keep everyone in the loop and had a very encouraging and positive reception.

I would also like to add that a lot of work has gone into a draft business plan for presentation to General Practitioners Services Committee and perhaps we will be able to discuss that in detail at the day-long retreat.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that Gail Compton recently joined the Network as our full time Administrative Coordinator. She takes over from Jaya Venkatesh who is now working on the Cancer Information Resource project. Gail has extensive

administrative experience including roles at the Centre of Excellence for Functional Cancer Imaging, BC Women's Hospital, and the Registered Nurses Association of BC. Welcome Gail!



Gail Compton joins the Network as Administrative Coordinator.

Contact
Dr. Philip White at drwhitemd@shaw.ca
Gail Compton at gcompton@bccancer.bc.ca

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

June 24-26, 2005:
"10 Years Abreast Celebration" –
dragon boat festivities in Vancouver
with breast cancer teams from
around the world,
www.abreastinaboat.com

August 19 – 21, 2005:
"The Weekend to End Breast
Cancer" – thousands unite in
Vancouver to walk 60 km in support
of breast cancer research,
www.endcancer.ca

2005 Annual Conference, November 3-5, 2005

The theme of this year's conference, November 3-5 at the Westin Bayshore in Vancouver, is "Cancer and Families" encompassing topics from hereditary cancers to psychosocial supports. The Family Practice Oncology Network session will be held Saturday, November 5 and include the launch of the Network's new Cancer Information at the Point of Care resource.

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| 0830 – 0930 | Keynote Address |
| 0930 – 1000 | Cancer Information at the Point of Care I: Overview
– Dr. Andrew Murray and Dr. Jack Chritchley |
| 1000 – 1030 | Break |
| 1030 – 1100 | Paediatric Oncology: Follow-up Adult Survivorship – Dr. Sheila Pritchard |
| 1100 – 1120 | Cancers in Family – Dr. Karen Panabaker |
| 1120 – 1140 | Febrile Neutropenia – Dr. Stephen Chia |
| 1140 – 1200 | The Role of Family Physicians in the Management of Extremity Sarcoma
– Dr. Bassam Masri |
| 1200 – 1300 | Lunch |
| 1300 – 1400 | Cancer Information at the Point of Care II: Demonstration/Participation
– Dr. Andrew Murray and Dr. Jack Chritchley |
| 1400 – 1645 | Workshops (45 minute rotating sessions) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lymphedema – Dr. Winkle Kwan• Preceptorship Program – Dr. Bob Newman• Prostate Cancer and Erectile Dysfunction – Dr. Stacy Elliott |

For more information or to register online visit
www.bccancer.bc.ca/HealthProfessionalsInfo/AnnualCancerConference2005
or call Gail Compton at 604.675.8106

Enhance your skills with the Preceptor Program

The Family Practice Oncology Preceptor Program is one of the initial priorities the Family Practice Oncology Network identified at its establishment in February 2003 and the positive results are already evident. The goal is to ensure that all BC communities with a population of 15,000 have a least one family physician with special oncology competence. Four

physicians have completed the program to date and 11 more are currently enrolled.

The Preceptor Program is a two-month course designed to give family physicians, especially those in rural communities, an opportunity to gain specific oncology knowledge and skills to meet the needs of patients at risk to develop cancer, being treated for cancer, recovering from

cancer and those with persistent cancer. The program is eight weeks in duration, structured in a modular format for maximum flexibility, and can be taken consecutively or over a period of six months. Physicians who complete the program are eligible to receive continuing medical education credits.

Each group of participants takes the introductory module (two weeks) together at the BC Cancer Agency in Vancouver with the remaining six weeks to be completed at their convenience with a BCCA Clinic Associate serving as a mentor. The introductory module includes medical and radiation oncology, surgery, cancer screening, oncological emergencies, diagnostic imaging, library skills and computer courses with the other modules focusing on specific tumor groups. The program is offered twice annually with the introductory module taking place September 26 through October 7, 2005 and February 27 through March 10, 2006. Other modules are available through each of the four cancer centres (Kelowna, Surrey, Vancouver and Victoria).

The UBC Enhanced Skills Program provides support for the Preceptor Program including a salary for participants while enrolled and coverage for travel and accommodation expenses.

For more information or to receive an application form for September 26 through October 7, 2005, contact Gail Compton at gcompton@bccancer.bc.ca or call 604.675.8106.

Meet one of our Preceptors

Dr. Elizabeth Bastian, General Practitioner In Oncology, Smithers

Informing local physicians about your involvement in the Preceptor Program and obtaining support from the local health authority are two recommendations Dr. Elizabeth Bastian suggests to those considering the training. Dr. Bastian completed the program last fall and is now working in the Smithers area as a General Practitioner in Oncology (GPO). She ran a full service family practice there for many years and recently shifted her focus to providing oncology expertise. She also works several days per month in a drop-in clinic:

“Oncology is an interest I’ve had for a long time and the Preceptor Program provided an opportunity for me to pursue this and, at the same time, provide a more complete service to the community. The role of the GPO is evolving in our community with the patients guiding myself and our two oncology nurses as to how the service can be most effective. We are learning how best to complement the role and knowledge of local physicians and visiting surgeons ultimately providing a parallel service that is useful to everyone.”



Dr. Elizabeth Bastian completed the Preceptor Program last fall and now serves as a GPO for the Smithers area.

“The oncology nurses here are outstanding, very knowledgeable and doing a great job at helping me integrate with their role. Eventually, we would like to see the service grow to become a teaching center for University of Northern BC students.”

“Personally, I am fortunate to have the support of the Northern Health Authority for sessional fees that enable me to spend more time with patients than a general practitioner is able to. I make house calls, provide psychosocial counseling, symptom management and palliative care for which patients are very appreciative.

