



2021-22 ANNUALREPORT

DEPARTMENT OF SUPPORTIVE CARE











MESSAGE FROM THE **DEPARTMENT HEAD**

It is my pleasure to present to you the Department of Supportive Care Annual Report for fiscal year 2021–2022. The Department of Supportive Care (DSC) is an interdisciplinary department that spans across all sites of the University Health Network (UHN), administered through the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. The DSC consists of three divisions – Palliative Care, Psychosocial Oncology, and Cancer Rehabilitation & Survivorship. Together, we are dedicated to supporting patients and their families to have the highest quality of life possible, throughout and beyond the disease course.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have continued to adapt our clinical practice to support patients both in person and virtually, while also supporting the well-being of clinical staff and teams. Our coordinated response has demonstrated what we can achieve when we all come together for a common cause. We will continue to examine our tools and processes to ensure we are providing the highest quality of care.

This year, the DSC saw over twenty thousand patients, trained 252 learners, and published 169 peer-reviewed publications. The words "thank you" are not enough to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to the DSC team, the Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation, the UHN Foundation, and our community partners for their unwavering support during another extraordinary year.

Warm regards,

Dr. Camilla Zimmermann, MD, PhD, FRCPCHead, Department of Supportive Care

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DEPARTMENT **OVERVIEW**

The Department of Supportive Care (DSC) is a multidisciplinary department that spans across all sites of the University Health Network (UHN). The DSC consists of three divisions - Palliative Care, Psychosocial Oncology, and Cancer Rehabilitation and Survivorship. The department is guided by its multidisciplinary Leadership Team and Steering Committee. Together, we are dedicated to supporting patients with advanced disease and their families to have the highest quality of life possible.

The DSC is dedicated to continually adapting and advancing the care and services we provide to patients at the University Health Network. Our Strategic Roadmap to 2024 outlines our plan towards achieving new heights while navigating the changing world around us. As a world-leading program for supporting patients to improve their quality of life, we are committed to advancing the following priority areas through our 2020-2024 Strategic Plan:

- Integrate across our department, UHN and external partners to improve the patient experience.
- Standardize our care models and pathways.
- Advance academic supportive care by expanding research and education programs.
- Establish a culture of wellbeing for the Department of Supportive Care.
- Improve the patient experience through technology and virtual care.

Trust Our Vision

We meaningfully improve the lives of patients and families living with cancer and other serious illnesses locally and worldwide.

Believe in Our Mission

We will provide and promote high quality supportive care for all patients and their families throughout the course of illness, through excellence in clinical care, research, and education.

- >>> Palliative Care
- >>> Psychosocial Oncolog
- >>> Cancer Rehabilitation & Survivorship

Department Leadership



Camilla ZimmermannDepartment Head



Madeline Li Co-Lead, Psychosocial Oncology



Robin Forbes Social Work Co-Lead, Psychosocial Oncology



Jennifer Jones Director, Cancer Rehabilitation & Survivorship



Breffni Hannon Lead, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre Palliative Care



Ebru Kaya Lead, Toronto General Hospital Palliative Care



Warren Lewin Lead, Toronto Western Hospital Palliative Care

SteeringCommittee



Camilla Zimmermann Department Head



Aleksandra Chafranskaia Manager, Cancer Rehabilitation & Survivorship



Caitlin Doherty Manager, Supportive Care



Mary ElliottWell-Being Lead,
Supportive Care



Paige Fillier Senior Development Officer, PMCF



Robin Forbes Social Work Co-Lead, Psychosocial Oncology



Breffni Hannon Lead, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre Palliative Care



Jennifer Jones Director, Cancer Rehabilitation & Survivorship



Anet Julius
Director of
Professional
Practice, Princess
Margaret



Thomas Kais-Prial Research Manager, Supportive Care



Ebru Kaya Lead, Toronto General Hospital Palliative Care



Warren Lewin Lead, Toronto Western Hospital Palliative Care



Madeline Li Co-Lead, Psychosocial Oncology



Myann Marks-AitkenProject Manager,
Supportive Care



Lesley Moody
Clinical Director,
Solid Tumour
& Ambulatory,
Supportive Care,
Gattuso Rapid
Diagnostic Centre



Athena
Nicholas
Education
Specialist,
Supportive Care

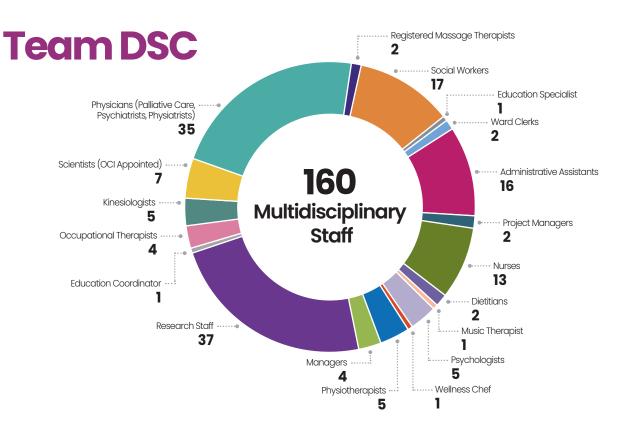


Gary Rodin
Director of Global
Institute of
Psychosocial,
Palliative & End-ofLife Care (GIPPEC)
Cancer Experience,
Princess Margaret



Tanis Walker Director, Major Gifts, PMCF

2021 THE YEAR IN NUMBERS



Research



Active Research Grants with DSC Pl or Co-Pl



Active Research Grant Collaborations



Peer-Reviewed **Publications**

\$9,824,598

Total New Research Funding

\$3,899,934

Total New Research Funding with DSC PI or Co-PI (9 Grants)

\$3,422,570

Total New Research Funding Collaborations (12 Grants)

