

# UHN CANCER EXPERIENCE PROGRAM NEWSLETTER



## SPRING PROGRAM UPDATES

Welcome to this edition of the Cancer Experience Program (CEP) Newsletter, which we are pleased to release in recognition of Patient Experience Week (April 25-29)! The last couple of months have seen many stresses on our healthcare system and cancer care, and the aim of the CEP to support the well-being of our patients, as well as caregivers and staff, has never felt more urgent. In this edition, we provide updates on some of this important work.

A new initiative we are pleased to introduce is the Young Leaders Cancer Experience Innovation Challenge. This challenge was launched to support early/mid-career members of the PM Young Leaders (YL) Program in leading multidisciplinary projects to improve the cancer experience. Members of the PM Elders – a body of distinguished past leaders of PM – were engaged in adjudicating which applications were most promising to achieve this goal and promote creative collaboration. This unique partnership between the YL and Elders brings together new and experienced talent to promote positive change at PM. The quality and innovative nature of these applications was uniformly exceptional, although only one could be funded in this competition. We open our newsletter by announcing the inaugural winners and their project below.

### IN THIS ISSUE:

---

YOUNG LEADERS CANCER EXPERIENCE INNOVATION CHALLENGE

---

PATIENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

---

GRAND CHALLENGE PROJECT FEATURE

---

NEW IN AMBIENCE

---

STAFF WELL-BEING COVID-19 SUPPORT

# Young Leaders Cancer Experience Innovation Challenge

*Award Recipients: Drs. Christian Schulz-Quach, Gilla Shapiro, Jennifer Croke, & Samantha Scime on behalf of Sexual and Gender Diversity in Cancer Care Working Group @ PMH/UHN*

This project will develop an interactive educational module for healthcare providers, administrative staff, and trainees to improve sensitivity to sexual and gender minority patients and their chosen families. This project emerged in response to evidence that healthcare providers often do not feel knowledgeable or comfortable with enquiry about patient pronouns, gender, sexual orientation, and relationship identity. This discomfort, in turn, affects the experience of cancer care of patients from sexual and gender minority communities. The interactive module developed by this YL team will focus on pronouns, gender, sexual orientation, and relationship identity in a patient-centered, inclusive, and engaging way. Established curriculum development methodology will guide implementation and a research evaluation will identify the effectiveness of the module.



From top left clockwise: Christian Schulz-Quach, Gilla Shapiro, Jennifer Croke, Samantha Scime

## Patient Experience Committee

*Alyssa Macedo, Quality and Patient Experience Manager*

The aim of The Patient and Family Experience Committee is to help the cancer program achieve “Exceptional Experiences Always”. To achieve this aim, this Committee has utilized patient experience data from Your Voice Matters (YVM) to guide improvements in the Cancer Program. YVM is a survey designed to collect information from patients about their experience in the outpatient clinics. YVM is a validated real-time patient reported experience measure (PREM) that asks about the patient experience before, during, and after their appointment. This confidential survey is emailed to patients who have visited an outpatient clinic in the past three months. It is offered in multiple languages and takes approximately 5 minutes to complete. So far, the response rate of 15% has generated 1500 surveys each month. Our Patient Experience-Quality Liaison, Shay Kittuppanantharajah



BScN, RN [above], in collaboration with The Patient and Family Experience Committee is analysing these data to ensure that key areas for improvement are identified. There are multiple initiatives underway based on these results, in alignment with the PM Strategy, that include improvements in clinic wait-times, patient-provider communication, and navigation program development. For access to the latest quarterly report, please contact Alyssa Macedo.

## Grand Challenge Project Feature

*Drs. Janet Papadakos & Meredith Giuliani*

Informal (family, friend) caregivers are central members of the cancer care team and essential for the delivery of high quality cancer care, with such critical roles as patient advocacy, care provision, and facilitation of care transitions. Their role became even more important with the restrictions in access to cancer care during the COVID-19 pandemic, and they have now been designated as ‘essential care partners’. However, despite the central role that caregivers are called upon to play in cancer care, they often receive little direct support or training. The new Princess Margaret (PM) Caregiver Support & Skills Program is an online digital education program that was built to address this gap and to provide education on a comprehensive set of caregiver needs. The digital format overcomes the limitations of in-person teaching, such as limited reach and engagement,



time constraints, travel, and out of pocket costs. The PM Caregiver Support and Skills Program was launched in November 2021 and is designed to improve the experience of patients and caregivers, while equipping them to be prepared and proactive in cancer care. An evaluation is underway, which was funded in part by the Princess Margaret Cancer Experience Human Touch in Cancer Grand Challenge.

Visit the program today! <https://pmcaregiver.ca>

## New in Ambience

*Cancer Experience team and the Cancer and the Arts Working Group*

### Symphony for the Soul

Directed by our Cancer and the Arts Working Group, the CEP has partnered with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO) to launch the Symphonies for the Soul series. This series brings TSO musicians to the cancer centre to play music to elevate the spirit and to promote calmness and comfort for PM's patients and staff. In March 2022, this series was brought to the 2B radiation floor. Violinist, Jenny Thompson, played a variety of pieces ranging from classical music to excerpts from well-known movies. The CEP and TSO are encouraged by the highly positive responses from patients, caregivers, healthcare providers, and support from hospital leadership. We look forward to continuing this series as we seek to transform the ambience of PM.



### New Artwork by Steve Driscoll

Last year, the CEP was introduced to renowned Toronto artist Steve Driscoll, whose style captures immersive and colour-saturated depictions of landscape. The Cancer and the Arts committee at PM, comprised of patient partners, volunteers, hospital leadership and staff, reviewed his piece, "The wind does not move in one direction", and unanimously approved its installation at PM. There was consensus that this piece is aesthetically pleasing and promoted feelings of comfort and calmness. "The wind does not move in one direction" was installed this past February near the Myhal Blood Collection/ECG lab wall. We look forward to hearing more responses of patients, families and staff to this installation.



## Staff Well-Being COVID-19 Support

*Cancer Experience team & Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation*

The most recent omicron wave of the COVID-19 pandemic has produced new and continuing challenges for our healthcare system and staff. With guidance from PM Clinical Directors and generous support from the Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation, we participated in the provision of urgent support for our onsite staff. In January, we delivered 150 sets of UHN branded and unbranded scrubs, particularly with our redeployed staff in mind. In addition, care packages of beverages and snacks were prepared for all onsite staff at the hospital and OPG buildings. To all of our front line staff, we deeply appreciate your dedication and commitment to your patients and team members in these most difficult of circumstances. Our program remains committed to supporting staff well-being at PM, and look forward to providing updates in the near future.

### Thank you to our Redeployed Staff

In response to the call for redeployment, these radiation therapists all volunteered so they could help out their colleagues. Below are Angela Cashell, Melanie Padiachy, Vickie Kong, Andrea Shessel, Kelly Guo (left to right) in their new scrubs; and Jill Isabelle and Vanessa Wan (not pictured). We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all staff who volunteered alongside them.

