

CANCER *talk*

CONNECTING WITH MANITOBA'S PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

Message from CCMB President and CEO



Sri Navaratnam, MBBS, PhD, FRCPC
President & CEO,
CancerCare Manitoba

CANCER CARE CLOSER TO HOME

CCMB held its Annual Public Forum in Brandon in November with a focus on cancer care closer to home. We were hosted by the Prairie Mountain Health (PMH) region and Western Manitoba Cancer Centre, a joint centre of CCMB and PMH. We are very thankful for the strong partnership we have with this region which facilitates care closer to home through Family Physicians in Oncology (FPOs), Radiation Oncology and Medical Oncology.

We are excited about the capital project expansion at the WMCC which will bring new clinic space, a new radiation treatment bunker, and a new Centre for Hope to bring hope and healing to cancer patients through support programs and services. The new Centre is made possible due to the generosity of Manitobans.

CCMB has coordinated care closer to home for many decades. Now we are expanding the hope and healing concept to sites outside Winnipeg, so that all cancer patients in Manitoba can receive support services closer to home along with their care.

Priority 4 of the Roadmap to Cancer Control calls for action to improve the patient experience throughout the cancer journey. The hope and healing concept is one way we are doing this.

As primary care providers, you are key to our community engagement, to providing care closer to home and giving hope to cancer patients. Thank you for your commitment and partnership with us.



Danielle Desautels, MD, FRCPC
Medical Oncologist,
CancerCare Manitoba

WHAT'S NEW IN CANCER TREATMENT - BREAST CANCER

HER2-Low Breast Cancer

Until recently, breast cancers were classified in a binary fashion as either HER2-positive or HER2-negative. HER2-positive breast cancers are those with high levels of the HER2 protein on their surface and/or high levels of HER2 gene expression. These tumours account for around 15% to 20% of all breast cancers and respond to drugs that target HER2. HER2-low breast cancer is a newly defined subtype of breast cancer. These tumours contain lower levels of HER2 and were formerly classified as HER2-negative as they did not respond to traditional HER2-targeted therapies. In a recent clinical trial, trastuzumab deruxtecan was shown to improve survival in individuals with metastatic HER2-low breast cancer compared with chemotherapy. Since HER2-low breast cancer accounts for a little over half of all metastatic breast cancers, this represents a major paradigm shift in the treatment of advanced disease.

Immunotherapy in Triple-Negative Breast Cancer

Immunotherapy helps the immune system find and attack cancer cells. Until recently, immunotherapy has had little role in the treatment of breast cancer. However, a recent study demonstrated that adding the immunotherapy drug pembrolizumab to neoadjuvant chemotherapy and continuing pembrolizumab after surgery improves outcomes in patients with high-risk triple-negative breast cancer (regardless of PD-L1 status). Additionally, adding pembrolizumab to chemotherapy can help some patients with advanced triple-negative breast cancer live longer. In the advanced setting, survival is improved only in patients whose tumours contain higher levels of the PD-L1 protein.

Adjuvant Olaparib for *BRCA* Mutation Carriers

Around 5% of patients with early-stage breast cancer carry a germline *BRCA* mutation. Until now, *BRCA* status has not impacted systemic treatment decisions for early breast cancer. However, a recent clinical trial demonstrated that one year of adjuvant olaparib, a PARP inhibitor, improved survival in patients carrying a germline *BRCA 1/2* mutation with high-risk, HER2-negative breast cancer who received chemotherapy before or after surgery. These results underscore the importance of identifying *BRCA* mutation carriers among patients with high-risk early-stage breast cancer.



Jeffrey Graham, MD, FRCPC
Medical Oncologist,
CancerCare Manitoba

BLADDER CANCER: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Bladder cancer is the most common type of tumour originating from the urinary tract. When identified early, a combination of chemotherapy and surgery/radiation therapy can lead to long-term remission and cure. Unfortunately, a proportion of patients will develop metastatic recurrence. In this situation, treatments are often not curative and instead are designed to help control cancer. Ultimately, the hope is that these treatments will help patients live longer and lead to improvements in quality of life.

