

# EAOC|24

EARLY AGE ONSET CANCER SYMPOSIUM



EVENT PROGRAM  
NOVEMBER 14-15

**CCRRAN**  
Colorectal Cancer  
Resource &  
Action Network



**RISCC**  
Réseau d'informations  
et soutien pour le  
cancer colorectal

A PATIENT-FOCUSED ORGANIZATION





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This year, CCRAN launched a new tailored peer-to-peer support program called **"My Cancer Companion"**.

The program matches participants based upon shared cancer and life experiences, as well as cultural and language considerations, to reduce loneliness and empower patients, caregivers, and survivors through empathy and understanding.



# ABOUT US



# ABOUT CCRAN

The Colorectal Cancer Resource & Action Network (CCRAN) is a compassionate Canadian charity that supports patients and families affected by colorectal cancer, dedicating every resource to help them navigate this challenging journey with confidence and hope. Rooted in the principles of support, education, and advocacy, CCRAN's programs provide essential, personalized tools to ensure that no one faces cancer alone.

Through CCRAN's "My" services, we offer tailored guidance, resources, and companionship to meet the unique needs of each patient and caregiver. The *My Colorectal Cancer Consultant* provides metastatic colorectal cancer patients with treatment options based on biomarker status, enabling informed discussions with their doctors. Our *My Colorectal Cancer Coaches* support patients and caregivers at every stage, from screening to survivorship. *My Colorectal Cancer Treatment Side Effects* offers resources to manage systemic treatment side effects. Our *My Foods for Life* promotes dietary balance with practical nutrition guidance. Our *My Early-Age Onset Colorectal Cancer Hub* addresses the specific needs of younger patients. Our newest program *My Cancer Companion* fosters peer-to-peer connections, matching patients and caregivers with companions based on factors like cancer type and cultural background. With CCRAN's "My" services, no one faces colorectal cancer alone.

As part of our broader mission, CCRAN also hosts symposia and informational events open to all individuals affected by cancer, including family members and caregivers. These events—featuring expert-led discussions—create a space where participants can learn, connect, and find strength in community.

At CCRAN, we believe that every individual deserves the resources to face cancer with dignity and strength. As a charitable organization, we rely on donations to continue providing these life-changing services and expanding our programs to reach more patients and families. Your support enables us to offer these vital resources, empower patients, and give hope to families who need it most. Together, we can make a lasting impact—please consider making a donation to CCRAN today to help us continue our mission of care, compassion, and community.



# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

## Dear Friends:

On behalf of the Colorectal Cancer Resource & Action Network (CCRAN), welcome to our fourth annual Early Age Onset Cancer (EAOC) Virtual Symposium!

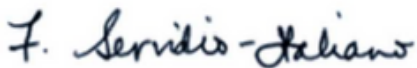
We are thrilled to build upon the objectives and outcomes from previous Symposia, addressing system-level challenges that limit the early detection and diagnosis of EAOC and preeminent treatment and management of EAOC patients. This Symposium will stimulate important discussions through a value-based healthcare lens, focusing on optimal diagnostic and treatment pathways, the value of comprehensive genomic profiling (CGP) in enhancing the patient journey, and strategies to improve survivorship for EAOC patients. The Symposium will amplify patient voices and foster meaningful and relevant discussion of the unique needs and challenges of early age onset cancer patients.

This year, our agenda includes a broad spectrum of tumour types, including colorectal cancer, breast cancer, lung cancer, gynecologic cancers, liver cancer, bile duct cancer, pancreatic cancer, and more. Global trends indicate a significant rise in cancer incidence among those under 50 years of age, contrasting sharply with declining rates in older populations. CCRAN's Symposium will tackle this critical issue, addressing the rising rates of early age onset cancers, the psychosocial impacts and unique needs of young adults, early screening, detection, diagnosis, and the utility of advanced diagnostics in helping to improve patient outcomes. Furthermore, CCRAN, in collaboration with multiple tumour type patient advocacy groups, is leading a national survey on EAOC patients' experiences with detection and diagnosis, the results of which will be reported at the Symposium and will later be used to inform our advocacy efforts. As the incidence of EAOC is expected to continue to rise, our efforts to address these challenges are more important than ever.

