

CONNECTed

Collective Oncology Network for Exchange, Cancer Care Innovation, Treatment Access and Education



RCONECTé

Réseau collectif d'oncologie pour échange, innovation en soin du cancer, accès aux traitements et éducation

CONNECTED WELCOMES THE ONTARIO PC PARTY'S COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING HEALTHCARE FOR CANCER PATIENTS AND CALLS ON OTHER PARTIES TO MATCH THESE PLATFORM STATEMENTS

The Ontario PC Platform Includes a Commitment To Fund Take-Home Cancer Treatments and Continued Funding of Drugs After Clinical Trials

TORONTO, ON (November 30, 2017) The Collective Oncology Network for Exchange, Cancer Care Innovation, Treatment Access and Education (CONNECTed) welcomes the Ontario PC Party's commitment to improving healthcare for cancer patients. At the Party Convention on Saturday, November 25, the Ontario PC's made two important announcements:

- 1) They will fund take-home oral cancer drugs to allow more cancer patients to receive treatment at home if they wish.
- 2) They will allow patients participating in clinical trials to be eligible for publicly funded treatment following the end of their clinical trial.

These two promises are excellent news for people living in Ontario for a number of reasons. In addition to providing equitable access to treatment, funding take-home oral cancer drugs will help reduce pressures on other health system budgets including hospital budgets, while also freeing up needed resources and space at the hospital level. Currently, Canada's Western provinces all treat take-home cancer drugs and hospital-administered cancer drugs on an equal basis. Ontario is one of the few provinces, along with NB, PEI and Newfoundland/Labrador, that doesn't pay for oral cancer drugs.

The current situation in Ontario also leaves many cancer patients who chose to participate in clinical trials without public funding for cancer treatments provided in the trial following their trial. That means men and women in Ontario with serious cancer diagnoses are faced with a choice: rely on the current system and hope for the best, or try a potentially life-saving new treatment, but face being abandoned by the system if the trial drug does not succeed. If trial patients were eligible for other forms of publicly-funded treatments should their trial be unsuccessful, it would increase choice, encourage participation in clinical trials, help increase pharmaceutical research and development in Ontario and - most importantly - help save lives.

Ultimately these two promises would improve cancer care by making Cancer Care Ontario (CCO) a more efficient and effective cancer control agency, which Ontarians expect given CCO's annual budget of nearly \$2 billion a year.

"We recognize the importance of a sustainable, affordable health care system and also the importance of access to badly needed cancer treatments for people who would otherwise have terrible quality of life and a much shorter lifespan," says Kathy Barnard, cancer survivor, Founder of Save Your Skin Foundation,

and CONECTed steering committee member. “While innovative drugs are high priced, the provinces can negotiate risk sharing arrangements with the manufacturers that will save money in the drug budget.

“We need to recognize that our present siloed drug budget process creates inefficiencies and inequities in today’s reality of about half of cancer treatments being oral therapies. All Ontarians with cancer should be treated equally as most other provinces have recognized,” says Barnard.

CONECTed calls on all Ontario parties to make the same commitment, not only for patients and their families and caregivers, but also for the economy of the province.

About CONECTed

CONECTed is a Canadian collective of oncology patient organizations formed to identify solutions to expand access to cancer treatments in a sustainable cancer care ecosystem through innovation, collaboration, exchange, and education with key stakeholders. With a unified and cohesive voice, this network aims to improve patient outcomes through appropriate cancer care delivery and organization. Their goal is to work together to promote the value of innovative medicines, companion diagnostics and supportive care through greater education and understanding.

Members of the Collective Oncology Network for Exchange, Cancer Care Innovation, Treatment Access and Education include:

Save Your Skin Foundation
Colorectal Cancer Canada
Myeloma Canada
Lung Cancer Canada
Melanoma Network of Canada
Lymphoma Canada

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