Traditionally, the treatment of advanced bladder cancer has involved using platinum-based chemotherapy. Chemotherapy has been shown to improve survival, but durable, long-lasting responses are rare. Over the last 5 years, there have been several new therapeutic options that have transformed the treatment landscape of bladder cancer. Conceptually, these new approaches can be divided into three groups:

- 1) immune-checkpoint inhibitors,
- 2) antibody-drug conjugates, and
- 3) targeted therapies.

Immune-checkpoint inhibitors (ICI) work by activating the immune system to help find and destroy cancer cells. In Manitoba, we use this type of therapy if bladder cancer has progressed despite initial chemotherapy (pembrolizumab) and as maintenance therapy after initial chemotherapy (avelumab). This maintenance approach is supported by a large phase 3 clinical trial that showed an improvement in survival when ICI therapy was started immediately after completion of chemotherapy as opposed to at the time of progression.

Antibody-drug conjugates (ADCs) can be thought of as chemotherapy delivery devices that

transport chemotherapeutic agents directly into tumour cells. This allows for more precise anti-tumour effects. In bladder cancer, agents such as enfortumab vedotin have demonstrated impressive results in clinical trials, including in patients who have progressed on both chemotherapy and immunotherapy. In Manitoba, we are opening a clinical trial exploring a combination of enfortumab vedotin and pembrolizumab in earlier stages of bladder cancer.

Targeted therapies have revolutionized the treatment of various cancer types, including lung cancer and melanoma. These treatments target specific alterations that tend to be more common in cancer cells. In bladder cancer, one such alteration is a protein called fibroblast growth factor receptor (FGFR), which is altered in approximately 20% of patients. At CCMB, we have opened a clinical trial investigating the use of the FGFR inhibitor erdafitinib in patients with advanced bladder cancer who have progressed on chemotherapy.

In summary, several promising new therapies are now available for the treatment of advanced bladder cancer. We remain hopeful that the ongoing development of these innovative treatments will continue to lead to improved outcomes for all Manitobans diagnosed with bladder cancer.

CANCERCARE MANITOBA PREVENTION & SCREENING

ColonCheck

Fecal Occult Blood Test Requisition Form

In April 2022, ColonCheck published a new [fecal occult blood test requisition form](#) for healthcare providers. We want to improve healthcare provider understanding of how to use this form. We invite you to complete a short survey to provide us with suggestions on how to increase healthcare provider understanding: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/59M6FRX>

In support of reducing Manitoba's endoscopy waitlist, ColonCheck is providing fecal immunochemical test (FIT) kits to select, consenting patients. To learn more visit www.cancercare.mb.ca/hcp-fit

CervixCheck

HPV triage is well underway!

Here is a question we received from a healthcare provider: **“What do I tell my patient who has had a low-grade cytology result (Pap test) but is negative for hrHPV?”**

Answer: A low-grade Pap test result is a mild abnormality, likely caused by a low-risk HPV type that is known not to cause cancer. All high-risk types (cancer-causing) tested for were not detected in your sample, therefore, we feel comfortable going back to routine cervical cancer screening.

The cervix kit project is nearing its end. Encourage patients to complete and mail their kit as soon as possible. More information about the project can be found [here](#).

References

Screening Guidelines

<https://www.cancercare.mb.ca/export/sites/default/screening/.galleries/files/getcheckedmb/g-hcp-guidelines.pdf>

Cervical Cancer Screening History Request Form

<https://www.cancercare.mb.ca/export/sites/default/screening/.galleries/files/cervixcheck/x-form-screening-history.pdf>

Cervical Cancer Screening Learning Module – Chapter 10

[chapter 10 of the Cervical Cancer Screening Learning Module for Healthcare Providers](#)

Cervix Kit FAQ for Healthcare Providers

<https://www.cancercare.mb.ca/export/sites/default/screening/.galleries/files/cervixcheck/x-hcp-faq-kit.pdf>

BreastCheck Mobile Clinics

<https://www.cancercare.mb.ca/screening/breast#clinics>

BreastCheck

Early detection of breast cancer increases treatment options and typically provides better outcomes. Eligible Manitobans can make appointments by calling 1-855-95-CHECK. No referral is required. BreastCheck has four permanent clinics in Brandon, Boundary Trails, Thompson, and Winnipeg. Also, the BreastCheck Mobile continues to circulate throughout the province. To review upcoming clinics, [visit the BreastCheck website at \[cancercare.mb.ca/screening/breast\]\(http://cancercare.mb.ca/screening/breast\)](#).



STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Rebekah Rittberg - Medical Oncologist, September 2022

Specializes in: Skin and Thoracic. Clinical fellowship - Thoracic Oncology at BC Cancer at the University of British Columbia. Medical Oncology Subspecialty Residency Program in addition to a Residency Program in General Internal Medicine. She received her MD and BSc(Med) from the University of Manitoba, Max Rady College of Medicine.

Dr. Karver Zaborniak, Dr. Colin Barber, Dr. Lundy McKibbin - Allergists, September 2022

Allergy and Clinical Immunology working in partnership with the Department of Medical Oncology and Hematology starting September 26, 2022. All working at HSC.

Dr. Barber - MD and Internal Medicine Subspecialty Residency at the Max Rady College of Medicine at the University of Manitoba.

Dr. Zaborniak - MD and Internal Medicine Subspecialty Residency at the Max Rady College of Medicine at the University of Manitoba.

Dr. McKibbin - MD at the University of Alberta and Internal Medicine Residency at the Max Rady College of Medicine at the University of Manitoba. Completed his Clinical Immunology & Allergy Subspecialty Training at Western University.

Dr. Marat Rafikov - Urology, July 2022

Urologist working with MPC. Fellowship in Endourology and Laparoscopy clinical fellowship, University of Toronto 2016 –2017. Medical Doctorate, University of Ottawa, 2011.

Dr. Sameer Kassim - Primary Care Oncology, December 2021

Family Medicine Residency Training Program – University of Manitoba. Post-Doctoral Research Fellow – Mount Sinai Hospital. Working at WRHA – Tick Collaborative Care Service.



2022 - 2023

Professional Development Calendar

Cancer Education for Health Care Professionals

Date	Event	Topic	Location & Time
October 18 & 25, 2022	Training	Cancer Screening and CervixCheck Competency Training Dr. Sarah Kean, Lesley Baldry	Click here for more information and to sign up for the waitlist
October 19, 2022	Community Oncology Rounds	Treatment of Sarcoma Dr. Shantanu Banerji, Dr. Saranya Kakumanu, Dr. David Perrin	8:00-9:00 am Zoom Register here
October 28, 2022	Cases in Cancer	Lymphoma & Adolescents and Young Adults Dr. Pamela Skrabek, Ian Scott	8:00-9:00 am Zoom Register here
November 17 & 18, 2022	Provincial Cancer Care Conference	See CancerCare Manitoba's website for details	Victoria Inn Hotel and Convention Centre
December 7, 2022	Community Oncology Rounds	Systemic Therapies for Lung Cancer Dr. Susan Green	8:00-9:00 am Zoom Register here
January 18, 2023	Cases in Cancer	Liver and Pancreatic Cancer: Journey Throughout Palliative Care Dr. Robin Visser, Stephanie Lelond	8:00-9:00 am Zoom Register here
February 15, 2023	Community Oncology Rounds	Head & Neck Cancer: Speech and Language Pathology Dr. Craig Harlos, Dr. Ahmet Leylek, Leslie Sarchuk	8:00-9:00 am Zoom Register here
February 28 & March 1, 2023	Training	Cancer Screening and CervixCheck Competency Training Dr. Sarah Kean, Lesley Baldry	Click here for more information and to sign up for the waitlist
March 3, 2023	Cases in Cancer	Upper GI Cancers: Stomach Dr. Marianne Krahn	8:00-9:00 am Zoom Register here
April 5, 2023	Interdisciplinary Rounds	Anesthesiology, Surgery, and Oncology	8:00-9:00 am Zoom Link to come
April 26, 2023	Community Oncology Rounds	Liver Cancer Dr. Vallerie Gordon, Dr. Maged Nashed	8:00-9:00 am Zoom Register here
May 5, 2023	Cases in Cancer	Melanoma: Biopsy Techniques, New Treatments, and Follow-Up Dr. Justin Rivard, Dr. Debjani Grenier	8:00-9:00 am Zoom Register here
May 9 & 10, 2023	Training	Cancer Screening and CervixCheck Competency Training Dr. Sarah Kean, Lesley Baldry	Click here for more information and to sign up for the waitlist