CCRAN will gladly serve as a resource on each of these topics post-Symposium; hence, we welcome inquiries and outreach. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions or concerns regarding our Symposium to Shalini Gambhir at [Shalini.g@ccran.org](mailto:Shalini.g@ccran.org)

Join us as we bring together clinical, policy, research, and patient experts to examine these critical issues and develop collaborative strategies to address the needs of this unique patient populations. We look forward to engaging discussions and actionable outcomes that will shape the future of EAOC care. Together, anything is possible!

Warmly,



Filomena Servidio-Italiano  
President & CEO  
CCRAN





# DAY ONE

- 9:30 A.M.** Symposium Day One Opening
- 9:45 A.M.** Welcome from CCRAN's President
- 10:00 A.M.** Realities of Timely Cancer Diagnosis in Canadian Healthcare: Key Learnings from CCRAN's 2023 Early Age Onset Cancer (EAOC) Symposium
- 10:45 A.M.** Understanding Early Age Onset Cancer Patient Priorities and Barriers to Detection and Diagnosis: Survey Findings
- 11:45 A.M.** Health Break: Educational Videos
- 12:30 P.M.** Understanding the Increased Prevalence and Underlying Factors of Early Age Onset Cancers
- 1:30 P.M.** Recommendations for Early Age Onset Cancer Screening Programs: Opportunities for Collaborative Advocacy Efforts
- 2:30 P.M.** Health Break: Educational Videos
- 2:45 P.M.** Prioritizing Timely and Equal Access to Diagnostic Testing in Cancer Care: Examining Policy Options
- 3:45 P.M.** Using Technology to Expand Cancer Screening
- 4:00 P.M.** Advocating for Prompt Detection and Diagnosis of Early Age Onset Cancer
- 5:00 P.M.** Closing Remarks

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

## **Realities of Timely Cancer Diagnosis in Canadian Healthcare: Key Learnings from CCRAN's 2023 Early Age Onset Cancer (EAOC) Symposium**

- Lead authors of the paper produced from CCRAN's 2023 Early Age Onset Cancer Symposium will speak to the key learnings and updates from last year's scientific program
- Challenges with cancer detection and diagnosis among those under 50 years of age from the clinician and patient point of view will be summarized

## **Understanding Early Age Onset Cancer Patient Priorities and Barriers to Detection and Diagnosis: Survey Findings**

CCRAN, in collaboration with multiple other advocacy organizations representing different cancer types, launched a survey to capture patients' priorities and healthcare experiences regarding an early age onset cancer diagnosis. As this is a national survey, information will be reported by province and cancer type.

This session will provide an overview of the survey results, including:

- Early age onset patients' reported priorities regarding information, resources, support, and care needs during the detection and diagnostic phases
- Information about their reported healthcare experiences during these phases of their cancer journey, including patients' experiences related to receipt of medical information and advice
- Access to and barriers impacting timely, appropriate care.

## **Understanding the Increased Prevalence and Underlying Factors of Early Age Onset Cancers**

Cancers previously diagnosed in older adults are being increasingly diagnosed in people under 50, researchers are working to tease apart the reasons why. Furthermore, progeny of early age onset cancers (EAOC) is at a higher risk of developing EAOC's. This session will address key questions about the increased incidence of early age onset cancers, including questions related to environmental and lifestyle factors associated with the rising rates.

Experts will speak to:

- Global trends and known risk factors
- Evidence-based risk factors pertinent for different types of cancers
- Preventive measures for reducing the risk of disease at a young age across cancer types, including population health surveillance and health promotion strategies



## **Recommendations for Early Age Onset Cancer Screening Programs: Opportunities for Collaborative Advocacy Efforts**

After significant advocacy efforts, the breast cancer screening eligibility has been reduced to 40 in Canada, though variability in access remains controversial. Decisions around earlier screening for lung and colorectal cancer are lagging, and timely screening in general for many other cancers is almost non-existent, particularly among younger individuals.

Experts from patient advocacy organizations will elaborate on critical issues related to current screening processes for different types of cancer and will identify advocacy priorities for population-based screening programs, including overarching themes across cancer populations. Opportunities for collaborative advocacy efforts will be explored, including how progress made in breast cancer screening could be leveraged to benefit other cancer populations.

