

Spring 2014

## Linking the BC Psychosocial Community Oncology Network

*This newsletter is published by the BCCA Provincial Psychosocial Oncology Program for health care professionals in communities throughout British Columbia and the Yukon.*

### What's New ?

#### Farewell to our esteemed colleague

#### Myrna Tracy Retires



Pictured here with her husband Robin and son Daniel

Myrna Tracy, Clinical Coordinator of the BC Cancer Agency Centre for the Southern Interior (CSI) is retiring after fourteen years of service (past 9 years as a Clinical Coordinator). She was born in Ladysmith, Vancouver Island before moving at an early age to Yorkton, Saskatchewan. She now resides with her family in Kelowna.

On the professional front, Myrna gained experience as an Income Assistance worker and Child Protection Worker in Saskatchewan, before working in a Transition House in Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. She returned to

Western Canada- initially working in Fort McMurray as a Youth Assessment Counselor in a lock down facility, before continuing westwards to her native Vancouver Island. There, she completed her BSW at the University of Victoria (graduating in 1986).

Thereafter, a new chapter commenced as she took on the role of Chief Social Worker at Saanich Peninsula Hospital in July, 1986, married Robin in 1987 and welcomed the birth of the other love of her life, Daniel the following year before completing her Masters in Social Work at the University of Victoria in 1994.

She moved to Kelowna to take on a counselling position at BC Cancer Agency Centre for the Southern Interior (CSI) in 2000. In 2005, she assumed the position of Clinical Coordinator of the team.

In her life, Myrna has always made time to indulge her passion for travel. She has made several expeditions throughout much of the world. It's easier to count the places Myrna has not been to, than the ones she has! This included a 3 and a half month overland group camping trip all the way from Nepal to England, via India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Greece, Italy, France and Belgium. On another occasion, she explored South America and Africa, finally arriving in Israel, where she worked on a Moshav in the Negev desert primarily picking red peppers. She even likes them to this day!

In recent years she has renewed her love of travel and exploring other cultures with trips to Cambodia, Vietnam

and Australia, where after 33 years, she was able to reunite with some of her camping buddies from the 70's.

“We will miss your consistent, courageous and supportive leadership Myrna. Your commitment to bettering the lives of everyone you have worked with has been truly inspiring. You have made such a difference to the lives of so many. We wish you the very best in your retirement, safe and wonderful travels, and above all, time with your loved ones. It's been an honour and we've had a blast!”

- From the CSI Patient and Family Counselling team

“In the last few years, I have had an opportunity to work more closely with Myrna in her Professional Practice Leadership role. She is highly committed to the care of patients and families and a strong advocate to improve care as well. She is known for her fine eye to detail and often is requested to review transcripts and other educational materials. Myrna initiated the first video to assist patients and families with financial issues.

We will miss Myrna and wish her the very best in her retirement and travels.”

- From Gina MacKenzie, MSW  
Provincial Director, Clinical Operations, Psychosocial Oncology



**Announcing: David Greenshields hired as the new Practice Leader for the Patient and Family Counselling program in Kelowna**

David Greenshields has worked as a counselor at the BC Cancer Agency's Kelowna and Vancouver Island Cancer Centers since 2008. He currently leads the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course at CSI and is active on the Provincial Stress Reduction Committee.

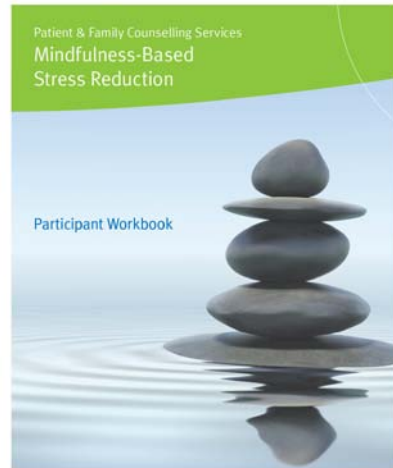
He has a strong administrative background in addition to his clinical expertise. Prior to joining BCCA, David was a Director of Resident Services and Social Work in Victoria for 9 years and had a number of management positions in residential care in Scotland previously.

**The Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC) to fund Return to Work - Interactive Tool Project**

Maureen Parkinson is a member of a national project team recently funded to develop the “Return to Work Interactive Tool.” The Principle Investigator is Dr. Christine Maheu and other team members include Dr. Mary Jane Esplen, and members from the Canadian Cancer Society and the National Institute of Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR).