Education

Education & Research Rounds Hosted

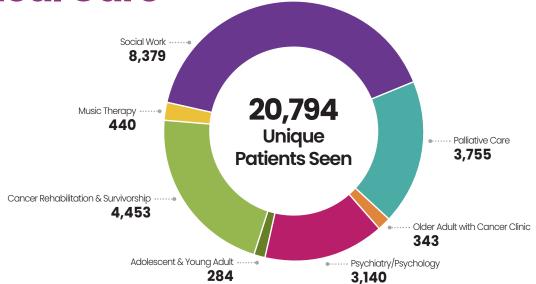
Undergraduate Students

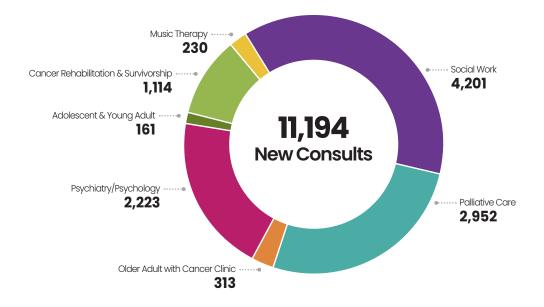
Graduate Students

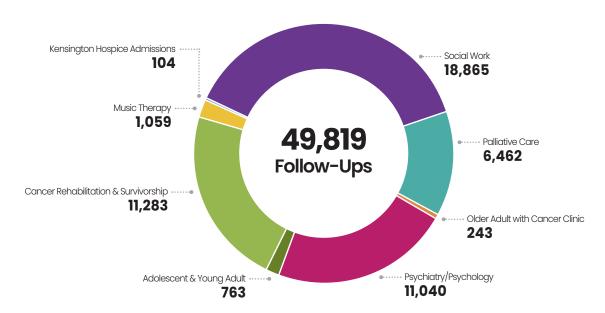
Post-Graduate Students

Continuing **Education Learners**

Clinical Care







CLINICAL CARE

>> Palliative Care

The Palliative Care Program at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre has experienced unprecedented growth in inpatient and outpatient referrals in 2021-2022. Occupancy levels on the Harold and Shirley Lederman Unit increased in 2021-2022 after a pandemic-related lull the previous fiscal year, and our average length of stay decreased from 11 to 8 days. For our inpatient consultation service, referrals increased to a record high of 850, and our team also assumed Most Responsible Physician care for up to 5 patients on the solid tumour units to relieve pressures on the oncology teams. Virtual care options in the outpatient clinic allowed us to support over 5500 visits in 2021; calls to our clinic nurse telehealth line also reached record numbers. Despite the intensity of these volume increases, our team did not grow in size, and all team members - including support partners, administrative staff, allied health, learners, nurses and physicians – deserve credit for working together to continue to provide exceptional patient care under these challenging circumstances.

Older Adults with Cancer Clinic

The Older Adults with Cancer Clinic (OACC) at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre identifies the unique needs of older people with cancer. The goals of the OACC clinical team are to help their patients maintain function, independence, and quality of life as much as possible before, during or after treatment as well as avoid overor under-treatment of their cancer. Over the last year, the clinic has expanded to 3 halfdays per week. Dr. Shabbir Alibhai and colleagues recently analyzed the economic impact of a geriatric oncology clinic using detailed costing data over 2 years of the OACC clinic. Published in Cancers (Basel), the analysis found that geriatric assessment saved approximately \$7,000 per new patient seen in the clinic.

Palliative Care Is the Umbrella, Not the Rain

Drs. Camilla Zimmermann and **Jean Mathews** (former fellow) created a communication aid for oncologists to guide conversations about palliative care with patients and their families. Published in JAMA Oncology, they proposed that early palliative care may be presented metaphorically as an umbrella to have at hand in case of rain. Oftentimes, the umbrella of palliative care is confounded with the rain of symptoms, complications, and distress that tend to occur during progressive cancer. The umbrella works best if we provide it to patients before the rain begins - do not wait until the patient gets drenched!

A Late palliative care referra









B Early palliative care referral









Palliative Care Highlights from...

Toronto General



The Palliative Care Team at the Toronto General Hospital (TGH) (Site Lead: Dr. Ebru Kaya) is the largest non-cancer outpatient program in Canada and continues to grow. The patients that come to our clinics have complex

symptoms and require palliative care planning. In addition to improving symptom control and quality of life, our clinics facilitate advance care planning and avoidance of emergency room visits and acute hospital admissions.

Several clinics are based on an integrated model that utilizes existing clinic structure within the non-palliative care ambulatory services, including for treatment of pulmonary hypertension, pre- and post-lung transplants, heart failure, chronic kidney disease, chronic liver disease, and non-cancer CALM therapy. A Rapid Access Palliative Care Clinic has recently been established, as well as expansion of the Cardiac Palliative Care Program to include patients with congenital heart disease. A Palliative Care Peripheral Vascular Disease Clinic is currently being established. We are also excited about expanding our Solid Organ Transplant Palliative Care Clinics to include patients listed for heart, liver, and kidney transplantation.

In addition to providing timely access to excellent care for patients and their families, the palliative care clinics at TGH provide a platform for research on non-malignant palliative care, as well as opportunities for mentoring and training clinical staff. The Palliative Care Team regularly trains residents and faculty from across Canada and abroad wishing to develop their skills in non-cancer palliative care. An innovative longitudinal curriculum for palliative medicine residents has recently been established to teach them core concepts of CALM therapy.

Over the past year, the team has been highly active in scholarly work focused on understanding the needs of non-cancer populations, including patients with COVID-19, resulting in high impact publications and presentations at national and international conferences.

Toronto General OP VAD Pulmonary HT CKD Dialysis Congenital Bridging



Abdu Sharkawy @ @Sharka... · 3h · · · · Started each of last 3 days telling a patient they have end-stage metastatic lung cancer. Never gets easier. I have immense respect & gratitude for my palliative care colleagues who give dignity & comfort to these patients. Thank you so much.



17 30





Abdu Sharkawy ② @Sharka... · 2h ···· Special shout out to @DrMarchington, Drs. Haley Draper, Nadine Gebara, Warren Lewin, Melissa Li, Archna Patel for being such incredible supports with Pall Care @UHN to me, others. You are my heroes of humanity. @DeiselKain we miss you!

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Toronto Western



In response to need during the pandemic and to improve serious illness care for patients and families at the Toronto Western Hospital (TWH), the Palliative Care Team at TWH (Site Lead: **Dr. Warren Lewin**) launched two

complementary pilot programs. A dedicated social worker was newly recruited to the interdisciplinary team; simultaneously, 3 dedicated palliative care beds were established, enabling patients to be admitted directly by the specialist Palliative Care Team at TWH. Together, these novel initiatives led to a 20% decrease in in-hospital deaths, a more rapid discharge process, an increase in supportive and grief counseling, a standardized approach to arranging family meetings, and enhanced hospital awareness of the TWH Palliative Care Program. Informal feedback from patients, families, key stakeholders, and teams has been overwhelmingly positive and the palliative care team is hopeful to leverage this success to continue these services and expand the team's reach throughout the hospital..