Patient advocacy experts will address:

- How advocacy efforts impact policy, highlighting opportunities for lowering the screening age and improving diagnostic care pathways across cancer types
- Inter-provincial disparities in screening practices and policies, within the context of variable recommendations across jurisdictions.
- Ideal processes for population-based screening programs to reach both those who are higher risk and those who are asymptomatic and/or at average risk of disease
- Opportunities to build on existing advocacy initiatives and collaborative efforts

## **Prioritizing Timely and Equal Access to Diagnostic Testing in Cancer Care: Examining Policy Options**

Timely access to diagnostic testing has been an ongoing issue for Canadians for years. With a shortage of medical imaging equipment and a lack of sufficient health human resources, patients face excessively long wait times for lifesaving procedures.

Experts will discuss system-level issues that contribute to the diagnostic backlog in cancer care across provinces, with an emphasis on factors that could be bolstered to improve the timeliness of diagnosis among younger adults. Policy priorities for optimizing diagnostic pathways for adults under the age of 50 years will be discussed. Speakers will address:

- The importance of timely diagnostic services in cancer care pathways, with a focus on early age onset cancers
- Current state of cancer diagnostics across regions in Canada and health human resource and equipment gaps that contribute to diagnostic delays
- Policy options for improving timely diagnosis of early age onset cancers, including application of AI to streamline diagnostic referral processes

## Using Technology to Expand Cancer Screening

To boost colorectal cancer screening rates in her practice, Dr. Gorfinkel developed an automated cancer screening tool. Implementation of this tool through Electronic Medical Record (EMR) in her family medicine practice has increased screening rates significantly without contributing to physician burden. The application of this digital tool facilitates broader screening of patients by removing barriers such as the need for in-person visits and lack of physician time. Opportunities for expanding this tool to younger patient populations and cancer type will be discussed.

## Advocating for Prompt Detection and Diagnosis of Early Age Onset Cancer

Early age onset cancers tend to exhibit more aggressive characteristics, making prompt recognition and management of symptoms crucial for improving outcomes. These cancers often grow more quickly and may be diagnosed at a later stage, leading to poorer prognoses. Patient advocates with lived cancer experience from different tumour types will share their personal and expert perspectives on cancer screening and diagnostic pathways in Canada. They will reflect on how the timing of their cancer detection impacted their disease trajectory, the factors that impeded a swift diagnosis, and their resulting healthcare experiences and quality of life. A clinical diagnostic expert with experience in both urban and rural environments will address the barriers that lead to diagnostic delays and discuss approaches for enhancing the timeliness of cancer diagnoses. This will include an examination of systemic issues and factors related to healthcare delivery, and effective cancer screening models. The discussion will highlight challenges with the cancer diagnostic experience from a patient and healthcare provider point of view and opportunities for improving timely and equitable diagnosis of early age onset cancer in Canada, including the role of patient advocacy and scalability of existing screening and diagnostic models and processes across cancer types and geographic regions.



## HONOURING FIVE YEARS OF INSPIRING STORIES

This year, CCRAN celebrated a major milestone: five years of dedicated service.



# DAY TWO

- 9:30 A.M.** Symposium Day Two Opening
- 9:35 A.M.** Welcome from CCRAN's President
- 9:45 A.M.** Optimizing Care for Early Age Onset Cancer Patients: The Role of Specialized Clinics
- 10:45 A.M.** The Role of Psychosocial Support for Young Adults Living with Cancer and Their Families
- 11:45 A.M.** Health Break: Educational Videos
- 12:15 P.M.** The Role of the Gut Microbiome in Cancer Treatment
- 12:30 P.M.** What's New in the Management of Metastatic Cancer?
- 1:30 P.M.** Streamlining Younger Cancer Patients' Clinical Care Pathways: The Value of Advanced Biomarker Testing
- 2:30 P.M.** Health Break: Educational Videos
- 2:45 P.M.** Unlocking the Potential of Your Tumour's Biomarkers Status: A Novel Tool to Identify Targeted Treatments and Clinical Trials
- 3:15 P.M.** The Importance of Information Sharing and the Role of Patient Groups in Promoting Health Equity
- 4:15 P.M.** Closing Remarks

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

## Optimizing Care for Early Age Onset Cancer Patients: The Role of Specialized Clinics

The unique care and treatment needs of young onset cancer patients are often not recognized and appropriately addressed. Ideally, cancer patients under the age of 50 years would have seamless access to a suite of healthcare professionals to address each of their unique care needs and support them along the trajectory of care, from diagnosis to surveillance.

