

CancerTalk

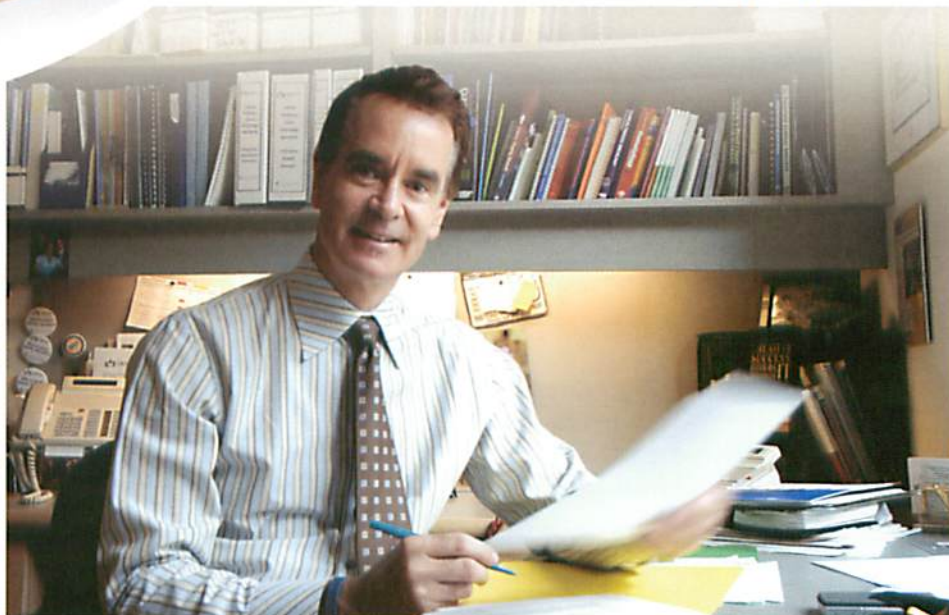
Connecting with Manitoba's Health Professionals *Issue 1, Spring 2006*

Better Connections Improve Care

Since fall 2003, CancerCare Manitoba's Urban Primary Care Oncology Network (UPCON) has been building connections between oncologists and family doctors to improve continuity of cancer care for patients in Winnipeg. Now in its final year, the Health Canada-funded project is aiming to build the foundation of new ways of providing seamless, integrated care linking specialists and family physicians.

"The incidence and prevalence of cancer is increasing far faster than the supply of cancer specialists," says Dr. Jeff Sisler, Director of Primary Care Oncology. "The role of every family physician as the lynchpin of coordinated care and supporting patients and their families is vital."

UPCON focuses on 12 group family practice clinics and community health centres in Winnipeg. A main priority for the project has been improving the way information is shared between family doctors and CancerCare specialists. Manitoba's unique cancer-specific electronic health record system formed the basis for the program. Prior to UPCON, these electronic records were already in use at all community hospitals and at the 14 rural sites of CancerCare Manitoba's Community Cancer Programs Network (CCPN).



Director of Primary Oncology, Dr. Jeff Sisler is the face of UPCON – an initiative designed to improve information sharing between family physicians and CancerCare Manitoba specialists.

"The missing piece has always been family doctors, and that's what we added," says Dr. Sisler. He notes that the nurses, social workers and other health-care providers also have access to this information, encouraging continuity in all aspects of health care.

"For us, UPCON participation means better care, better flow and better efficiency," says Dr. Grant Goldberg, one of eight physicians on staff at the Mount Carmel Clinic in Winnipeg's Point Douglas neighbourhood.

"Delays, ambiguities and lack of clarity about who's doing what are frustrating for doctors and patients in many areas of the health care system. UPCON presented a great opportunity to address the fragmentation in cancer care and try to make a difference," says Dr. Goldberg.

He adds that networking with

CancerCare Manitoba "has taken away some of the mystique" around the organization by encouraging communication and consultation between family doctors and cancer specialists.

UPCON provides networking opportunities through monthly sessions and annual events. "It's about getting them in the building, and building relationships," says Dr. Sisler, adding knowledgeable, well-supported family physicians with the expertise to navigate a complex system can dramatically improve timely access and quality of care.

The monthly sessions with CancerCare Manitoba staff are attended by physicians representing each of the 12 clinics. Annual events include a full-day program with all the staff at UPCON clinics, as well as physicians from CCPN sites in rural Manitoba who participate through the MBTelehealth network.

Announcements

CCPN 26th Annual Educational Conference

The Community Cancer Programs Network (CCPN) is holding their 26th Annual Educational Conference for health care professionals working with cancer patients, on May 4 - 6, 2006 in Neepawa, Manitoba. The program has been created to meet the learning needs of CCP Staff, however, non-CCP staff are also welcome. To find out how to register or to print a copy of the Conference Program Brochure and Schedule, please go to <http://www.cancercare.mb.ca/Conference/>.

For more information contact Shana Robertson, Chair, 2006 Conference Committee at (204)787-1347 or shana.robertson@cancercare.mb.ca

WATCH for our new web site section, "Information for Health Professionals" being launched SOON at www.cancercare.mb.ca

Training Opportunities in Cancer Care

The CancerCare Manitoba Foundation is pleased to offer two scholarships to allow family physicians and primary care pediatricians interested in the care of patients with cancer or blood disorders to pursue two weeks of training relating to the cancer care continuum. Each scholar will receive \$8000 and a book allowance and will be eligible for Mainpro-C credits. One rural and one Winnipeg physician will be selected.

For more information please contact Dr. Jeff Sisler, Director of Primary Care Oncology at 787-3595 or jeff.sisler@cancercare.mb.ca

Applications close **June 5, 2006**

Seen your family doctor lately?

That's the tagline of the 2006 Urban Primary Care Oncology Network (UPCON) promotion at CancerCare Manitoba! In our poster campaign we're focusing on four key ways that the Family Physician (FP) can help!

- ✔ Manage the patient's other medical problems
- ✔ Assess new problems in a timely way
- ✔ Support the patient and family as they cope with cancer
- ✔ Take charge of follow-up when treatment is done

Cancer patients in treatment and early follow-up benefit from regular contact with their family doctor, but we know that the intensity of cancer treatment can erode that relationship. Surveys show that less than half of cancer patients have follow-ups booked with their FP.

Through this promotion, we're encouraging CCMB patients to stay connected with their FP. Just as importantly, we're reminding CCMB doctors, nurses and other professionals of the importance of the FP in the shared care of the patient!

Editor

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Full house at the UPCON symposium

2nd Annual UPCON Symposium

On January 20, 2006 the UPCON and CCMB hosted the 2nd annual full day educational session for family physicians and primary health care providers, entitled "Follow-Up Care of Cancer Patients: How to help when treatment is complete".

Presentations by a variety of CCMB experts on follow-up issues for the major cancer sites, as well as presentations about fertility, sexuality, and psychosocial transitions in follow-up care and childhood cancers were a part of the program. The day was capped off by tours of the Radiation Therapy suite and the Prostate Centre.

Family physicians will be looking after more and more cancer patients in follow-up in the years to come, and we hope this kind of day gave the information needed to do a great job.



Dr. Ross at the symposium