

BC Cancer Agency Vancouver Island Centre Accomplishments & 'Firsts'

- **June 2007** A first in Canada: PREDICT Personal REsponse Determinants In Cancer Therapy project launched by BC Cancer Agency's Vancouver Island Centre will enable all new patients to participate in developing a research resource for use worldwide.
- **2007** VIC partnered with VIHA, PHSA, UBC and UVic to advance the clinical use of TeleCare across the region. One initiative has installed five mobile video consultation units in regional hospitals from Nanaimo to Port Hardy and a base unit at the VIC. The capital costs of the equipment were funded through donations to the BC Cancer Foundation in partnership with the Lions and Lionesses clubs of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. The intent is to provide cancer consultations to patients in rural and remote communities on Vancouver Island. TeleCare reduces the burden of travel for both patients and specialists. The investigative team obtained a 2-year research grant from the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research to evaluate the impact and acceptability of this technology.
- **2007** The only BC Cancer Agency research centre specializing in cancer immunology research. The Deeley Research Centre staff are focusing on studying the role of the immune-response in cancer, and creating immune-based therapies such as vaccines and antibodies. Examples of current research projects include: T-Cell therapies for breast and ovarian cancer and immune response to prostate cancer.
- **2003 - 2007** Numerous firsts in radiation therapy: First centre in BC to investigate respiratory gating for lung and breast cancer. This research involves minimizing the breathing motion of patients receiving radiation treatment. Also, the first centre in British Columbia to use implanted prostate fiducial markers for localized radiation therapy for prostate cancer patient and the first centre in BC to treat breast cancer patients with brachytherapy. This technique involves the insertion of small plastic tubes through which a small radioactive source can be introduced, and allows for reduced treatment time.
- **2006** BC Cancer Agency teamed up with VIHA in the "SunTips" campaign to make more teens and youths aware of the risks of developing cancer from sun exposure and tanning beds. Teens talked to teens -- in advertising, newspaper stories and on the website (www.SunTips.ca) -- about how chasing the perfect tan has led to wrinkles, sagging skin and skin cancer.
- **2006** The BC Cancer Agency expanded its community cancer prevention program across BC, including Vancouver Island. Two Community Prevention Coordinators funded through the BC Cancer Foundation now serve the Island. Their role is to partner with community groups to assess local needs, raise awareness and support cancer prevention actions.
- **2006** VIC was the first centre in Canada to treat a patient with breast cancer with conformal IMRT. The 100th patient treated with IMRT in Victoria was a woman with an extensive breast cancer from Quesnel who was unable to be safely treated with standard radiation techniques in Vancouver. The ability to offer innovative and less toxic treatments is an example of how investing in research and innovation can translate into practical benefits for patients.
- **2006** VIC, because of its role in improving care through technical innovation was selected as the 3rd site internationally to evaluate the role of a 3-dimensional ultrasound device to improve, non-invasive daily set-up verification during radiation therapy for prostate cancer. This project is also grant-funded.

- **2006** First Canadian partners in the multinational collaborative Canary Project focused on early detection cancer research. In 2006 Canadian-born philanthropist Don Listwin donated \$1 million from his US-based Canary Foundation to the BC Cancer Foundation to support Dr. Brad Nelson's team at the Deeley Research Centre. The research is focused on creating a simple blood test to screen women for ovarian cancer and has expanded to study other tumour types.
- **September 2006** The VIC hosts the provincial Tumour Tissue Repository (TTR) which recently celebrated its 1000th donation of tumor tissue. The BC Cancer Agency recently recruited Dr Peter Watson from Winnipeg to lead the TTR. In the past year, under Dr Watson's leadership, the BCCA's TTR has taken the national lead in setting standards for cancer tissue banking and pan-Canadian standardization, collaboration and cooperation. Collecting tumor tissue samples will enable BC and international researchers to address important questions on how individual molecular expressions of cancers should be used to customize and personalize cancer therapy choices in the near future.
- **2005** VIC (with a cancer centre in Hamilton, Ontario) was the national leader in developing a new breast cancer radiation technique in which patients who have breast conserving surgery (lumpectomy) for early-stage breast cancer are able to complete their whole course of radiation in 1 week compared to the 3.5 to 6 weeks of daily treatment visits to a cancer centre that are required with standard breast cancer radiation techniques. Clinical researchers at the VIC are now co-leading a Canadian national study awarded over \$6 million in research funding from the CIHR and CBCRA to compare partial breast RT to whole breast RT to ensure this novel, 1-week technique is as safe and effective as standard treatments.
- **2005** VIC clinical researchers collaborated with investigators at the University of Victoria and VIHA on a Palliative Care and Communication initiative that was awarded \$1.2Million funding from the CIHR over 5 years, starting in 2005. Two key current investigations are whether palliative chemotherapy palliates and how to improve patient/physician communication around the choice of palliative chemotherapy to ensure that the patient, family and physician have the same goals when embarking on palliative chemotherapy.
- **2004** A first in Canada: BC Cancer Agency's High School Internship program gives 4 high school students a chance each summer to participate in hands-on cancer research; the program has grown to include an extensive regional high school outreach program to encourage interest in science and spread prevention messages.
- **2004** First centre in BC to treat advanced head and neck cancers with Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT). IMRT involves modulating the intensity of radiation: both the strength of dose and the shape of the beam, so that damage to healthy tissue can be minimized as much as possible. This has greatly improved quality of life for head and neck cancer patients.
- **2003** The VIC's Trev and Joyce Deeley Research Centre is housed in the 3rd floor of the VIC. The centre was named to commemorate the Deeleys' support of the BC Cancer Foundation which included donations and bequests to cancer research totaling more than \$6 million dollars. Approximately \$2Million per year is raised by the BC Cancer Foundation on Vancouver Island to support the ongoing operating and research costs of the Deeley Centre and 4 other Clinical research themes at the VIC.
- **July 2003** – Dr. Brad Nelson named as founding Director of the BC Cancer Agency's Trev & Jocye Deeley Research Centre. A BC native and renowned cancer immunologist, Dr. Nelson was recruited from the Fred Hutchison Cancer Research Center in the US.
- **March 2001** The BC Cancer Agency's new Vancouver Island Centre opened in with a mandate to provide the best cancer care available to more than 700,000 people on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. It is the only BC Cancer Agency Centre housing a cancer research centre within a patient clinic.