

Nominee Information:

1568

Name: Dr. John Spinelli

Title: Vice President, Population Oncology

Organization: BC Cancer

Project / Group
Name (If Applicable): Indigenous Cancer Strategy

Address:

Email:

Nominator Information:

Name: Dr. Malcolm Moore

Title: President

Organization: BC Cancer

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Collaborative Solutions:

1) Provide a brief overview of the project and/or team.

The Indigenous Cancer Strategy, the first of its kind in BC, aims to improve First Nations and Métis cancer outcomes by addressing all steps of the cancer journey, from prevention through to survivorship and end-of-life, and aims to support the enabling factors of partnership and knowledge development. The strategy provides a comprehensive road map for partner organizations to work together on in alignment with existing and emerging structures and opportunities, and invites all health system and community organizations to support. The partner organizations that developed the strategy are: First Nations Health Authority, Métis Nation BC, BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres and BC Cancer. This partnered approach is unique in the province, and the country, as it allows First Nations and Métis communities to lead changes in cancer care according to First Nations and Métis priorities. It provides space and opportunity for a diversity of Indigenous perspectives to govern implementation, and ensures outcomes are achieved in a collaborative fashion. The strategy is the culmination and continuation of each of the partner organizations working together over the past three years. This work included engaging with First Nations and Métis cancer patients and families to better understand the Indigenous cancer journey, and building organizational capacity to understand best practices in supporting Indigenous health and cancer control approaches.

Johnna Sparrow, First Nations cancer survivor said "...our communities are used to being disempowered and to losing battles. The Indigenous Cancer Strategy has the ability to turn that around. It can create a culture of empowerment for Indigenous people to not only survive cancer but to thrive against cancer."

2) What is the overall goal of the project and/or team? What problem or challenge is being solved and/or what need is being addressed?

The Indigenous cancer strategy has seven goals to improve the Indigenous cancer journey. Strategy goals include (1) Indigenous communities guide cancer care services that align with Indigenous priorities through internal and external partnerships and collaboration;

- (2) Indigenous people experience fewer new cases of cancer through healthy living, wellness and supportive environments;
- (3) Indigenous communities prevent and detect cancer earlier by participating in culturally safe colon, cervical and breast cancer screening programs;
- (4) Indigenous people, families and communities receive high quality and culturally safe cancer care and support;
- (5) the wellness of Indigenous cancer survivors is supported throughout their entire survivorship journey;
- (6) the end-of-life journeys, perspectives and wishes of Indigenous peoples are supported, as well as the wellness of their families and communities; and
- (7) Indigenous cancer journeys are well documented and understood. These strategic goals were informed by community engagement and research activities.

Feedback gathered from Indigenous cancer patients and family forums highlighted the need to improve cultural safety in cancer care services. This included the need to improve: transitions in care between Regional Health Authority and BC Cancer programs and services; the health literacy of health care providers in being able to discuss traditional perspectives on health and wellness; and relationship-based care to include supports that extend beyond the biomedical services provided by Western medicine. Through research, it was found that First Nations communities are more at risk for some of the most commonly diagnosed cancers, including colon and cervical cancer. When looking at survival rates, it was found that First Nations people were less likely to survive cancer than non-First Nations people. These are concerning results that reinforce stories heard from patients and families. The Strategy goals directly address the disparities identified through knowledge development activities.

3) How has the project and/or team demonstrated excellence, leadership, innovation and leading practices? Has it inspired other? Will it add value across the health care system? Please provide specific examples.

The strategy is innovative in that it took a two-pronged approach to its development: that of the Western model of strategic development combined with the Indigenous cultural practice of community engagement. This approach allowed for this work to be heard and felt by both Western and Indigenous systems and organizations. By respecting the needs of all systems, organizations, and parties involved, the Strategy provides a clear path forward that encourages all participants to be leaders. This includes patients, families, communities, health care providers and organizations, and it presents participants as equal partners in improving Indigenous cancer outcomes.

Hon. Minister of Health Adrian Dix said of the Strategy: "This strategy is among the newest of its kind, and a crucial step in addressing cancer survival disparities among Indigenous people in British Columbia...It's not about us deciding what is best but about us learning what is best, following what is best, implementing what is best with full involvement from First Nations people.

"With the release of the Strategy, Regional Health Authorities have been incorporating actions into existing and emerging regional cancer plans. In addition, agencies within the Provincial Health Services Authority (besides BC Cancer) have reached out to support actions that align with their areas of expertise. This is proving that the Indigenous Cancer Strategy is already adding value across the entire health care system. The innovative approach taken to develop and now implement the Strategy is overcoming jurisdictional and mandated barriers and gaps in care experienced by all cancer patients and their families. We are now seeing the coming together of health care systems and partners behind a specific health issue like never before.

4) Has the project and/or team achieved its goals? How has care for individuals been improved? Please provide specific examples of results.

The Indigenous Cancer Strategy is already achieving goals and improving care for First Nations and Métis patients and families. For example:

- First Nations and Métis patient and family support booklets have been developed that feature tips, reflective questions, and supportive stories from First Nations and Métis cancer patients;

- BC Cancer has committed to implementing navigator positions to support Indigenous cancer patients and families in navigating community, Regional Health Authority and BC Cancer services;



- The Ministry of Health and FNHA's Letter of Mutual Accountability includes cancer and implementation of the Indigenous Cancer Strategy as a priority; •The procurement and installation of First Nations and Métis art in each BC Cancer regional centre now creates a welcoming environment for patients and families when receiving care;
- First Nations cervical and breast cancer screening promotional videos have been developed that speak directly to First Nations communities and people contemplating screening;
- An FNHA Chair in Cancer and Wellness at the UBC has been established, which is a \$3 million commitment by both FNHA and UBC to support knowledge development activities;
- BC Cancer and FNHA have published research titled "Cancer in First Nations people living in British Columbia, Canada: an analysis of incidence and survival from 1993 to 2010";
- BC Cancer and FNHA regional teams, along with Regional Health Authorities, are building relationships and sharing existing patient supports; and •Information sessions have been held at all BC Cancer centres that focused on the concepts of cultural safety, and promoted PHSA's San'yas Indigenous cultural safety training.

These achievements are significant in such a short amount of time. However, a lot of work still remains. With the momentum already underway, the Indigenous Cancer Strategy is being seen as a best practice to improve culturally safe cancer care for First Nations and Métis people.