



NEWS RELEASE

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Provincial Health Services Authority

BC Cancer Agency launches new nurse practitioner program

VANCOUVER – The BC Cancer Agency has launched a new program to provide ongoing care for “unattached” cancer survivors – people who have been treated for cancer but have no primary care provider.

The BC Cancer Agency’s Survivorship Nurse Practitioner Program is the first of its kind in Canada to use nurse practitioners to transition cancer patients back into the community.

The program started in March 2013 in Vancouver, where there are an estimated 650 cancer survivors without a family doctor or primary care provider. The program will expand to Surrey later this year, with hopes of growing to other areas of high need throughout the province in the future.

People living with – and beyond – cancer can face lots of physical, psychosocial and economic issues in addition to general health care concerns. Once a person has had cancer, they also have an increased risk of being diagnosed with a second (primary) cancer, thus ongoing screening is important.

The Survivorship Nurse Practitioner program:

- ensures patients are monitored and that post treatment side-effects are managed, reducing the need for walk in clinic and emergency room visits.
- provides care for all other conditions and needs as any other primary care provider.
- allows nurse practitioners direct access to BC Cancer Agency oncologists and other cancer experts, when consultation is required.

The BC Cancer Agency’s Survivorship Nurse Practitioner Program is part of the Province’s Nurse Practitioners for BC (NP4BC) initiative, which launched in fall 2012. NP4BC provides opportunities for existing nurse practitioners, as well as new graduate nurse practitioners, to be fully integrated in the health-care system. The majority will be working in primary health-care settings, which can include public health offices, medical clinics, residential care or other

community settings. To date, 87 new nurse practitioner positions have been created as a result of the program.

Quotes

Minister of Health Terry Lake

Nurse practitioners play a key role as members of a variety of health-care teams throughout the province and as part of our NP4BC program, the innovative Survivorship Nurse Practitioner Program will help support cancer patients and reflects government's commitment to ensure that all British Columbians have access to the care they need, when they need it."

Megan Stowe, Provincial Director, BC Cancer Agency Provincial Survivorship Program

"It's a challenge to move beyond cancer, but the challenge is greater if you don't have a family doctor or primary care provider. The new nurse practitioner model for cancer survivor transition will improve access to primary care."

Kristina Morrison, Family Nurse Practitioner, Provincial Survivorship Program

"My passion is providing access to primary care. We know that more people are surviving cancer and we need to make sure cancer patients are supported as they make the transition to their 'new normal' after cancer treatment."

Pat Bays, patient

"Living with cancer changes everything – your health, your relationships, your daily life, and your perspective. No matter how strong you might think you are, you can't deal with these changes alone. The BC Cancer Agency understands this. Their new Survivorship Nurse Practitioner program offers an integrated approach to life after cancer; and I personally have found that it has helped me to get on with life."

Quick Facts

- There are almost 200,000 BC residents living in BC who have had a diagnosis of cancer.
- About 65 per cent of adults and 80 per cent of children diagnosed with cancer are expected to live at least five years post-diagnosis.

More info for patients

The Vancouver program is accepting referrals. Patients must have had a previous cancer diagnosis, an MSP number and live in the following areas: Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond, Surrey, Delta/Ladner, White Rock, North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Coquitlam, Port Moody and Port Coquitlam. Individuals who meet these criteria and are seeking a primary care provider can call 604-829-2570.

The BC Cancer Agency is part of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), providing province-wide specialty healthcare. Together, we are transforming healthcare through innovation. The BC Cancer Agency provides a comprehensive cancer control program for the people of British Columbia by working with community partners to deliver a range of oncology services, including prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment, research, education,

supportive care, rehabilitation and palliative care. For more information, visit www.bccancer.ca.

For more information or to arrange an interview:

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