>> Psychosocial Oncology

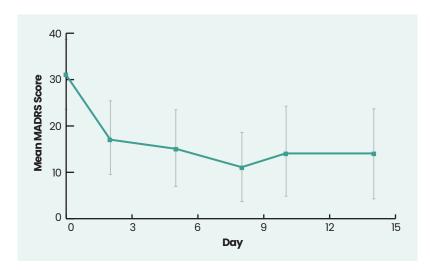
The year 2021 laid the groundwork for many new interventions and services which will be fully realized in 2022. Included among these are the creation of a dedicated Post-Treatment Psychosocial Oncology Support Clinic for women with breast cancer, a new focus on Sexual and Gender Diversity (SGD) education for all Princess Margaret staff on how to be more aware and inclusive in their practices, and launch of a new Sexual Health Clinic available to patients with all cancer types at Princess Margaret. We have also continued the unique work of our Cancer Caregiver Clinics, as well as our Managing Cancer and Living Meaningfully (CALM) clinics for patients with advanced disease. Innovation in the delivery of CALM this year have included international expansion through the Global CALM Project, development of an iCALM app, and a book launch of "Managing Cancer and Living Meaningfully: An Evidence-Based Intervention for Cancer Patients and Their Caregivers", authored by **Drs. Gary Rodin** and **Sarah Hales** and published by Oxford University Press.

Successful Completion of **INKeD-PC Trial**



In 2021, a major clinical accomplishment for the Psychosocial Oncology Program was the completion of the Phase II - Open-label Clinical Trial of Intranasal Ketamine for Depression in Patients With Cancer Receiving Palliative Care (INKeD-PC) Study. This clinical trial led by Dr. Madeline Li

demonstrated that intranasal ketamine is a safe, effective, and rapidly acting treatment for depression in patients with advanced cancer. Average Montgomery-Asberg Depression Rating Scale (MADRS) scores showed significantly less severe depression within 24 hours of the first dose, and the benefit lasted for at least 2 weeks. Based on these strong results, ketamine was added to the hospital formulary so that it is now available to all patients who need it as part of usual care.



Adolescents & Young Adult Program

Over 2021-2022, the switch to virtual care due to the COVID-19 pandemic has been pivotal in enhancing care for the adolescents and young adult (AYA) patient population at the Princess Margaret. Virtual appointments have allowed for increased flexibility for receiving support in managing the many needs that are unique to this transitional age group. Furthermore, shifting the monthly AYA meet-ups to a virtual platform and optimizing social media to advertise this event has increased attendance to over 10 patients per meet-up, with many wanting to return to subsequent sessions. Having the opportunity to join the meetings virtually has allowed for increased engagement in the comfort of their own homes. and for the opportunity to stay anonymous while still connecting with others and receiving the support they need. The development and success of the AYA program was documented in a peer-reviewed publication.

The Integrated AYA Palliative Care and Psychiatry Clinic is co-led by a psychiatrist and a palliative care physician. This innovative clinic continues to support the physical and psychosocial care of adolescents and young adults with advanced cancer. A publication in Cancers (Basel) in 2021 documented the high burden of palliative and psychosocial symptoms of this population, as well as the success of the clinic in improving symptom scores and end-of-life planning.

>> Cancer Rehabilitation & Survivorship

The Cancer Rehabilitation and Survivorship (CRS) Program continues to extend and expand its reach and deliver innovative high-quality care to patients at the Princess Margaret. In 2021-2022, we saw a 24% increase in new patient referrals with over 1,500 new patients and the delivery of over 12,000 patient visits. We saw increasing referrals from all disease sites. While wait times for initial assessments have risen to an average of 9 weeks, we instituted an urgent referral pathway and patients are typically seen within 3 weeks.

CRS appointments were delivered using hybrid models, including in-person and virtual appointments. We have also integrated virtual classes and e-modules to support patient teaching. Furthermore, we have enhanced collaborations with programs such as the Adolescents and Young Adult (AYA) Program, Palliative Care Program, and Cancer Pain Program. Of note, AYA referrals have increased over 80% in past 5 years. Our structured multi-dimensional Cancer Rehab and Exercise (CaRE) Program has continued to evolve and expand with the revision of the CaRE@Home e-modules and the development of the CaRE Program for alloBMT patients. CaRE-Advanced Cancer continued with online group delivery due to the COVID-19 pandemic.





I could speak at great lengths of my gratitude for The Cancer Rehab and Survivorship Program at Princess Margaret. This program was an essential part of my recovery from chemoradiation treatment and monumental in shaping my attitude towards growth, self-acceptance, and kindness during a very difficult time in my life.

I am thankful for the informative online modules, the weekly SMART goal-setting activities, and the reminder to move my body to get me physically, mentally, and spiritually back to normal and thriving post-treatment... Thank you so very much, I wouldn't be the same person without you.

Olivia S.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

In alignment with the purpose, values, and principles of the University Health Network (UHN), the Department of Supportive Care (DSC) strives for excellence in education, to further the provision and promotion of high-quality supportive care for patients and their families throughout the course of illness. Our inter-professional team, many of whom hold faculty positions at the University of Toronto, provide outstanding education programs and learning opportunities for fellows, residents, graduate students, medical students, summer students, and observers.

>> Diverse Learners

DSC welcomes learners from a wide range of disciplines including palliative care, psychiatry, nursing, and allied health. Education programs are offered within all three of our divisions: Palliative Care, Psychosocial Oncology, and Cancer Rehabilitation and Survivorship.

129 trainees rotated through the Palliative Care division at the Princess Margaret, Toronto General and Toronto Western sites, with experiences in inpatient consults, outpatient clinics (including virtual care clinics established during the pandemic), palliative care unit, and hospice.

30 learners rotated through the Psychosocial Oncology (PSO) division including medical undergraduates (CC1-CC4), Psychiatry residents, and Social Work and Psychology trainees. Evaluations were outstanding, which was also reflected by the increased frequency of rotation requests across all offered PSO programs.

36 learners rotated through the Cancer Rehabilitation and Survivorship (CRS) division to gain an understanding and appreciation of the diverse services and types of care offered to patients during and after cancer treatment. Through immersion in clinic activities, trainees were able to learn about the inter-professional team, cancer-related impairments identified during comprehensive assessments, self-management support, and the overall patient experience.