Specialized Early Age Onset Cancer Clinics integrate multidisciplinary care to meet the specific care needs of this patient population to optimize cancer care pathways and patient outcomes. While the effectiveness of this care model is documented, it is not being broadly implemented or promoted.

In this session, clinical experts from multiple disciplines will elaborate on the advantages of early age onset cancer programs and highlight best practices that could be scaled to other cancer centres across jurisdictions.

The following topics will be addressed:

- The unique care and treatment needs of early age onset patients, ranging from diagnosis to survivorship
- Benefits of offering integrated, multidisciplinary care delivered through specialized clinics
- Evidence-based best practices in early age onset cancer care



CCRAN team celebrates our feature in Maclean's cancer issue!



## **The Role of Psychosocial Support for Young Adults Living with Cancer and Their Families**

Patients diagnosed with cancer at an earlier stage in adulthood face unique emotional and psychological challenges related to disruptions in their family life, personal goals, education, career, social relationships, financial status, and future planning. Moreover, young adults often lead complex lives as they are building their careers and families, and may lack the resources (time and financial) to help alleviate the burden of a cancer diagnosis, navigating healthcare, and paying for diagnostic and therapeutic interventions that are not covered publicly. This combination of factors contributes to heightened emotional distress in this patient population. This session was designed to highlight the unique existential and psychosocial experiences of early age onset cancer patients, particularly those diagnosed with metastatic disease, and the psychosocial supports they seek, are able to access, and find helpful at different phases of their disease trajectory. The impact of a late-stage diagnosis on an individual's clinical and mental health outcomes, as well as a person's social and family environment will be considered in the context of support needs.

Experts in clinical and psychosocial care will speak to the support needs they are encountering with young onset cancer patients in their practice and research, how these needs vary depending on disease stage, and how psychosocial interventions can be effectively and optimally incorporated into cancer care at the healthcare provider and organizational level. They will also speak to the profiles of individuals who seek out psychosocial supports and the importance of raising awareness around the psychosocial needs of this patient population and the role of supports.

## **The Role of the Gut Microbiome in Cancer Treatment**

A medical oncologist and clinician scientist with an expertise in immunotherapy and the microbiome. Dr. Elkrief will provide an overview of the gut microbiome role in cancer treatment. The audience will learn about factors that impact and alter the gut microbiome, and its function, in terms of the role it plays in influencing the effectiveness of cancer therapies, specifically immunotherapies.

The following topics will be addressed:

- General information about the gut microbiome, factors that influence & modify the microbiome
- The role of the gut microbiome in cancer treatment, specifically immunotherapy, and its relation to melanoma and lung cancer
- Active clinical trials investigating the role of the microbiome in lung cancer and melanoma.



## What's New in the Management of Metastatic Cancer?

Cancer diagnosed in younger persons is typically more aggressive and more likely to be metastatic, requiring more aggressive treatments. Given their potential to live many more years, younger patients may have a higher risk tolerance and be open to experimental or cutting-edge treatments that can improve their longevity and quality of life. The prospect of novel therapies that promise fewer side effects and better management of their disease, even offering a cure or significant improvement in survival, is a powerful motivator for this patient population.

Targeted therapies that minimize damage to surrounding healthy tissue and reduce the risk of short- and long-term side effects may be of particular interest.

In this session, clinical experts in various cancer types will discuss novel therapies in the management of metastatic cancer that are especially appropriate among patients under the age of 50 years.

Experts will speak to:

- Therapies effective in the management of metastatic cancers
- Key therapeutic advancements that are improving treatment outcomes among young cancer patients in their practice
- The role of comprehensive genomic profiling (CGP) and ctDNA in the application of cutting-edge therapies to significantly improve the patient care trajectory

## Streamlining Younger Cancer Patients' Clinical Care pathways: The Value of Advanced Biomarker Testing

A cancer diagnosis for adults under 50 carries unique challenges due to their various life demands. Streamlining cancer care trajectories improves patients' care experiences and quality of life, reduces the societal burden of disease, and reduces healthcare costs. Precision diagnostics and treatment, enabled by advanced biomarker testing such as comprehensive genomic profiling (CGP), offers the potential to streamline care by enhancing treatment decisions. Access to CGP in Canada is limited, however, and not yet accepted as standard care. This session highlights the systemic barriers hindering streamlined cancer care in the Canadian healthcare landscape from the clinical, patient, and systems perspective, and examines the value of advanced biomarker testing in optimizing cancer care pathways for early age onset cancer patients.