This initiative will provide an excellent opportunity to provide vocational rehabilitation resources to patients, health care professionals, and employers

**New Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction booklet published ~ by Sarah Sample, MSW, Professional Practice Leader, (top picture) and Melanie McDonald, MSW, Counselor – both from Patient and Family Counseling team at Vancouver Centre**



The Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction participant workbook was developed as a resource for patients participating in the 8 week MBSR program. This 56 page workbook was written by Sarah Sample and Melanie McDonald, and is based on the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Center for Mindfulness MBSR program curriculum. The workbook was reviewed by colleagues and patients. This project is a result of effort over the past 3 years and we are excited to finally have this resource ready to use!

## Two new publications by Dr. Alan Bates, Psychiatrist at the Vancouver Centre

### Understanding and Treating Delirium

By Alan T. Bates, MD, PhD, Department of Psychiatry, University of British Columbia, and Yesne Alici, MD, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York

Sadly, no one is immune to delirium. The right set of unfortunate medical circumstances could induce disturbed attention, disorientation, and even psychosis in any of us. Yet despite the universal risk, relatively high incidence in hospital, and potential long-term consequences, delirium is misunderstood. Fortunately, this is changing with the evolution of Psychosomatic Medicine as well as a greater recognition of the negative effects of delirium by medical and surgical services. The American Delirium Society and the European Delirium Association are two organizations working to bridge the gap between medical specialties. Advances in the prevention and management of delirium are timely with an aging population threatening to overburden healthcare systems with dementia-associated costs and the risk that delirium can cause irreversible brain damage.

### Understanding Death with Limited Experience in Life: Dying Children's and Adolescents' Understanding of their Own Terminal Illness and Death

By Alan T. Bates and Julia A. Kearney

Although an inescapable part of life, death is not a prominent theme in most people's day-to-day life.

Most adults faced with their own mortality struggle with difficult existential and practical questions at the end of life. If this is true for adults, then what must the prospect of looming death be like for a child? And how can we help them navigate the difficult uncertainties they must face? This review outlines what we know about children's and adolescents' understanding of their own terminal illness and provide direction for clinicians tasked with minimizing their distress.

## Update from the Aboriginal Cancer Care Coordinator by Dana Marshall, Centre for the North



I have had the privilege to be in this role for the last 19 months. In this time I have learned so much from my colleagues, patients and community members. I would like to encourage completion of the online

Indigenous Cultural Competency Course, offered through PHSA. The goal at the Centre for the North is for all staff members to complete the course. If you have not taken this online course, please consider enrolling.

My role is to help patients with their practical concerns, and to provide supportive counselling throughout their cancer journey. I also help patients find resources in our community. I am excited to work with BCCA and look forward to what the next year brings.

## Update from Vancouver Island



Over 25 patients and family members attended a "**Mindfulness Meditation Workshop**", in Victoria on January 23. This workshop was led by Laura Daly (Masters in Counseling Psychology, Intern with the Patient and

Family Counseling Program). There was good demand for this program.

This 2- hour workshop included education about, and practice of mindfulness techniques. The practice component included: meditation, a body scan, and a mindfulness eating exercise. We received positive

feedback, and hope to run similar programs in the future. Here are some comments from participants:

- “This encouraged me want to think more in the present moment and to be more aware”
- “What I liked most was the wonderful peaceful pace of the class and the meditation. Laura’s VOICE!”
- “I have constant pain, I plan to use this tool to help reduce the pain and improve sleep quality”

## **BIG CANCER HOOK-UP Event from Victoria**

Victoria participated in the first BIG CANCER HOOK-UP Event on a gorgeous sunny afternoon on Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at the Vancouver Island Cancer Lodge. This ambitious event is sponsored by Young Adult Cancer Canada (YACC) to hook-up young people with cancer across Canada. More than 150 registrants participated in more than 10 cities.

The event was a ‘real-time’ experience for all, broadcasted live from St. Johns, Newfoundland with Geoff Eaton, YACC Executive Director/Founder playing the role as the ‘David Letterman’ host as he interviewed several cancer survivors/supporters who told their stories.

Although our group struggled with technological glitches and eventually ended up watching the program from a small laptop screen, they were clearly appreciative of the ‘black humour’, honesty, touching stories and music shared during the program.

Our group even sent tweets to the event, hoping that one of our tweets would be read during the program--- but to no avail. Just knowing that others were meeting online at the same time across Canada was powerful.

The Victoria experience was co-hosted by Helen Wong (Patient & Family Counsellor who has coordinated the monthly drop in YACC- Meet-up at VIC) and Anja Hess, a young adult cancer survivor who has attended YACC retreats in the past and is passionate about supporting other young adults with cancer. Anja has spearheaded an informal social group for young adults in Victoria and we hope there will be a Local Life branch in Victoria in the near future.