Learners at DSC



Undergraduate Students



Graduate Students



Post-Graduate Students



Continuing Education Learners

>> Fellowships

Palliative Care

The Palliative Medicine Fellowship Program based at UHN continues to grow with a vision of advancing palliative care globally. More than 30 highly qualified applicants from 14 countries applied for the 7 positions in the fellowship program in 2021. This fellowship program provides physicians with advanced training in specialized palliative care. The program has graduated 26 palliative care fellows over the last four years, including 10 Canadians and 15 internationals from 13 countries: UK, Australia, France, Thailand, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi, Arabia, Israel, Ireland, Mexico, Egypt, Kuwait, and India. Many of the program's graduates took leadership positions in their home institutions and started new palliative care services in their countries. Further, many of the graduates assumed academic careers in palliative medicine after graduation. These graduates were appointed at reputable academic institutions, such as the University of Toronto, University of Ottawa, Queen's University, Thailand's Mahidol University, and Pakistan's Aga Khan University.



Mohamed Abdelaal Clinical Research Fellow, Egypt



Jacqueline Alcalde Castro Clinical Research Fellow, Mexico



Mohammed Al Yousef Clinical Fellow, Saudi Arabia



Sofia Canales Clinical Fellow, Mexico



Arunangshu **Ghoshal** Clinical Fellow, India



Jean Mathews Clinical Research Fellow, India



Alejandra Ruiz **Buenrostro** Clinical Fellow. Mexico



Merna Wassef Clinical Fellow, Canada



Fernando Xavier Silva Clinical Fellow, Brazil

The Older Adults with Cancer Clinic has trained two geriatric oncology fellows, including our first surgeon.



Samuel Dube Canada



Isabel Tejero Spain

Psychosocial Oncology

With two new Psychosocial Oncology Fellowship positions within DSC, the re-developed Clinical Fellowship in Psychosocial Oncology will see its inaugural fellows join the Psychosocial Oncology team in the second half of 2022. Under the leadership of Dr. Christian Schulz-Quach (Director of the Fellowship Program), Athena Nicholas-Figliomeni, Dr. Kim Miller, and Dr. Jody Morita, this program aims to provide world-class education and specialization in Psychosocial Oncology. Affiliated with the University of Toronto, DSC will offer one and two-year fellowships in the Division of Psychosocial Oncology. The PSO Clinical Fellowship Program is designed to help psychiatrists develop the psychosocial knowledge and skills needed to deliver high quality supportive care for all patients and their families throughout the course of illness. Fellows receive supervision in the psychiatric care of serious illness patients and develop collaborative relationships with interdisciplinary staff within palliative care and cancer rehabilitation and survivorship.

This past year the Adolescents and Young Adult Program also worked with one clinical fellow, Dr. Mauricio Ribeiro from Brazil.



Mauricio Ribeiro Brazil

>> Continuing Education & Professional Development

DSC takes pride in fostering a strong culture of ongoing learning and professional development. Evidence supporting high quality serious illness clinical care, emerging best practices, innovative models of care and technologies, and case management discussions is routinely shared and explored by staff and learners within our various rounds, seminars, and conferences. These offerings highlight departmental innovation, knowledge, and expertise while promoting collegiality and a sense of "oneness" within the department.

Education Activities

of Rounds/Seminars hosted in 2021-2022:

- 8 Supportive Care Grand Rounds
- Supportive Care Research Seminar
- Pain & Symptom
 Management Rounds
- International Virtual Round Series with King Hussain Cancer Centre (Jordan)
- Global Institute of Psychosocial, Palliative, & End-of-Life Care (GIPPEC) Seminar
- 2 Psychosocial Oncology Clinical Case Conference
- Psychosocial Oncology Human Touch Seminar
- 7 PM Cancer Survivorship Research Rounds
- Canadian Cancer Survivorship Research Consortium Rounds

In late 2021, the Psychosocial Oncology (PSO) Education Committee, consisting of an interdisciplinary group of educators, proposed a new education strategy targeted at reinvigorating education activities to better satisfy the everevolving learning needs of PSO staff and learners. Based on the results of a comprehensive needs assessment, this innovative strategy focuses on incorporating a variety of education formats into the education structure of the division. The following are three new activities recently implemented as part of this strategy.

Global Institute of Psychosocial, Palliative, and End-of-Life Care (GIPPEC) Seminar
A formal education seminar involving both

A formal education seminar involving both staff and international GIPPEC-affiliated speakers.

- Psychosocial Oncology Clinical Case Conference
 Offered twice a month, this conference provides a space for practical patient case discussion and the opportunity for feedback to inform the patient's management plan.
- Psychosocial Oncology Human Touch Seminar
 This seminar series is a collegial support-

to psychosocial oncology that can benefit from group insight.





Dr. Christian Schulz-Quach and **Athena Nicholas-Figliomeni** presented this innovative education strategy at the 11th Annual University of Toronto Donald Wasylenki Education Day, where it was well received. While only recently launched in March 2022, the PSO Education Committee is confident that this new structure will increase team support and connectedness, while providing valuable knowledge to staff and learners.

A significant focus for DSC education this past year was to implement more accreditation opportunities and improve the overall standards and process of education activities. In addition to the Pain and Symptom Management Rounds, the GIPPEC Seminar and DSC Grand Rounds are now both selfapproved group learning activities as defined by the Maintenance of Certification Program of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. The

DSC Education Activity Evaluation Form was also created and integrated into all relevant education rounds. The opportunity to formally evaluate these activities on a routine basis ensures that these activities continue to satisfy the learning needs of their respective target audience.

>> Innovations in Education

Over the past year, our amazing staff has been actively involved in the creation and further development of several education programs and initiatives, at the hospital level, community level, and nationally. Brief updates from each program and initiative are highlighted in the following sections.

Palliative Care ECHO Project



Co-led by **Drs. Haley Draper** and **Nadine Gebara**, the Palliative Care ECHO Project was launched in February 2022. It is a Community-Based Primary Care Community of Practice Series through Pallium Canada. Nationally accredited, it includes an 11-part virtual educational series that supports primary care clinicians across Canada who wish to integrate palliative care into their practices while building an interdisciplinary community of practice. ECHO uses a "hub and spoke" education model to connect healthcare providers in communities ("spokes") with teams of specialists and experts at regional and national centers (the "hub").





Loving the courses so much I have recruited many other healthcare workers to now sit in on course together. Improving my confidence to provide the best care possible and introduce what I am learning to Drs. that do not have the palliative experience.

> **FCHO** Project Participant

MAiD Curriculum Development Project



In 2021, the Canadian Association of MAiD Assessors and Providers (CAMAP) was approached by Canadian parliamentarians to create a national educational Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) curriculum for healthcare providers. The Cana-

dian MAiD Curriculum Development Project is CAMAP's response to this request and is currently being developed in collaboration with Dr. Madeline Li as the Scientific Lead.

