

NEW CANCER REPORT REVEALS OPPORTUNITIES FOR GOVERNMENTS TO ‘DO THE RIGHT THING BY PATIENTS’

Canada part of 10-country survey that reveals inefficiencies in cancer care from patient perspective

Vancouver, BC: 24 July 2019 –The international [All.Can](#) cancer initiative has today published a major report urging health officials, governments and decision-makers to ‘do the right thing by patients’ when developing cancer care plans and policies by taking patient insights into account in all aspects of treatment and care.

The report, [Patient insights on cancer care: opportunities for improving efficiency](#), highlights four major areas of cancer care inefficiency from the patient perspective. All.Can defines inefficiency in cancer care as anything that does not focus on what matters to patients.

“Patients are almost never included in conversations about cancer care,” said Kathy Barnard, Stage IV melanoma survivor, Founder of Save Your Skin Foundation, and member of All.Can international’s steering committee.

“The cost of cancer care in Canada has risen steadily from [\\$2.9 billion in 2005 to \\$7.5 billion in 2012](#). Clearly, there is an urgent need to improve efficiency and reduce waste in cancer care in Canada. Improving efficiency is not a question of linear cost-cutting, but of finding ways to allocate resources more efficiently to achieve better health outcomes for patients.

“We need to listen to what patients say would improve their experience of care. Ignoring the findings of this report would be a missed opportunity to do the right thing by patients and make changes that could make a real difference,” said Barnard.

Based on results from a large, international patient survey of nearly 4,000 people affected by different cancers across 10 countries, including 342 patients from Canada, the report identifies four key areas for improvement based on patient insights:

1. Ensuring a swift, accurate and appropriately delivered diagnosis

- A quarter of global survey respondents (26%) stated their initial diagnosis was the most inefficient part of their cancer care journey.
- In Canada, almost a third (27%) of respondents whose cancer was diagnosed outside of a screening program said their cancer was diagnosed as something else – either once or multiple times; 14% of Canadian respondents whose cancer was detected outside of a screening programme waited more than six months to be diagnosed with cancer.

2. Improving information-sharing, support and shared decision-making

- Almost half (44%) of Canadian respondents did not feel sufficiently involved in deciding which treatment option was best for them.
- A third (33%) of Canadian respondents said they were not given enough information about their cancer care and treatment; (48%) said that they did not receive enough information about the signs and symptoms indicating that their cancer might be returning or getting worse; and 43% were not given information about patient groups or charities that might be able to support them.

3. Making integrated multidisciplinary care a reality for all patients

- A quarter of global respondents (24%) said they did not have access to support from allied health professionals such as dietitians and physiotherapists.
- Six out of ten Canadian respondents (61%) said they needed psychological support either during or after their cancer care – but a third (35%) of them said it was ‘not available’.

4. Addressing the financial implications of cancer

- 26% of global respondents reported a loss of employment income as a result of their cancer care and treatment.
- 48% of Canadian respondents paid for some part of their cancer care; 46% reported travel costs; and 28% reported loss of employment.

The authors of the report urge policymakers and the entire cancer community to act on these findings – as making these changes could make a real difference to patient outcomes and experiences of care, and the financial impact cancer has on patients, families, the health system and society as a whole.

This is supported by existing evidence: faster diagnosis can improve patient survival and is associated with reduced treatment costs for many cancers. Shared decision-making is associated with improved patient outcomes. Cancer patients with depression have a 39% higher risk of mortality and **higher healthcare expenditure than patients who do not have depression – pointing to the need for appropriate psychological support.**

Lost productivity due to cancer is estimated to cost €52 billion per year in the European Union, due to early death and lost working days – and protective social policies that either help patients return to work or protect them from financial insecurity due to cancer can have a huge impact on reducing this burden.

To download a full copy of the report, *Patient insights on cancer care: opportunities for improving efficiency*, visit: <https://www.all-can.org/what-we-do/research/patient-survey/>

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Note to editors

About cancer:

Every year, 9.6 million people die from cancer worldwide and 17 million new cases are diagnosed.

About the international All.Can patient survey:

The *Patient insights on cancer care: opportunities for improving efficiency* report is based on the findings from the All.Can patient survey. This is to our knowledge, the first international survey designed to gather patient perspectives on inefficiencies in cancer care i.e. how their care experience could be improved.

The data were collected from January to November 2018, predominantly online, and the survey was open to current and former cancer patients (and their carers) of all ages and with all cancer types.

The survey was conducted internationally, with bespoke versions in ten separate countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the US. There was also a generic international survey available in English, French, German and Spanish.

The survey was developed by All.Can international and Quality Health, and was validated via expert review and testing with patients to ensure questions were understood and answered as intended. Quality Health is a survey provider based in the UK.

About All.Can international

All.Can is an international, multi-stakeholder initiative, dedicated to tackling inefficiency in cancer care – where inefficiency is defined as any allocation of resources that does not focus on what matters to patients. Its ambition is to help drive solutions for sustainable care for all those affected by cancer.

All.Can international's membership includes representatives from leading patient organisations, policymakers, healthcare professionals, research and industry. To find out more about the membership of All.Can, visit: <https://www.all-can.org/about-us/members/>

The international All.Can initiative is made possible with financial support from Bristol-Myers Squibb (main sponsor), Roche (major sponsor), Amgen, MSD and Johnson & Johnson (sponsors), and Baxter (contributor), with additional non-financial (in kind) support from Helpsy, Intacare and Goings-On. For more information about All.Can, its full membership and governance, visit: <http://www.all-can.org/>