Speakers will elaborate on the following topics:

- Benefits of advanced molecular testing in optimizing diagnostic and treatment pathways and its implementation in Canadian healthcare
- Timeliness of access to appropriate cancer treatment and the role of companion diagnostics
- Value of advanced molecular testing for early age onset cancer patients and for systems
- Use of real-world evidence to inform the implementation of CGP in cancer care pathways



The Jumbo Colon wraps up another successful summer season!

## Unlocking the Potential of Your Tumour's Biomarkers Status: A Novel Tool to Identify Targeted Treatments and Clinical Trials

Younger patients are often keen to explore innovative precision medicine treatment options and clinical trials. Founded by a cholangiocarcinoma survivor, Genomic Focus is a free online tool which helps patients to find personalized treatment options and clinical trials to manage their cancer and highlights the pivotal role of genomics in revolutionizing cancer outcomes.

The following will be addressed:

- How patients can better understand their tumour's biomarkers status
- The online tool's ability to identify potential clinical trials and available targeted therapies both within and outside of Canada

## The Importance of Information Sharing and the Role of Patient Groups in Promoting Health Equity

Navigating cancer as an early age onset patient can be an incredibly difficult journey. Patients from marginalized groups may face additional challenges and isolation throughout their cancer journey and it is imperative that the landscape continually identifies and implements the resources necessary to improve all outcomes.

following will be addressed in this session:

- System-level inequities & challenges patients have encountered within their personal cancer care journeys
- How the strategies, tools and efforts of patient groups have served to address systemic barriers to equitable access.
- Explore policy options and advocacy efforts aimed at improving equitable access to timely cancer care, particularly during the detection and diagnostic phases.





# OUR EXPERTS

We are privileged to have a phenomenal line up of moderators, panelists, and presenters, as well as an incredible Steering Committee who have provided thoughtful guidance and support in anticipation of this Symposium.





**Dr. Michael Raphael, MD, FRCPC;** Medical Oncologist, Odette Cancer Center, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

▶ **Steering Committee Co-Chair**

▶ **Session: Day 1, 10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.**

Dr. Raphael is a Medical Oncologist at the Odette Cancer Center at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Center. His practice is dedicated to the care of patients with gastrointestinal cancers. He completed his medical degree at Queen's University and his internal medicine and medical oncology training at the University of Toronto. He then completed an advanced cancer health services research fellowship and a Master's of Science (Healthcare Quality, Risk and Safety) at Queen's University. His research focus is on population-based cancer care. His research aims to identify ways to optimize the coordination and delivery of cancer care services, and to describe gaps in care, disparities in access to treatment, uptake of cancer therapies, and real-world toxicity and effectiveness. His research has already influenced practice guidelines globally and led to a new quality metric that is routinely captured by Cancer Care Ontario ("time to initiating adjuvant chemotherapy"). He is also a valued member of CCRAN's Scientific & Medical Advisory Board.



**Dr. Petra Wildgoose, MD, CCFP, MPH;** Primary Care Physician Lead, Young Adult Colorectal Cancer Clinic, Odette Cancer Center, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

▶ **Steering Committee Co-Chair**

▶ **Session: Day 1, 10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.**

▶ **Session: Day 2, 9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.**

▶ **Session: Day 2, 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**

Dr. Petra Wildgoose is a Family Physician with a specialization in Oncology. She is the lead of the Young Adult Colorectal Cancer Program at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto, where she addresses the physical, psychological, social, and lifestyle concerns unique to this patient population, and provides long-term survivorship care. She also works in the division of General Surgery as a surgical assistant in colorectal and hepatobiliary oncology. She received her certification in Family Medicine from the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Toronto in 2018, and prior to this, completed two years of residency training in General Surgery. She also has specific interests in both mental health and the care of young adults. She holds a Master of Public Health degree in Adolescent Health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and previously worked as an inpatient physician at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto. Her current interests are looking at the application of mindfulness-based interventions in improving the quality of life of young adult colorectal cancer patients. She is thrilled to be involved with CCRAN to promote awareness of early-age onset colorectal cancer.