The project is overseen by MAiD content experts from across Canada who report to a National Steering Committee comprised of medical, political, and interest group stakeholders to ensure equity and diversity in the curriculum content. Training modules are being developed on eight topics: Foundations, Initial Clinical Conversations, Assessments, Provisions, Capacity and Vulnerability, Complex Scenarios, Mental Health, and Clinician Resilience.

The curriculum is currently being developed with synchronous and asynchronous online learning formats, available in French and English, and can be delivered through in-person workshops. A rigorous dissemination and evaluation process involving a variety of end-user groups from across Canada is planned. The final curriculum will be approved by national medical and nursing colleges and will be promoted and sustained by CAMAP.

Cancer **Rehabilitation &** Survivorship Courses





In collaboration with the Michener Institute, members of the Cancer Rehabilitation and Survivorship (CRS) Program continued to develop courses for a future academy.

An "Introduction to Cancer Rehabilitation and Survivorship" course is being developed by **Patrice dePeiza** and will serve as a foundational e-learning course. An additional course entitled, "Return to Work After Cancer" is also in development by Lydia Beck. The team is excited to run their third session of "Exercise and Cancer for Fitness and Health Professionals" later this year.

Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada's **Opioid Curriculum**



Over the past year, **Dr. Jenny Lau** (Medical Director, Harold and Shirley Lederman Palliative Care Centre, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre) helped create modules about palliative care pain management for the Association of Faculties of Medicine

of Canada (AFMC)'s Opioid Curriculum for undergraduate medical education. She is also currently creating a cancer pain management module for AFMC's Opioid Curriculum for postgraduate medical education and continuing professional development.

I liked the course content and found it informative and relevant to my practice.

Exercise & Cancer for Fitness & Health Professionals Course Participant



THE **CONVERSATION** LAB



In 2021-2022, <u>The Conversation Lab</u>, a new educational initiative led by **Dr. Warren Lewin**, launched in partnership with UHN to improve serious illness care. Most healthcare providers in practice receive very

little training on how to communicate with their patients and families facing serious and life-threatening illness. The Conversation Lab, which is made possible with generous support from the UHN Foundation, was created to eliminate this education gap and lead research to enhance serious illness care in and beyond our health system. The Lab's vision is to build a healthcare system in which every clinician is trained and empowered to skillfully discuss what matters most with their seriously ill patients and their families. A multi-pronged approach enabling this transformation is planned, including education, system-level change, and research in order to evaluate and disseminate knowledge. New tools will be launched in 2022, giving frontline providers needed knowledge and skills to deliver high quality serious illness care.

The Conversation Lab recently partnered with VitalTalk – an internationally recognized organization using an evidence-based teaching method – becoming Canada's first academic institution to scale up teaching impact based on the best

available communications research. The team is currently training 12 faculty communication champions committed to teaching our novel curriculum across several specialties at UHN. Specialties trained include family medicine, hospitalist medicine, neurosurgery, geriatrics, palliative care, internal medicine, ICU, medical oncology, and radiation oncology.

The Lab also continues to train postgraduate residents and fellows reaching more specialties than ever, including family medicine, palliative care, geriatrics, hospitalist medicine and ICU. Approximately 100 learners have participated in the half-day workshop and roughly 150 additional learners have attended the one-hour lecture. 95% of learners have reported increased confidence in their skills, intent to change their practice based on teachings, and would recommend the course to their peers.

In the past year, the Lab welcomed two patient partners to help design better communication tools to meet the needs of the local population. The team also recently completed designing the Communication Skills Teaching Program and associated tools. They are available to all UHN learners and faculty and aims to transform care within UHN and beyond!



This is exactly what I wish I had been taught earlier in my training. Thank you for creating this helpful tool. It's made my family meetings so much more effective.

Ali, PGY2 Family Medicine

After only a few hours of teaching, this workshop completely transformed my clinical practice and increased my confidence in having conversations about serious illness. I continue to use these skills every day and would highly recommend this training to any learner.

Natalie, PGY3 Enhanced Skills U of T Resident

I have strongly encouraged my Program Director to keep this session in the PGY3 curriculum for years to come.

Carly, Hospitalist Resident

99

Palliative Care Fellowship Bridging Program

The Palliative Care Fellowship Bridging Program had an extremely successful fourth year as the Curriculum Development Committee further reviewed and modified content based on the feedback of previous participants. In addition to palliative care fellows, fellows from outside the palliative care division attended the program for the first time. 16 incoming fellows participated in the eight-module course and were able to interact with their fellow peers to discuss important topics and issues regarding settlement in Canada, palliative care in Canada and at UHN, patient-physician communication, advance care planning, working in a team-based environment, bioethics and patient safety, and social determinants of health.

Under the leadership of Drs. Ahmed Al-Awamer and Ebru Kaya, and in collaboration with the Michener Institute and International Centre of Education at UHN, the Bridging Program is currently being expanded so that it will be available for international fellows from all specialties. There are currently 25 international fellows enrolled in the 2022 cohort from different fellowship programs across UHN. In recognition of the program's tremendous success, the program received the 2020 Princess Margaret Innovation in Cancer Education Award. The program curriculum and evaluation outcome were also recently published in





Continuing Adult Education in Geriatrics **Oncology Principles**



Thanks to a generous donation from the Slaight Family Foundation, the Geriatric Oncology team, under the leadership of **Dr. Shabbir Alibhai**, has embarked upon creating a series of learning modules on various aspects

geriatric oncology. These state-of-the-art modules will target adult learners in oncology (primarily physicians and nurses) with the help of the Princess Margaret Cancer Education Program. They will be freely available and address key topics such as the elements of a geriatric assessment, frailty screening, predicting life expectancy, predicting, and reducing treatment toxicity, and falls in older adults with cancer. The Geriatric Oncology team has almost completed the design of the first of eight modules in this series. The design and build of the next several modules are currently underway.

U of T Palliative Care Wellness Curriculum



In the past year, the University of Toronto Palliative Care Wellness Curriculum Team, co-led by Dr. Warren Lewin, was featured on the front-page of the Toronto Star and was invited to present at a national

conference where the novel curriculum was very well received. Continuing their partnership with the Art Gallery of Ontario, the curriculum used various forms of art to teach residents how to be better observers and communicators. In 2021, an improv session was designed specifically for healthcare providers to allow another arts-based vehicle to deepen communication skills. The team looks forward to presenting at an international conference later this year and disseminate knowledge by writing about the program in a medical education journal.

