PATIENT RESOURCE

When patients have cancer, nurses can refer patients to the Canadian Cancer Society for information and support services

by Jan MacVinnie, Manager, Canadian Cancer Society Cancer Information Service

When a patient receives a cancer diagnosis, they and their loved ones may have many questions and may feel fear, anxiety, helplessness or anger. But with knowledge and support, there is power. At the Canadian Cancer Society, we offer a range of free cancer information and support services for your patients, their family, friends and caregivers. These services are confidential and many are available in more than 100 languages.

Jennifer Wiernikowski knows the value of the service and has recommended it to many of her patients. She is a nurse practitioner at the Juravinski Cancer Centre in Hamilton and a member of the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology.

“I encourage all my patients and their families to call the Cancer Information Service,” she says. “This service is a trusted source of information and support. The staff take as much time as needed to make sure people get all of their questions answered, even the ones they didn’t even know they should ask.”

Our Cancer Information Service helps people across the country by answering their questions about more than 100 different types of cancer, treatment, diagnosis, care, services and much more. The service’s information specialists are specially trained and evaluated. While they do not provide medical advice, they do provide evidence-based information and connect patients and family caregivers to local community support programs and services if needed.

Since its inception in 1996, the Cancer Information Service has answered more than 1.25 million inquiries about cancer. Last year alone we distributed more than one million copies of print material and provided information to more than 12 million visitors to our website, cancer.ca.

Our information is evidence based and reflects current Canadian clinical practice. More than 80 healthcare professionals—doctors, nurses and educators—helped us write our online and print cancer information.

In addition to our Cancer Information Service, we manage an online community—CancerConnection.ca—where people who have cancer, cancer survivors and caregivers share their experiences and build supportive relationships. And for those looking for support to quit smoking, our Smokers’ Helpline offers proven tips and tools to help people quit smoking.

Patients and their families are more likely to listen when health care professionals tell them about the benefits of cancer information and support services. To refer people to the Cancer Information Service, simply have them call 1 888 939-3333, visit cancer.ca or complete and submit a healthcare provider referral.

The personal information collected on the referral form will only be used to contact the individual regarding our service.

Patients looking for up-to-date information focusing specifically on the progress and promise of cancer research may be interested in our online newsroom called Research Horizons. It can be found at www.cancer.ca/en/research-horizons and it highlights:

- immunotherapy
- genomics
- cancer prevention
- early diagnosis.

Content on this site showcases recent Canadian and international research efforts of all cancer types. Blogs and feature articles found on Research Horizons are available in English and French, and are written in a way that is accessible to a wide audience. The site also features shared news articles and other resources from trusted sources.

With research and treatment rapidly evolving, and with an almost 40% increase expected in the number of cancers diagnosed in Canada within the next 15 years (driven by the aging and growing population), the need to keep patients and their families informed about the latest advances in treatment has never been greater. If they read something on Research Horizons that they would like to learn more about, they can contact our Cancer Information Service at 1-888-939-3333 or visit www.cancer.ca.