To request an In-Office Education session, email CCMBPrimaryCareEducation@cancercare.mb.ca



NOVEMBER 2022 CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS:

PROVINCIAL CANCER CARE CONFERENCE, PROVINCIAL CANCER SURGERY UPDATE, AND LIVING WITH CANCER: A PATIENT AND FAMILY CONFERENCE

Provincial Cancer Care Conference (PCCC)

The PCCC was offered in person on November 17-18, 2022, at the Victoria Inn Hotel and Convention Centre in Winnipeg. Participants from across Manitoba received relevant, evidence-based information from local oncology specialists. The conference was attended by a multidisciplinary audience of healthcare professionals. The conference was sold out with over 269 registrants.

The theme of the conference was Strengthening Equity in Cancer Control Together. The Thursday afternoon workshop focused explicitly on this theme. Dr. Claire Betker, *Scientific Director of the National Collaborating Centre of Determinants of Health*, presented the first workshop on 'Equity in Action: Disrupting the Status Quo' and she was followed by Dr. Sara Goulet, *Lead of the Fly in Program at ONGOMIZWIIN Health Services* and Dr. Linda Diffey, *Indigenous scholar in the Department of Community Health Sciences, University of Manitoba*, who presented a second workshop titled 'Addressing Indigenous Specific Racism in Clinical Practice: Strategies for Optimizing Cancer Care of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples'.

Thursday evening, we welcomed Shannon Gander, Mental Health and Resilience Strategist to present the keynote address 'Thriving at Work: Key Factors for Resilient, Engaged and Connected Teams', covering psychological health and safety in the workplace and actions to support workplace well-being and resilience.

During the Friday morning sessions, there was a focus on genitourinary cancers, including sessions on prostate, kidney and bladder cancers. The remainder of the Friday program featured numerous plenary and breakout sessions regarding various disease groups and tailored to various healthcare professions.

Provincial Cancer Surgery Update (PCSU)

The PCSU was also offered in person, on November 19, 2022, at the Victoria Inn Hotel and Convention Centre. This biannual event was sold out with 50 registrants. Participants included general surgeons performing cancer surgery, residents, and medical oncologists amongst others.

The focus of this year's cancer surgery update was rectal cancer management given that there have been multiple changes in the treatment of this disease in the past several years. A variety of new studies were described and discussed to create consensus on how to best manage patients. Other topics addressed were the treatment of skin cancers, focusing on margins of resection and follow-up protocols; lymph node biopsies, when and how-to biopsy; and immunotherapy reactions and the implications of these for surgery.

Living with Cancer: A Patient and Family Conference

Living with Cancer: A Patient and Family Conference was a virtual conference held November 25th and 26th, on the online conference platform 'Airmeeet'. This was CCMB's first-ever conference for patients and their loved ones, aimed at enhancing patient engagement and access to information. Over 350 patients and family members registered to this conference. Over 200 joined us for the event.

Friday evening featured a keynote presentation from Catherine Wreford, *Cancer Warrior and title holder of The Amazing Race Canada*. Catherine's keynote, titled 'Cancer Dancer- How to overcome what you think is impossible' explored her personal story, her journey with cancer, and had key takeaways such as the importance of advocating for oneself and asking for help, and how those with cancer can still strive to achieve things which may seem 'impossible'. We were excited to have over 140 viewers on Friday evening!

The Saturday program featured a diversity of session topics and presenters, including sessions on cancer treatments, pain management, complementary therapies, & medical cannabis, nutrition, precision oncology, a patient panel, and psychosocial considerations such as anxiety about recurrence, identity, & spirituality. A feature of the virtual conference was also the opportunity for attendees to visit virtual booths where they could watch videos and access digital resources. The booths were hosted by various CCMB and Shared Health programs, and gave attendees the opportunity to learn more about services available to them at their own pace and from their homes.

We would like to offer a heartfelt THANK YOU to all healthcare providers, CCMB staff and community who contributed to the success of these three events.

Stay tuned for more information on upcoming educational events for 2023!



Dr. Sri Navaratnam and speaker Dr. Joel Gingerich at the Provincial CancerCare Conference 2022



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