Department of Supportive Care Observership Program

In collaboration with the UHN International Centre for Education, DSC restructured its Observership Program to include two new offerings. The Virtual Learning Program was created for students, trainees, and practicing health professionals and includes a customized learning plan based on identified learning objectives, virtual shadowing opportunities, and opportunities to attend and present at virtual DSC education rounds. The department also launched a new Executive Personalized Learning

Program tailored specifically for health professionals. Additional features included immersion in departmental activities and regular individual didactic teachings. We are thrilled about this launch and the opportunity to host even more observers within the upcoming year.

>> Excellence In Teaching





In January 2021, Drs. Ahmed Al-Awamer and Ebru Kaya received the 2021 Award for Excellence in Postgraduate Medical Education in the category of Development and Innovation from the Temerty Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto. The prestigious award acknowledged their roles in developing the Palliative Medicine Clinical Fellowship Program and other supporting programs, such as the Bridging Program for international fellows.



Dr. Warren Lewin received the 2020-2021 Top Lecturer Award from the University of Toronto General Surgical Oncology Program. The award is selected by the surgical oncology fellows at U of T annually to a non-surgeon teacher who is teaching in their program. Dr. Lewin introduced a series of lectures focusing on wellness and resiliency that included communication skills training by an interprofessional team.



Dr. Brenda O'Connor received a competitive Faculty Teaching Award for Excellence in Teaching from the UHN Department of Medicine.



Dr. Christian Schulz-Quach was awarded a 2020-2021 U of T MD Program Teaching Award of Excellence for his significant commitment to undergraduate medical education teaching. The award honours his invaluable contribution to the Temerty Faculty of Medicine's educational mission

>> On the Horizon



Over the next fiscal year, the department will appoint a central DSC Education Lead who will be responsible for providing governance, oversight, and guidance for all education programs and activities across the three divisions. The Education Lead will work with

Athena Nicholas-Figliomeni, Education Specialist, to develop and execute a formal DSC education strategic plan that aligns with staff and learner needs, as well as with wider UHN Education standards of practice.



RESARCH & INNOVATION

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, DSC researchers had a productive year in 2021-2022. Across divisions, DSC researchers received over 20 new project grants in 2021-2022. DSC's academic publication output has continued to be high - with 169 unique publications in 2021-2022, many of which involved intradepartmental collaboration. Publications appeared in high-impact journals including Lancet Oncology, Journal of Clinical Oncology, and Journal of the National Cancer Institute. Select research highlights from 2021-2022 are featured in the subsequent sections.

>> Notable Publications



Association of Commonly Used Therapies with Cognitive Function in Men with Advanced Prostate Cancer

Dr. Shabbir Alibhai and colleagues examined the association of chemotherapy, enzalutamide, abiraterone, and radium 223 with cognitive function in men with metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer. Published in JAMA Network Open, the findings showed that most patients had stable cognition or slight improvements during treatment, regardless of the treatment used.



Chemo-Brain: An Activation Likelihood Estimation Meta-Analysis of **Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Studies**

Dr. Lori Bernstein and colleagues sought to determine if there are brain areas that consistently show either hyper- or hypo-activation in people treated with chemotherapy for non-CNS cancer. Published in Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews, the meta-analysis yielded two significant hypo-activation clusters which are part of the frontoparietal attention network, which could explain higher levels of mental fatigue in cancer survivors.

DSC Research Snapshot



Active Research Grants with DSC PI or Co-PI



Active Research **Grant Collaborations**



Peer-Reviewed **Publications**

\$9,824,598

Total New Research Funding

\$3,899,934

Total New Research Funding with DSC Pl or Co-Pl (9 Grants)

\$3,422,570

Total New Research Funding Collaborations (12 Grants)

>> Notable Publications



Aging in Adult Survivors of Childhood Cancer

Dr. Kim Edelstein and colleagues published a review in the <u>Journal of</u> <u>Clinical Oncology</u> of the literature on early or accelerated aging in childhood cancer survivors, focusing on cellular, physiological, and behavioral research in human and animal studies, to better understand the risk factors, research gaps, and clinical implications of early aging in this population and aid in future care planning.



Validation of the Death & Dying Distress Scale in Patients with Advanced Cancer

Drs. Gilla Shapiro, Gary Rodin, and colleagues reported on the psychometric characteristics and responsiveness of the Death and Dying Distress Scale (DADDS). Published in <u>Psychooncology</u>, findings showed that the DADDS is a valid and brief two-factor measure that assesses distress related to the shortness of time and to the process of dying.



Improving the Quality of Self-Management Support in Ambulatory Cancer Care

Dr. Doris Howell and colleagues conducted a mixed-method study to assess readiness and barriers/enablers for Self-Management Support (SMS) among stakeholders at 3 regional cancer centres in Ontario. Published in <u>BMJ Quality and Safety</u>, this project demonstrated strategies for tailoring SMS implementation to readiness and barriers and enablers



Symptom Screening with Targeted Early Palliative Care for Patients with Advanced Cancer

Dr. Camilla Zimmermann and colleagues from Medical Oncology and DSC published a Phase II trial of Symptom Screening with Targeted Early Palliative Care (STEP) in the <u>Journal of</u> the National Comprehensive Cancer Network. This CIHR-funded trial demonstrated that STEP is feasible in ambulatory patients with advanced cancer and distinguishes between patients who remain stable without palliative care and those who benefit from early intervention.



CanDirect: Effectiveness of a Telephone-Supported Depression Self-Care Intervention for Cancer Survivors



Drs. Jennifer Jones and Madeline Li, together with colleagues from Montreal, reported on their randomized controlled trial of CanDirect, a novel, telephone-delivered depression self-care intervention for cancer survivors. Published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology, the findings demonstrated that CanDirect is an effective method of managing mild-moderate depression symptoms in cancer survivors.

View the full list of publications for 2021-2022 on the UHN DSC website.

>> Notable Ongoing Projects



Clinical & Cost-Effectiveness of a Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment and Management for Canadian Elders with Cancer - The 5C Study

Co-Investigator: Dr. Shabbir Alibhai (CCS Impact Grant)

Multi-centre RCT randomizing older adults initiating first-line or second-line chemotherapy for various malignancies to either routine oncologic care or routine oncologic care plus geriatric assessment and management. Primary results were presented at ASCO 2021 and the International Society of Geriatric Oncology Meeting.



Canadian Cancer Rehabilitation (CanRehab) Team – Improving the Systematic Identification, Management, and Treatment of the Adverse **Effects of Cancer**



Co-Pls: Drs. Jennifer Jones & David Langelier (CCS/CIHR Team Grant)

Project 1 of this multi-site multi-project grant is underway and includes the development and implementation of an electronic prospective surveillance model (ePSM) for cancer rehabilitation (remote screening for rehabilitation needs with a risk stratified automated response system to deliver support and connect patients to rehabilitation services based on their needs



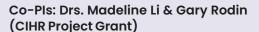
A Web-Based Peer Navigation Program for Men with Prostate Cancer-Hybrid Effectiveness Implementation Trial

PI: Dr. Jackie Bender (CIHR Project Grant)

This project aims to advance knowledge on the effectiveness and implementation of a web-based peer navigation program for men after treatment for Prostate Cancer.