## **Update from CancerChatCanada**

CancerChatCanada is partnering with Cancer Care Ontario to offer our first National professionally facilitated online support group for cancer survivors who have had a stem cell transplant. We know that these cancer survivors often face ongoing challenges post-treatment, and we are excited to be able to offer this kind of group experience.

CancerChatCanada is offering many other online support groups this Spring, including those for cancer patients in treatment, cancer survivors and family members. Our specialized groups include: a Blood Cancer Group for patients with lymphoma, leukemia or myeloma, an Ovarian Cancer Group (in partnership with Ovarian Cancer Canada), and Sleeping Well with Cancer and Beyond, an educational group for cancer survivors and family members with insomnia.

If you are aware of someone that would benefit from one of our online support groups or educational courses, please direct them to register on our website at [www.cancerchatcanada.ca](http://www.cancerchatcanada.ca), email us at [cancerchatcanada@bccancer.bc.ca](mailto:cancerchatcanada@bccancer.bc.ca), or call us at 1-877-547-3777 ext. 645234.

## **Update from Community Partners**

### **UBC RESEARCH PROJECT - Peer Navigation program for Prostate Cancer Patients**

Researchers with the Peer Navigation Solutions Team (UBC School of Population and Public Health) are inviting health care providers who work with prostate cancer patients to share their experiences. Your participation will help them to understand the challenges and opportunities experienced by health care providers in assisting patients and their families throughout their cancer journey. The goal of this research project is to develop peer navigation tools to help patients and family members in a variety of ways including on-line, telephone or in person.



Any healthcare professional (e.g., nurse, social worker, physician) providing care to prostate cancer patients is welcome to participate. They are also inviting patients and family members to share their experiences. For more information, please contact them: (phone) 604- 822-2729, (email) [peer.navigation@ubc.ca](mailto:peer.navigation@ubc.ca).

BC Cancer Agency  
presenters at  
**eHealth Innovation &  
Technology Showcase,**  
Vancouver, May 9, 2015

“Cancer Chat Canada: From the Comfort of Home-Supporting Cancer Patients and Family Members Where they Live”, Oral Presentation **Heather Rennie** (Presenter), **Gina MacKenzie**

“Intervention to improve emotional well being and cognitive functioning in brain tumour survivors”, Poster Presentation **Douglas Ozier** (Presenter), **Matias Mariani**, **Maureen Parkinson**

## Presentations at CAPO

The annual conference for the Canadian Association for Psychosocial Oncology is on April 22 – 25 in Montreal. Several BC Cancer Agency Psychosocial Oncology staff **highlighted below** will be presenting.



CELEBRATING LEADERSHIP IN WHOLE  
PERSON CARE: CAPO'S FIRST THIRTY YEARS  
APRIL 22-24, 2015 • MONTRÉAL, QC • AVRIL 22-24, 2015  
CÉLÉBRONS NOS TRENTE ANNÉES D'INNOVATION  
DANS LE DOMAINE DES SOINS HOLISTIQUES



## Symposium/Workshop presentation: (90minute)

### Off track! Masters in psycho-oncology discuss difficult sessions

Panel: **John Christopherson**, **Sarah Sample**, Kimberley Thibodeau, Gary Rodin, Michael Speca, Jill Taylor-Brown

“**Thinking Outside the Box**”: Finding Sustainable Solutions for Innovative Canadian Psychosocial Oncology and Palliative Initiatives

Presenters: Shelly Cory (Virtual Hospice), Mary Jane Esplen (de Souza Institute), Deborah McLeod (IPODE), **Heather Rennie** (CCC), Discussant: Shane Sinclair

## Oral presentations: (20 minute)

“**Expressing Freely**: Art Therapy Groups for Chinese-Speaking Cancer Patients”

Presenters: **Catherine Dunlop** and **Sandy Kwong**

## Implementing “Fit” (Feedback Informed Treatment):

Measuring Patient Reported Outcomes at the BC Cancer Agency

Presenters: **Heather Rennie**, **Gina Mackenzie**

**Patient Family Advisory Council**: Putting the patient at the centre of patient-centred care  
Presenters: Rosie Cashman and **Douglas Ozier**

“**The Expressive Arts Studio**: A Workshop Series for Young Adults with Cancer”

Presenters: **Catherine Dunlop** and **Sara Prins Hankinson**

## Using Technology to Educate Online Support Group Facilitators:

Cancer Chat Canada develops new solutions for teaching “old dogs, new tricks”