The Preceptor Program gave me more of a well-rounded understanding of oncology including valuable insight into the services of the BC Cancer Agency. The week I spent learning about palliative care was also extremely useful as was gaining a perspective on homecare nursing. Complementary care, including dealing with the difficult psychosocial issues and nutritional advice, is an area where I would like to learn more.”

Contact Dr. Elizabeth Bastian at Biz.Bastian@northernhealth.ca

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

March 30 – April 1, 2006:
2nd International Cancer Rehabilitation Conference in Vancouver, “Survivorship: Moving Forward After Treatment” – an interdisciplinary opportunity to address the physical, psychosocial and spiritual aspects of life after cancer treatment,
www.interprofessional.ubc.ca

General Practitioners in Oncology – a BC history

We are building the Family Practice Oncology Network on the strong historic foundation of our provincial cancer treatment organization whose early founders and visionaries considered General Practitioners an integral part of the BC Cancer Agency. Roles of family practitioners within the institution changed over the decades resulting in an internal structure recognized as a model to other provinces.

Before the 20th Century, the only treatment available for cancer patients was radical surgery, primarily for Stage I cancers. In 1895, William Roentgen discovered the x-ray, and a few years after that General Practitioners and Surgeons gave the first radiation treatments in Canadian hospitals. Radium treatment results showed early promise in 1930. At that time, there was a growing concern about “the cancer problem” across Europe and Central Canada, and the death rate from cancer in BC was the highest in Canada. To bring BC in line with the rest of the country, the BC Medical Association recommended the establishment of the BC Clinic for the diagnosis and radium-based treatment of cancer.

The BC Cancer Institute opened in Vancouver in 1938. The staff consisted of two part-time Medical Diagnosticians or General Practitioners (Dr. Frank C. Hebb and Dr. J.A. MacMillan), one Radium Therapist (Dr. A. Maxwell Evans) and one Radium Nurse (Dorothy Findley). Complete medical histories, physical examinations, and diagnostic tests were done by the Medical Diagnosticians who also arranged consultations with Vancouver General Hospital specialists. After cancer was diagnosed and individual treatment plans were made, patients received their surgical and/or radiation treatments. With the success of BCCI, BC’s provincial cancer death rate in the 1940s was more in line with the rest of Canada. By the 1950s, there were four General Practitioners working in the BCCI Diagnostic Department and by the early 1970s, there were seven. At

the same time, the Radiation Oncology Department had seven radiation oncologists.

Infectious diseases became treatable with the advent of new antibiotic treatments. Many physicians, previously treating tuberculosis, had more time to investigate drugs for the treatment of cancer. A growing number of physicians were added to the new Medical Oncology Department in the BCCI. Internists and hematologists treated an increasing number of cancer patients and the medical staff began participating in National Cancer Institute of Canada clinical trials. By the mid-1970s, the number of patients receiving systemic treatments rose by 30% with most treated as in-patients. In fact, in 1980 there was still only one outpatient room with four chairs for ambulatory chemotherapy treatments.



Dr. Helen Karsai is a General Practitioner in Oncology in the BCCA's Department of Medical Oncology.

The BCCI Diagnostic Department in 1980 was called the New Patients Department. At that time this department employed nine Clinic Physicians. In addition to complete history and physical examinations of new patients, Clinic Physicians worked in follow-up clinics and in adjuvant chemotherapy breast clinics. The Clinic Physicians also performed procedures such as lymphograms, lumbar punctures, paracentesis, thoracentesis and bone marrow aspiration biopsies.

In 1985, there was a paradigm shift at the Vancouver Clinic of BCCI (by then renamed the Cancer Control Agency of British Columbia). The medical community slowly recognized that the majority of cancer diagnoses were being made by primary care general practitioners. The General Practitioners from the former New Patients Department were incorporated into the Departments of Medical, Radiation and Gynecological Oncology, and were referred to as Clinic Associates.

In the 1990s, the trend was to increase the number of Clinic Associates in the Medical Oncology Department. The Clinic Associates in Vancouver became part of the treatment teams, along with the Residents, in the new Medical Oncology sub-specialty. There were

further improvements in patient care and in outcomes of cancer treatments as illustrated by the Health Statistics Division of Statistics Canada report on cancer mortality across Canada (1994-1996 data showed 15% better survival rates for males and 5.6% better survival rates for females in BC compared to the rest of Canada). Relative survival rates in BC for prostate cancer, breast and colorectal cancer are persistently the highest in Canada. The strengths of the BC Cancer Agency (BCCA) are in cancer screening, early detection and multi-disciplinary tumor groups which discuss individual patient care utilizing evidence-based treatment protocols developed by the individual tumor groups of which Clinic Associates are active members.

In 2003, Clinic Associates were renamed General Practitioners in Oncology (GPO). The College of Family Physicians and the BCCA reached an agreement in 2000 to allow delivery of chemotherapy anywhere in the province as long as “satellite clinics” meet accreditation and national quality standards. Provincial cancer control includes, at the present time, four major comprehensive cancer centers for initiation of cancer treatment (Kelowna, Surrey, Vancouver and Victoria). In the smaller cities of BC, satellite clinic GPOs treat cancer patients according to the prescribed treatment protocols. At the present time there are 24 GPOs working in BC. In the future there will be an increasing role for them and for family doctors in cancer treatment delivery.

Contact Dr. Helen Karsai at
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For More Information

To learn more about the Family Practice Oncology Network or become involved please contact:

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Visit the Network Website:
[www.bccancer.bc.ca/
HealthProfessionalsInfo/FPON](http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/HealthProfessionalsInfo/FPON)

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