

Cancer Program News

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You can find archived newsletters on our [website](#) and on [SharePoint](#)

Story ideas? Email us cancercareinfo@nshealth.ca



Drew Bethune, Senior Medical Director,
NSHA Cancer Care Program



Margaret Ann Morrison, Senior Director,
NSHA Cancer Care Program

A message from Cancer Care Program Leaders

Happy New Year! It is hard to believe it is already the second month of a new year and a new decade. The past year has been busy and not without its challenges, but together we have also had some successes.

A few highlights from the last year include:

- Introduction and supports for new virtual care tool, Real Presence;
- Additional positions for medical oncology and radiation oncology, and an increased complement of general practice oncologists (GPOs), as a result of focused work involving Cancer Care Program leaders, other NSHA colleagues, the Division of Medical Oncology, Department of Radiation Oncology, and government;
- Increased focus on data collection and analysis to support decision making; and
- Our collaborative approach to managing the shortage of the breast cancer drug, tamoxifen.

[Full Story»](#)

Integrating Tobacco Cessation into Cancer Care



Left to Right: Judy Purcell, Manager, Cancer Prevention and Health Promotion, and Katee Seaboyer, Tobacco Cessation Project Leader

There is strong evidence that patients who quit smoking at the time they are diagnosed with cancer respond better to cancer treatment, have fewer side effects, and experience improved survival.

Educating patients and families about the benefits of stopping tobacco use, in relation to their cancer treatment and outcome, and providing them with supports to quit is a priority for our Cancer Care Program.

Efforts to integrate evidence-based tobacco screening and cessation support are evolving in response to the evidence, new opportunities and greater stakeholder engagement.

Read more: [Cape Breton Cancer Centre – leading the way](#)

[Ask me campaign being launched across Cancer Care Program](#)

[Queen Elizabeth II Cancer Centre screening for tobacco use](#)

[Tobacco Cessation in Cancer Care part of Mi'kmaw Cancer Care Strategy](#)

Role of Radiation Therapists – A Fine Juggling Act



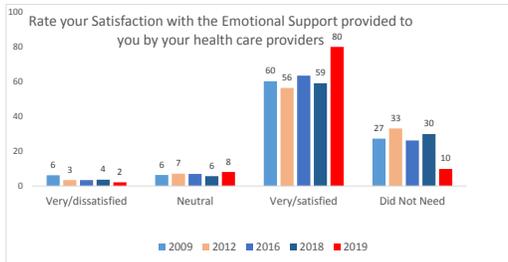
Left to right: Jennifer Cottreau, and Deanne Robinson, Radiation Therapists, QEII Cancer Centre

You can feel the warmth and compassion in Deanne Robinson's voice when she speaks about her work with cancer patients. A radiation therapist at the QEII Cancer Centre since 2005, Deanne's first career was as a massage therapist. In this role, she helped to ease the symptoms of patients with lymphedema. An interest in working more closely with cancer patients prompted her to return to school to become a radiation therapist.

As a radiation therapist, Deanne's role includes: coordinating patient care, administering radiation therapy safely, and addressing any side effects patients experience, such as fatigue and dry, itchy skin. In addition, Deanne and her colleagues are team players, educators, technical experts and skillful in time management.

[Full Story»](#)

2019 Patient Satisfaction Survey Results



Cancer patients once again report a high degree of satisfaction regarding their overall cancer experience, with respondents of the 2019 patient satisfaction survey providing an average rating of 9.2 on a scale of 0-10, where 0 is poor and 10 is excellent.

While the results are positive, only 33 per cent of the 1,946 patients invited completed survey, as compared with a 55 per cent response rate in 2018. There are a couple of possible reasons: timing of the 2019 survey (people invited to complete survey over the summer), and a decision to encourage people to complete the survey electronically with a request for anyone wanting to complete a paper copy to call and request one.

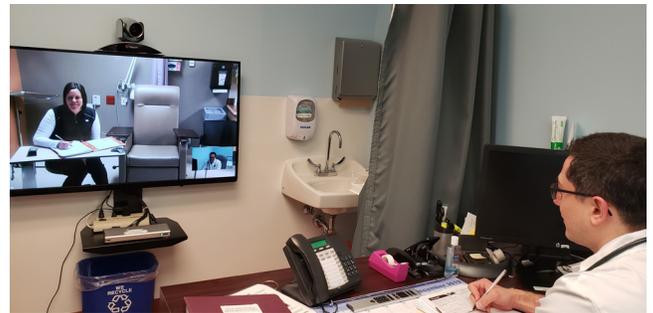
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Technology enabling more patient-centred care

Patients and cancer care providers who have tried it like it a lot. Virtual care, known by some as tele-medicine or tele-oncology, has been used in our cancer system to varying degrees in a few facilities across the province for many years. It has and continues to improve access to care when in-person appointments between cancer care providers and patients are not possible.

Cape Breton Cancer Centre (CBCC), whose team supports virtual clinics in Antigonish and Inverness, has had a coordinated virtual care program since 2014.

Likewise, the QEII Cancer Centre in Halifax supports virtual clinics in Yarmouth. QEII specialists also support occasional specialist needs in Sydney through virtual care.



Left to right: Melissa Beaton, Oncology Nurse, Inverness Consolidated Memorial Hospital, and Dr. Wissam Saliba, Medical Oncologist, Cape Breton Cancer Centre

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News and Notes

- **Provincial Cancer Network (PCN) 2020**

Mark your calendar for PCN 2020 being held in Halifax on May 7 and 8. The two-day meeting will focus on topics of interest to both cancer care and primary care and will enable us to: learn from one another, strengthen our networks and enhance communication to improve cancer patient care. A detailed agenda and registration information will be shared soon.

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- **New patient referral process being tested at CBCC**

A new patient referral process is being piloted at the Cape Breton Cancer Centre to make it easier for family doctors and other primary care providers to refer patients, ensure referrals are processed in a timely manner, and avoid the chance of a referral being missed.

- **Policy Dashboard on NSHA Cancer Care Program SharePoint**

The Cancer Care Program has developed a policy dashboard to provide information on approved and in-progress Cancer Care Program policies. The dashboard includes documents currently being developed, those under stakeholder review, and those recently published or requested for development. All Cancer Care Program employees, who have registered for SharePoint [can access the policy dashboard online.](#)

- **Accessing the Cancer Care Program's SharePoint Site**

If you or someone you know cannot access our SharePoint site, please email Kris Kennedy, at kris.kennedy@nshealth.ca

- **CAPhO Conference 2020**

The Canadian Association of Pharmacy in Oncology (CAPhO) Conference 2020 will be held at the Westin Harbour Castle in Toronto, Ontario from April 2 to 5. [Visit the Conference website for information.](#)

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Cancer Program Update | Winter 2020

This is a newsletter for and about the people who are a part of the NSHA Cancer Care Program. It is produced by the program's communication staff.

We welcome your comments and story ideas. Email us at cancercareinfo@nshealth.ca or call us at 1.866-599-2267.

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