Longitudinal Study of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) in Patients with Advanced Cancer





Study of changes in the prevalence, predictors, and attitudes about the desire for hastened death over the past decade, as well as the longitudinal trajectory of MAiD requests and completion, and its impact on family caregivers.



Does Exercise Improve Progression-Free Survival in Glioblastoma? A Prospective Single-Arm Intervention Trial

PI: Dr. Kim Edelstein (CCS Innovation Grant)

Aims of this work are to develop and implement an individualized exercise intervention for patients with glioblastoma to support functional independence, and to delay tumor progression and cognitive decline.



Emotion & Symptom-Focused Engagement (EASE): A Randomized Controlled Trial for Individuals with Acute Leukemia





Multi-site RCT of a novel combined PSO and palliative care intervention for patients with newly diagnosed acute leukemia, with recruitment sites including PM, Kingston Health Sciences Centre, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, and Ottawa Hospital.

>> Notable Ongoing Projects



Traumatic Stress Symptoms in Family Caregivers of Patients with Acute Leukemia – A **Longitudinal Observational Study**

Co-Pls: Drs. Gary Rodin & Lindsay Jibb (CIHR Project Grant)



Longitudinal observational study of traumatic stress in caregivers of adults and children with acute leukemia; team has also begun a Phase I trial of Emotion and Symptom-focused Engagement for Caregivers (EASE-CG).

>> Notable New Funding

Peer-Reviewed Funding

Dr. Jackie Bender: Digital Peer Navigation for Adolescents and Young Adults with Cancer – A Feasibility Study (PI, CIHR Project Grant)

Dr. Sarah Hales: PEARL Study – Assessing Psilocybin-Assisted Existential, Attachment, and Relational Therapy (PI, Lotte and John Hecht Foundation Grant)

Drs. Breffni Hannon & Camilla Zimmermann (Mentor): Electronic Symptom Screening and Targeted Early Palliative Care (eSTEP) (Associated Medical Services Fellowship in Compassion and Artificial Intelligence)

Dr. Ebru Kaya: Palliative Care Needs for Patients with Cystic Fibrosis (Site PI, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation)

Dr. Jenny Lau: Observing, Understanding, and Telling stories at end of Life for Opioid Use Disorder patients (OUTLOUD): Mixed-methods research and knowledge translation (PI, CIHR Project Grant)

Dr. Madeline Li: Canadian MAiD Curriculum Development Project (Scientific Lead, Health Canada Grant)

Samantha Lo: Trajectories of Psychosocial and Functional Outcomes Among Non-Hogdkin's Lymphoma Survivors (PI, CIHR Project Grant)

Drs. Rinat Nissim & Sarah Hales: Quality of Death in Hospital and Bereavement Outcomes in the COVID-19 Era (Co-Pls, CIHR Project Grant)

Drs. Camilla Zimmermann & Breffni Hannon: Palliative Care at the End of Life Among Patients with Cancer Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Co-Pls, CIHR COVID-19 Research Gaps & Priorities Grant)

View the full list of grants for 2021-2022 on the UHN DSC website.

PM Cancer Experience Grand Challenge Grants

Dr. Mary Elliott: Developing New Mobile App Technologies to Support Staff Wellness (PI)

Dr. Madeline Li: Enhancing Proactive and Universal Access to Psychosocial Support for All New Patients at PM (PI)

Drs. Sarah Hales, Rinat Nissim, Breffni Hannon: Improving Support Offered to Family Caregivers at PM (Pls)

PM Catalyst Grant

Dr. Shabbir Alibhai: Comprehensive Health Assessment for My Cancer Treatment Plan: Field Validation of a Geriatric Assessment Tool for Cancer Patients (CHAMP-F) (PI)

>> Excellence In Research



Dr. Jackie Bender received the 2021 Early Career Investigator Award from the Canadian Association of Psychosocial Oncology (CAPO). This award, supported by CIHR – Institute of Cancer Research, honours a new investigator for outstanding contributions to research in the field of psychosocial oncology.



Dr. Doris Howell will be inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau International Researcher Hall of Fame in July 2022. Doris was selected as a 2020 Outstanding Article of the Year Award Finalist from the *Journal of Patient-Reported Outcomes*. This was in recognition of superior achievement in quality-of-life research as exemplified by her article entitled "Personalized Symptom Management: A Quality Improvement Collaborative for Implementation of Patient Reported Outcomes (PROs) In 'Real-World' Oncology Multisite Practices."



Lauren Squires received a U of T C. David Naylor University Fellowship to help further her research on cancer care for the 2SLGBTQ+ community. The Fellowships were established to support outstanding scholars who are active in community service and commencing the first year of a graduate degree program.

TEAM SUPPORTIVE CARE

DSC's richest resource is its people. With a team of 160 staff, the department fosters an environment of innovation and learning to advance a quality patient experience. In 2021-2022, the DSC continued to exhibit excellence, innovation, and leadership in delivering world class patient care, research, and education, exemplified by the many achievements of our talented staff.

>> New Recruits

- Zenep Acar, Social Worker, Psychosocial Oncology
- Archanaa Aingaran, Administrative Assistant, Palliative Care
- Sarah Darling, Administrative Assistant, Psychosocial Oncology
- Daniela Fierini, Dietitian, Cancer Rehabilitation and Survivorship
- Brianna Flockhart, Program Coordinator, Palliative Care
- Brendan Lyver, Researcher, Sexual and Gender Diversity in Cancer Care Working Group
- Logan Meyers, Clinical Research Coordinator, Cancer Rehabilitation and Survivorship
- Chelsea Nicholas, Administrative Assistant, Supportive Care
- Bojana Petrovic, Research Associate, Cancer Rehabilitation and Survivorship
- Luxshiga Premakumar, Administrative Assistant, AYA and OACC
- Nirali Shah, Administrative Assistant, Palliative Care
- Catherine Smith, Dietitian, Cancer Rehabilitation and Survivorship
- Marlie Smith, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Adolescents and Young Adult
- Betty Yen, Social Worker, Psychosocial Oncology

>> Sustained Service

Congratulations and thank you to our dedicated DSC staff who have reached their ≥25-year service milestone in 2021-2022.



