

# Cancer SCN: Core Committee Quarterly Update

## April to June 2018

The Cancer Strategic Clinical Network (SCN) is committed to providing our Core Committee and stakeholders with timely updates regarding our projects and activities. For more information, please contact [angela.estey@ahs.ca](mailto:angela.estey@ahs.ca).

### Provincial Breast Health Initiative:

- **Provincial Breast Health Initiative Steering Committee:**
  - Chaired by Dr. John Kortbeek and Angela Estey, this committee was established with representation from each Zone, CancerControl Alberta, Primary Care, Cancer and Surgery SCNs, and patient advisors.
  - We held two meetings this quarter:
    - On April 11, we reviewed new priorities to improve breast health and cancer care including transitions of follow-up care, management of proliferative disease, and high-risk screening management.
    - On May 30, we reviewed the breast cancer reporting portal which consolidates existing breast cancer measurement and reporting into a single online landing page on Tableau. We also received an update on surgical uplift from the Surgery SCN.
- **Pathway for Delivering Mastectomies as Same Day Surgery:**
  - Since 2017, we've been working together to implement a major breast cancer day surgery pathway for all sites across the province.
  - In 2016/17, 22% of mastectomies were performed as same day surgery. The target for 2017/2018 was 30% and we surpassed it at 36%.
  - We are implementing a plan to achieve 2018/2019 targets of 50%.
- **Pathway for Expediting Diagnostic Work-Up and Management of Highly Suspicious Breast Lesions:**
  - A pathway to expedite referrals and consults for patients with highly suspicious breast lesions on imaging was implemented in Edmonton and Calgary with support from Cancer SCN RN Coordinators and in collaboration with Diagnostic Imaging groups, Primary Care Networks, breast programs, and surgeons.
  - We are monitoring timelines for diagnostic work-up. Preliminary analysis shows local improvements in the number of days from imaging to biopsy and from imaging to referral.
  - Preliminary results from the patient experience survey about the diagnostic assessment phase of care will be available in Fall 2018.



- **Pathway for Advancing Breast Reconstruction:**

- To facilitate more appropriate referrals, we are working with plastic surgeons to develop a referral checklist and provincial inventory of plastic surgeons, the types of procedures they do, and where they operate.
- A summary of the clinical practice guidelines was developed and will be shared with all general surgeons performing mastectomies.
- Breast reconstruction content on MyHealthAlberta.ca was reviewed, organized. A link to national content has been added based on recommendations from plastic surgeons.
- A Breast Reconstruction Measurement Framework is proceeding and will include six initial priority metrics.

### Accelerating the Diagnosis of Cancer:

- This emerging initiative aims to address diagnostic delays for cancer.
- Patient advisors drafted guiding principles for co-design of a comprehensive provincial strategy that will facilitate cancer diagnosis for Albertans. The Cancer SCN Core Committee membership also provided feedback.
- A co-design committee is being assembled for Fall 2018 to develop a business case.
- In collaboration with the Institute of Healthcare Economics, we are conducting an environmental scan of facilitated cancer diagnosis initiatives in Alberta and other jurisdictions
- We are completing preliminary data analyses on cancer wait-times in Alberta including association with staging, treatment, and hospital admissions. We will review this data with Screening Program leads and Tumor Team leads for colorectal cancer and lymphoma.
- We are planning consultations with provider representatives to gather their perspectives on delays to cancer diagnosis.

### Palliative and End of Life Care:

- The mandate and support for a pan-SCN initiative, with support from Critical Care, Emergency and Cancer SCN, has been obtained from Alberta Health to understand acute care utilization in patients with oncological and non-oncological advanced or end-stage disease, including care provider and patient perspectives.
  - We are conducting systematic literature reviews on effectiveness of Emergency Department based-palliative care interventions and on screening tools to identify patients in the Emergency Department with palliative care needs. We plan to share findings in summer 2018.
  - The University of Alberta Hospital (UAH) study started on March 24, 2018 with 27 participating emergency department (ED) physicians, 241 patients enrolled, 6,617 patients screened to date. The Grey Nuns Community Hospital study started on April 11, 2018 with 17 participating ED physicians, 60 patients enrolled, 8,970 patients screened to date. We anticipate the study to be completed by August 30, 2018 with analysis and results available in September 2018.
  - We are currently scoping out the second phase of the qualitative study of patient perspectives' on unmet end-of-life care needs.

## Cancer SCN Research:

The Cancer SCN research team supports priority initiatives of the Cancer SCN as required. It also continues to engage with multiple stakeholders to identify and nurture research-practice partnerships, which will create and apply knowledge that improves cancer outcomes.

### Priority Initiative Support- Accelerating the Diagnosis of Cancer:

- The research team worked collaboratively with coordinators of the Patient and Family Advisor Network (CancerControl Alberta) to develop a qualitative interview study. The goal of the study is to explore perceptions and experiences of patients and family members in the cancer pre-diagnosis period.
- An application for ethics review was submitted in April 2018, and all necessary ethics and operational approvals were obtained by the end of May 2018.
- In collaboration with CancerControl Alberta, study invitations were sent out to potential participants in early June 2018.
- Study interviews with individual patients and family members were underway by the end of June 2018.
- Findings from the interview study will help inform the development of a survey to be co-designed with Cancer SCN patient advisors, and disseminated in late summer/early fall 2018 to gather broad patient perspectives.

### Engaging with stakeholders and building networks:

- April 2018 – the Scientific Director of the Cancer SCN was invited to sit on the Board of the Canadian Cancer Research Alliance (CCRA). This national advisory coalition aims to support the development of pan-Canadian strategic priorities for cancer research, and to strengthen the cancer research community. Dr. Robson attended her first CCRA meeting in June 2018.
- May 2018 – the Scientific Director was invited to present at a Strategic Retreat organized by the Department of Oncology, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Alberta. Dr. Robson talked about the importance of developing ‘research-practice partnerships’ that can help create and apply knowledge to improve cancer outcomes.
- April – May 2018 – the Assistant Scientific Director (Dr. Anna Pujadas-Botey) supported clinical staff from CancerControl Alberta’s Provincial Practices portfolio in developing a survey to inform the adaptation of an educational tool to be used by healthcare providers.
- June 2018 – the Assistant Scientific Director was accepted to an Adjunct position at the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta. This position will support the development of the Cancer SCN’s research network, and will provide opportunities for capacity building.
- April – June 2018 – along with the Cancer SCN Senior Medical Director, the Scientific Director of the Cancer SCN continues to sit on a planning committee for a symposium describing the collection and uses of patient reported outcomes in cancer care in Alberta. Organized by CancerControl Alberta, the symposium will be held in November 2018.