

Linking the Psychosocial Community Oncology Network



WHO ARE WE?

A group of psychosocial professionals in communities throughout British Columbia and the Yukon in agencies, hospitals, private practice, and clinics.

This newsletter is for social workers, clinical counsellors, psychologists, and psychiatrists who work with people with a diagnosis of cancer and their family members.

You can now find contact information for key contacts within the community oncology network throughout British Columbia on the BC Cancer Agency website.

<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/RS/CommunitiesOncologyNetwork/default.htm>

What's New?

Official Launch of the Children's Website

My Anything but Ordinary Journey:

<http://www.cancerinmyfamily.ca>

As many of you may know, September 2nd was the official launch of the children's website. It has been designed to help children deal with the challenges they face having an adult family member living with cancer. We are happy to say that we have been getting very positive feedback about the site from both children and parents. We hope that families in your community will also find it useful.

A black and white drawing of a tree is the first thing that welcomes children to enter and explore the site. As children do different activities, the tree begins to fill in with colour - giving them a sense of accomplishment and movement through the journey. They get to create an explorer which represents them in this online world as well as buddies to accompany them on the journey.



In This Issue

What's New?

- ✧ Launch of Children's Website
- ✧ Increased Psychosocial Support in the North

Educational Opportunities

✧ Psychosocial Rounds:

October 14th-

Genetic Counselling

November 30th-

Introduction to the new Children's Website

December 9th -

Report from Cancer care Summit

✧ IPODE courses

✧ Cancer Transitions

Facilitator Training

Research & Reports:

- ✧ Telehealth
- ✧ Patient Navigation

Information & Resources:

- ✧ Affordable Housing

Weather is a great metaphor for emotion so children can use icons to change the weather in their world as often as they like.

Other activities include:

- **Submarine Activity** is a matching game which is a fun way for kids to use their memory. As they advance in the game, reassuring messages relating to cancer appear .
- **Secret Garden Activity** is a Pong-like game where children can bounce and collect fruits and vegetables in a picnic basket. After game play they learn some quick facts about healthy eating choices.
- **Rocket Ship Activity** is a scavenger hunt to encourage physical activity. They're instructed to gather five items (e.g. something you like a hug) and put them in a bag. We call this their "feel good bag" that they can go back to when they need to be comforted.
- **Rock Wall Activity** is where children can draw and colour on the rock wall starting by illustrating the difference between healthy cells and cancer cells.

The site is entertaining for kids, but it's also important they have the opportunity to express themselves. They can do this in their **travel journal**. It's a take-away piece that they can complete at any time. After each activity there are questions to answer in their journals or to begin discussions with their family. One of our goals is to encourage communication within the family.

To understand more about the features of the website, there is a section for parents where you can download the [Parent's Guide](#) and some pages of the [Time for Me Activity Booklet](#). Both of these booklets have been developed by BCCA Patient and Family Counselling staff.

Northern Health and the Cancer Control Strategy:

Increased Psychosocial Support in the North

Northern Health has made some exciting changes this year to increase psychosocial support for cancer patients. Tasha Ahlstrom has been hired as the Regional Oncology Psychosocial Lead- a new position in Northern Health. As many of you know, previously Tasha was an oncology social worker in Prince George Regional hospital.

The Northern Health Authority is responding to the unique and often unmet psychosocial needs of many cancer patients and their families living in the north. In a dispersedly populated area, the geographic size of 2/3 the province, complex barriers to service include the time and expense for patients and their families to travel to receive treatment on top of the anxiety, grief, loss and depression they may be experiencing as they deal with a diagnosis of cancer. There are many communities including some community oncology clinics where there is limited access or no social worker working within the health care or acute care setting.

As part of a more comprehensive plan to serve these patients, Tasha will provide psychosocial support and information to patients living in communities that do not have access to a social worker. She is also available to provide support to the patients, family and health care professionals regarding clinic intervention and consultation on difficult psychosocial issues.

If you are having any problems opening the site you may need to download a free program called **Flash** on to your computer



Tasha Ahlstrom BSW

**Northern Health Regional
Oncology Psychosocial
Lead**

If you would like more information
Contact Tasha at
(250) 565-286 or
Tasha.ahlstrom@Northernhealth.ca

This will be made possible by utilizing Telehealth which includes telephone, internet or video link.

We would like to congratulate Tasha on her new position and also welcome Teresa Silva who is replacing Tasha as the oncology social worker in Prince George regional Hospital.

Educational Opportunities:

Psychosocial Rounds:

On the second Wednesday of every month there will be rounds from noon to 1pm PST that you are welcome to attend either in person at one of the 5 regional cancer centers or by video / telephone conference link.

- **Wed. Oct. 14th Hereditary Cancer Genetic Testing - Psychosocial Impacts and Outcomes**
Presenter: **Jenna Scott**, MS, CGC
Clinical Coordinator / Genetic Counselor
BCCA Hereditary Cancer Program
- **Mon. Nov. 30* Introduction to the New Children's Interactive Website**
Presenter: **Gina MacKenzie**, MSW
Professional Practice Leader, Vancouver Centre(VC)
*(not the usual 2nd Wednesday due to statutory holiday)
- **Wed. Dec. 9th Things we learned at the 7th National Cancer Summit in Prince George** Presenters: **Myrna Tracy**, ,MSW, RSW Professional Practice Leader, Central Southern Interior(CSI) & **Arlene Elliott**, MA, RCC, counsellor,(CSI)

For dial in numbers & video linking

support contact:

Multi-Media and
Telehealth Services
BC Cancer Agency

604.707.5959

mmedia@bccancer.bc.ca

For suggestions of topics or non technical questions please contact Elaine Shearer, eshearer@bccancer.bc.ca 604-877-6000 x 3275

IPODE

The Interprofessional Psychosocial Oncology Distance Education project is an imitative of the Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology (CAPO) has been developed with support with the support of the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. For more information go to:www.ipode.ca or www.edopi.ca.