Antonella Falbo, Administrative Assistant (30 years)

Retirement Celebration

After 30 plus years at UHN, starting at the Toronto General Hospital and then moving to the Princess Margaret, Rhonda Kibrick-Lazear (Social Work Program Specialist) retired at the end of 2021. Rhonda worked in outpatient hematology and has had a significant impact on the Department of Psychosocial Oncology. She was actively involved in developing many projects to improve patient care for patients at the Princess Margaret. Over the last decade, Rhonda was the Social Work Education Lead at the Princess Margaret, promoting field education amongst social workers, coordinating placements, and offering support to students during their practica. DSC wishes Rhonda all the best with her retirement!





>> Departures

- Joy Awyodele, Administrative Assistant
- **Reilly Bootle**, Administrative Assistant
- Mihaela Dirlea, Social Worker
- Tanya English, Administrative Assistant
- Stephanie Gladman, Dietitian

- Ali Henderson, Social Worker
- Jean Matthews, Palliative Care Physician
- Ellen Paonessa, Art Therapist
- Srishti Srishti, Administrative Assistant
- Dani Taylor, Social Worker

>> Other Notable Awards & **Appointments**



Paige Fillier was promoted to Senior Development Officer at the Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation. Paige will continue to support the Breast, Gyne, Supportive Care, and Cancer Experience portfolios in her new capacity.



Mark Jasinski received the Rising Star Oncology Nursing Award at the 18th Annual Oncology Nursing Awards Ceremony. This award is presented to an oncology nurse that is new to nursing in recognition of their contributions to excellence in nursing and enhancing the patient experience through patient-centered care.



Ali Henderson stepped into the role of the new UHN Discipline Head for Social Work in 2021. Ali has a wealth of experience and skills that will serve her well in this role.



Dr. Carmine Malfitano was awarded a PhD summa cum laude in translational neuroscience at the University of Ferrara, with a doctoral dissertation based on the qualitative study of traumatic stress in caregivers of patients with acute leukemia.



Dr. Erin O'Connor was awarded the UHN Convergence of Care, Research, and Education Award as part of the Local Impact Awards.



Dr. Camilla Zimmermann received the MD Anderson Award for Outstanding Contribution to Palliative Care. Dr. Zimmermann was chosen from a pool of Palliative Care leaders for her extraordinary work in the advancement of the field.

>> Enhancing Staff Wellbeing

Supportive Care Staff Well-Being Collaborative



The Supportive Care Staff Well-Being Collaborative aims to promote an environment where staff can flourish, work within a culture that thrives from the strength of diversity, feel supported and be recognized for their contributions. Since its inception in November 2020, led by **Dr. Mary Elliott**, the collaborative has met regularly to operationalize key strategic initiatives. We have been able to help embed the lens of staff well-being in the DSC Steering Committee, team meetings, safety huddles and even at rounds. In addition, Dr. Elliott was the Princess Margaret COVID-19 Steering

Committee Staff Well-Being Representative and was at the forefront of the Princess Margaret's response to COVID-19.

Participation in the Well-Being Index (WBI) Survey at the Princess Margaret helped our Collaborative gain insight into the DSC staff experience. A key finding was that the large majority of staff find their work meaningful, and feel they are contributing professionally; however, most do not feel that work leaves them enough time for personal and family life. The WBI also points to the toll the pandemic has had on the emotional well-being of staff. Integrating the lens of process efficiency and initiating the opportunity to use a well-established tool to track worklife balance are next steps in the action plan to respond to the results.

Connection and a sense of DSC community are essential to well-being, and a variety of replenishing activities were initiated. Robin Forbes ran the "DSC Best Song Competition", Dr. Elliott led drop-in "Mindful Moments" twice a week, Dr. Madeline Li injected laughter and competition with end of year games at rounds, Myann Marks hosted "Mindful Art Viewing" with Melissa Smith from the AGO, and Dr. Elliott created "Exhaling in Sunlight", a place to reflect and write in celebration of the dedication of the social workers.



DSC Emerging Leader Role



Mentorship and leadership opportunities are vital to helping staff grow. This year we established a DSC Emerging Leader role. From 5 excellent candidates **Kyle Fitzgibbon** was selected to hold the one-year position. Thanks to **Dr. Warren Lewin, Robin Forbes, Caitlin Doherty, Dr. David Langelier, Thomas Kais-Prial**, and **Dr. Mary Elliott** for crafting the role and their time on the selection committee

Kyle is a Clinical Research Coordinator and has a Master of Science, Institute for Health Policy, Management and Evaluation from the Dalla Lana School of Public Health. He is currently pursuing certification as a project manager through the University of Toronto. Kyle has Lesley Moody, Clinical Director, providing mentorship to this role, and he brings the voice of early career staff to the DSC Steering Committee.



The Lift – Bringing Wellness to the Princess Margaret

The Lift is moving forward thanks to receiving a Princess Margaret Grand Challenge Cancer Experience Grant. This multichannel social media platform, which harnesses the latest in clinical neuroscience and delivers well-being practices and topical podcasts, will spotlight staff from across the PM Cancer Program.

Co-Leads **Drs. Mary Elliott** and Alejandro Berlin, with their core project team of members, Mike Lovas and Adam Badzynski from the Princess Margaret Cancer Digital Intelligence Program and Angela Bell, Princess Margaret Social Media Coordinator, continue to create this timely, and barrier-free way to bring wellness to healthcare workers at the Princess Margaret and beyond.











>> Active in the Community



Team Supportive Care received the Top UHN Staff Team Award at the 2021 Weekend to Conquer Cancer event with 13 participants and \$14,183 raised! Congratulations to our walkers: Caitlin Doherty, Kaimraj Dookie, Mary Elliott, Breffni Hannon, Barbara Jenkins, Warren Lewin, Paty Lopez, Lisa Marks, Stephanie Phan, Gary Rodin, Christian Schulz-Quach, Kailey Trewartha, and team captain **Myann Marks-Aitken**!

Last year, **Team Supportive Care** once again participated in the ride, raising \$2,500 for the Ride to Conquer Cancer.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Department of Supportive Care is generously supported by the Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation and University Health Network Foundation

Annual Report Contributors

- Myann Marks
- Aleksandra Chafranskaia
- Caitlin Doherty
- Robin Forbes
- Breffni Hannon
- Jennifer Jones
- Thomos Kais-Prial
- Ebru Kaya
- Warren Lewin
- Madeline Li
- Athena Nicholas
- Chelsea Nicholas
- Stephanie Phan
- Department of Supportive Care Steering Committee

