

Department of Medical Oncology and Hematology (DMOH)



Dr. Leonard Minuk

Department Head, CancerCare Manitoba,
Medical Oncology and Hematology (DMOH)
Section Head, Hematology & Oncology,
Max Rady College of Medicine

DMOH is the largest medical department at CCMB, consisting of 23 medical oncologists, 20 hematologists, and ten administrative support staff. CCMB provides access to cutting-edge treatments and services through outpatient facilities at various locations, including Health Sciences Centre (HSC), St. Boniface Hospital (SBH), Victoria General Hospital (VGH), Grace Hospital, and the Western Manitoba Cancer Centre in Brandon (WMCC). Additionally, they offer inpatient consultative services in hematology, apheresis, and medical oncology at HSC and SBH, along with managing the inpatient Leukemia and Blood & Marrow Transplant ward at HSC.

Over the years, patient care in cancer and blood disorders has significantly improved but has become increasingly complex and challenging. As the department head, one of Dr. Leonard Minuk's main responsibilities is planning the necessary physician complement to oversee treatments while ensuring safe and efficient delivery within the overall system.

Dr. Minuk envisions CCMB expanding its services further with a continued focus on delivering quality care closer to home. CCMB

has successfully established services in various locations through its Community Oncology Program, and the recent addition of a medical oncologist in Brandon, Dr. Brady Anderson, is a significant milestone.

The department aims to incorporate many new and innovative therapies in the near future. CCMB is on the verge of introducing CAR-T (chimeric antigen receptor T cell) therapy in Manitoba, a groundbreaking immunotherapy technique with immense potential to transform cancer treatment outcomes. This type of immunotherapy is currently used to treat hematologic malignancies such as non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and acute lymphoblastic leukemia, but there are CAR-T products in development for other types of cancer in the future that present immense potential for transforming cancer treatment outcomes.

Research is the backbone of CCMB and DMOH. Engaging in a wide range of studies, the physicians contribute to local, national, and international scientific discoveries. Physicians in the group are the recipients of local, national, and international peer-reviewed grant funding, are successful in publishing their research in high-impact medical journals and are invited to present these findings at international academic

meetings. All of the department's physicians regularly attend academic meetings and use this science-informed knowledge to introduce leading-edge treatments in Manitoba, ensuring patients receive the best possible care. When asked, Dr. Minuk said, "The balance between providing compassionate care to patients and dealing with the emotional toll that comes with treating cancer daily is something that all physicians struggle with. As compassionate people, it is difficult to witness pain, suffering, or tragedy and not let it consume you. It is critical to focus on our successes and recognize that success can take many forms. Traditional successes, like putting someone's cancer into remission, are easy to recognize. Other types of success can be just as important, being an empathetic ear to a patient's struggle, relieving pain and symptoms, and providing comprehensive counseling about treatment, prognosis and expectations. In my experience, our patients often express a great deal of gratitude toward us, and this gratitude goes a long way toward filling our buckets."

Before taking on a leadership role, Dr. Minuk would often see ways the system could improve if their workplace were more efficiently organized. While deriving great satisfaction from patient care, he came to the realization that his impact was limited to the individuals directly in front of him. This awareness and desire to improve the system motivated him to embrace a position in medical leadership alongside his primary responsibilities of direct patient care. Dr. Minuk and the department's dedication have steered the way toward delivering exceptional care to patients battling cancer and blood disorders. Through compassionate care and an unyielding commitment to research and advancement, they are transforming cancer care in Manitoba. Their vision for the future holds great promise, inspiring hope and optimism for a brighter and healthier tomorrow.