Fall term: September to December 2009

Relational Practices with Families in Oncology & Palliative Care

This course provides graduate students with an opportunity to explore the interprofessional care of families experiencing cancer along the illness trajectory from diagnosis through to bereavement or long term survivorship.

Instruction is .web-based with one hour of real time online audio communication per week. Learning resources have been developed specifically for this course, including case study narratives, video-taped interviews, and dramatizations of individual, family and interprofessional situations.

Cases will provide opportunities for students to learn about diverse and marginalized communities. Course work will draw on a variety of theories including: family theory, models of family & couple counselling/ therapy, family assessment, therapeutic conversations and interventions

Small group work will allow students to develop a rich understanding of the cancer experience from the perspective of families, as well as competency in family assessment, intervention, interprofessional collaboration, and cultural safety.

Cancer Transitions: Moving Beyond Treatment

Cancer Transitions is a psycho-educational program developed by **The Wellness Community** and the **Lance Armstrong Foundation** for cancer survivors. The program is designed to help survivors make the transition from active treatment to post-treatment care.

The BC Cancer Agency has endorsed and coordinated pilot testing and evaluation of the Cancer Transitions program at four adoption sites across Canada: The sites are:

- Prince George -Northern Health Authority
- Montreal - Hope & Cope
- Toronto - Wellspring;
- BC Cancer Agency - Victoria.

The overall objective of this pilot study is to assess the feasibility of launching the Cancer Transitions program in Canada.

The pilot groups commenced in January 2009. The Cancer transition s groups are six-week program in duration and are delivered by trained facilitators. There is a guide and workbook for participants. The programs key areas of focus are: emotional well-being, exercise, nutrition, medical management, and survivorship care planning. The program provides in-depth information and the opportunity to practice skills that can potentially help cancer survivors manage their life after treatment.

COMING UP

January to April 2010

Interprofessional Psychosocial Oncology: Introduction to Theory and Practice

There is a designated contact in each partner university who registers students. In BC contact the following:

UBC Okanagan
Carole Robinson (Nursing)
carole.robinson@ubc.ca

UBC Vancouver
Grant Charles (Social
Work)
gcharles@interchange.ubc.ca

or contact the project
office at
project@ipode.ca
or 902-473-6618

Facilitator training

This fall, program facilitators will be trained to deliver the program at a number of new sites across Canada. The facilitator training is free of charge and will consist of a two-day workshop hosted at two locations in Central and Western Canada. If you would like more information about the program and training please contact jmagtoto@bccancer.bc.ca

The preliminary evaluation suggests that Cancer Transitions is a promising supportive care model for cancer survivors. The program is currently being modified to better fit a Canadian context.

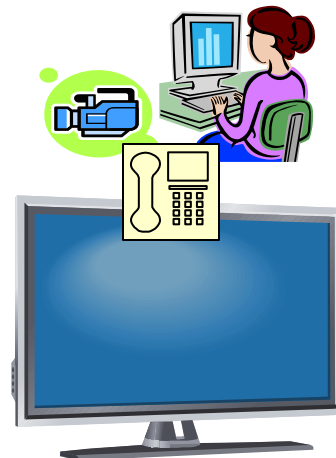
Research & Reports :

Telehealth

A **Round Table on Telehealth** held on **September 17th** was attended by 14 psychosocial oncology professionals from 6 communities throughout BC. Pilot projects were discussed in terms of successes and challenges. Possible future projects were also explored.

Ideas were shared on increasing the use of telehealth to meet the unmet psychosocial needs of cancer patients in their home communities. It was agreed that there was need for more promotion of the strengths of programs that use online, telephone and video linked technology with both health care professionals and patients.

To see a report on a **Dialogue on Telehealth** which occurred at the Cancer Care Summit in Prince George earlier this year follow this link: <http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/HPI/psychosocial/psychosocial.htm>



Patient Navigation

A Think Tank session that occurred at the Prince George Cancer Care Summit earlier this year explored the various models of navigation and their application to a number of case studies. A report on is available on the BCCA website Psychosocial Oncology page - <http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/HPI/psychosocial/psychosocial.htm>

Information & Resources:

Province-wide information on Affordable Housing listed by neighbourhood at http://www.bchousing.org/resources/Housing_Listings/zone1-7_singles.pdf which gives information on Co-Ops and privately owned complexes as well as BC Housing.

Updating Community Oncology List: Please check the information for your community at- <http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/RS/CommunitiesOncologyNetwork/default.htm>, and make sure it is up to date and accurate. Please forward any changes to eshearer@bccancer.bc.ca



Contact::

For submission information for upcoming issues or to submit an article please contact Elaine Shearer MA, Community Education Coordinator, eshearer@bccancer.bc.ca or call 604-877-6000 x 3275