Presenters: **Heather Rennie**, **Elaine Shearer**

**When Counting Sheep is Not Enough**: Cancer Chat Canada Pilots an Educational, Self-Management Approach for “Sleeping Well with Cancer and Beyond”  
Presenters: **Heather Rennie**, Michael Speca, Deborah McLeod

## Poster presentations:

**Intervention to improve emotional well being and cognitive functioning in brain tumour survivors**

Presenters: **Douglas Ozier**, Matias Mariani, and **Maureen Parkinson**

**Peace of Mind:** How an Arts-Based Support Group Helped Brain Cancer Patients Reframe"

Presenters: **Amy Rappaport and Catherine Dunlop**

Stay tuned to hear about highlights from the CAPO conference in next newsletter.

## Educational Opportunities:

### Psychosocial Rounds

Attend:

- In person at any one of the BC Cancer Centres
- Call 604-707-4540 Pass code 423515#
- Or arrange a video link with your location

**March 19**

#### Understanding Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefits

Presented by Shelley Pennington, BC Cancer Agency Resource Social Worker who will be interviewing Brenda Geisbrecht, Service Canada

**April 16**

#### Good grief - shifting from treatment to companioning

Presenter by Myrna Tracy, Arlene Elliott & David Greenshields, Patient & Family Counseling team, Sindi Ahluwalia Hawkins Centre for the Southern Interior

**May 21**

#### Utilizing mindful approaches, and psychosocial interventions to manage cancer pain

Presented by Laura Daly, MSW Student, Vancouver Island Centre

**June 18**

#### Update from the Aboriginal Care Coordinator

Presented by Dana Marshal, Centre for the North

### IPODE Continuing Education Courses

Register for courses online at [www.ipode.ca](http://www.ipode.ca).  
For more information contact Natasha Boutilier:  
[Natasha.Boutilier@cdha.nshealth.ca](mailto:Natasha.Boutilier@cdha.nshealth.ca)  
or 902-473-6618.

### Sexual Health 2015: Building Clinician Confidence & Competence

**Target audience:** Family Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Midwives, Registered Nurses, Specialists, Residents & Other Allied Health Professionals

**May 29-30, 2015 (Fri & Sat)**  
UBC Robson Square, Vancouver, Up to 12.25 MainPro-M1/ MOC Section 1

Register by Feb 16 for best rates!

<https://events.ubccpd.ca/website/index/110330>

Website: <http://ubccpd.ca/course/sexual-health-2015>

### BCCA Provincial Survivorship and Primary Care Forum 2015

Date: **June 9<sup>th</sup>**, 2015 830-330pm

Location: BCCA Research Centre, 675 West 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vancouver

The Provincial Survivorship and Primary Care Forum will feature presentations on the following topics: serious illness care planning, pain management and resources available for both patients and providers, skillfully breaking bad news to friends and family, late effects in Adult Childhood Cancer Survivors and information about the new program and clinic for Adult Childhood Cancer Survivors.

Stay tuned for registration information and our line-up of presenters.

## Information & Resources:

### Tip for low income earners needing early premium assistance

If a client has an income of less than 22 thousand annually, the client could contact Health Insurance BC for "early premium assistance". This means that the premium assistance would be back-dated from January 1st (rather than waiting for July). The client would phone 1.604.683.7151 and then press 1, another 1, and another 1.

"**Being Mortal**", a book by Atul Gawande is often quoted in BC Cancer Agency Advance Care Planning training. It's written by a surgeon who works with cancer patients and family members.

### NEW

### Terminal Illness form on Service Canada website

<http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/services/pensions/cpp/disability/benefit/>

## Blood Cancer Education Event

**Date:** Saturday, March 14, 2015 **Time:** 9:30 am

**Location:** Van Dusen Gardens, 5251 Oak St., Vancouver

### PROGRAM:

- 10:00 am- **Stepping Back into Life after a Cancer Diagnosis**
- 11:00 am - **Myeloma Lecture or Diagnosis-Specific**
- **Breakout Discussion Groups**
- 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm **Art and Healing Workshop**

Open to adults with any type of blood cancer diagnosis, their family members and other supporters.

Click on the link to [Register Online](#) or contact Sharon Pause at 604.733.2873 or [sharon.pause@lls.org](mailto:sharon.pause@lls.org).

Register early for this free event!!

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter please contact Elaine Shearer ,MA, Community Education Coordinator, Psychosocial Oncology Program [eshearer@bccancer.bc.ca](mailto:eshearer@bccancer.bc.ca).