**Christopher Mammoliti, BComm (Hons);** EAOC Patient Expert; Thyroid Cancer Survivor & Stage 4 Colon Cancer Survivor

- ▶ **Steering Committee Member**
- ▶ **Session: Day 1, 9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**
- ▶ **Session: Day 1, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**
- ▶ **Session: Day 1, 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

Christopher is a 39 years old, 3 time cancer survivor, father of two and a husband. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) Management Degree, and graduated with High Honours and as Class Valedictorian. He worked 15 years in management, primarily as General Manager of Seal & Design Canada. He served 4 years as the publicly elected Toronto District School Board Trustee for Humber River – Black Creek, subsequently elected by his fellow Trustees to sit as Vice-Chair of the Board. Christopher was awarded the Canadian Heraldic Platinum Jubilee Award for Outstanding Community Leadership by The Honourable MP Judy Sgro for this work. He is currently Director of CGM Group Inc., focusing on organizational/business consulting. He serves as Chair/Member of Seneca College's Business Program Advisory Committee since 2016.



**Dr. Catalina Lopez-Correa, MD, Ph.D.;**  
Chief Scientific Officer, Genome Canada

- ▶ **Steering Committee Member**

Dr. Lopez-Correa is the Chief Scientific Officer (CSO) at Genome Canada. Dr. Lopez-Correa has dedicated her career to genomics and its transformative applications in life sciences in Canada and internationally. As CSO at Genome Quebec (2008-2015) and Genome BC (2015-2019), she was instrumental in developing competitive teams for research and innovation initiatives raising the profile of Canadian genomics on the global stage. Recently, as the Executive Director of the Canadian COVID19 Genomics Network (CanCOGeN) she led a \$40M initiative to advance the use of genomics to understand and control the COVID19 pandemic. Now, as CSO of Genome Canada, and as a breast cancer survivor, she is taking genomics to the next level, by advancing the national and global implementation of genomic technologies.

Dr. Lopez-Correa's work has been recognized with several awards. In 2017 the Canadian Senate 150th Anniversary Medal, in 2013 the National Order of Merit from Colombia.



**Dr. Darren Larsen, MD, CCFP, MPL;** Chair, Cancer Quality Council of Ontario; Board Chair Elect, Canadian Partnership Against Cancer; Senior Fellow, Women's College Hospital Institute for Health System Solutions and Virtual Care; Lecturer, Department of Family and Community Medicine and Institute for Health Policy, Management and Evaluation, University of Toronto

▶ **Steering Committee Member**

▶ **Session: Day 1, 2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.**

Over his 33 years as a comprehensive care Family Physician, Darren has been involved in many provincial and national Health IT, Quality and Physician Leadership initiatives in Canada. He has contributed to multiple digital health, primary care and quality commissions for the Ontario Ministry of Health, Ontario Health (Quality, Digital Services and Cancer Care) as well as the Ontario and Canadian Medical Associations. He is Chair of the Cancer Quality Council of Ontario, Board Chair Elect for the federal agency Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, and is a senior fellow at WIHV (Women's College Hospital Institute for Health System Solutions and Virtual Care). Most recently Darren has held senior executive positions at Accenture and TELUS Health. His digital health interests include data analytics, measurement for quality improvement and accountability, physician change and issues of scale and spread.

Darren obtained his Bachelor of Science at the University of Alberta, Medical Doctorate at the University of Calgary, did residency at the University of Ottawa and holds a Masters Certificate in Physician Leadership from York University's Schulich School of Executive Management. He was most recently Chief Medical Director of TELUS Health Care Centres nationally, practiced at Women's College Hospital, and teaches at the University of Toronto in the Department of Family and Community Medicine as well as the Institute for Health Policy Management and Evaluation.



**Dr. Alexandra Pettit, MD, FRCPC;** Pathologist, Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital, Horizon Health Network

▶ **Steering Committee Member**

In Dr. Alexandra Pettit's early career, she was a pathologist in her hometown of Fredericton, New Brunswick. Her Undergraduate training was at Western University, Medical School at Memorial University and Residency training at Dalhousie University in Anatomical Pathology. Dr. Pettit's special interest lies in ensuring timely biomarker testing for patients.





**Dr. Mita Manna, MD, FRCPC;** Medical Oncologist, Provincial Disease Site Lead for Breast Malignancies, Saskatoon Cancer Centre

► **Steering Committee Member**

Dr. Manna is a medical oncologist at the Saskatoon Cancer Centre and Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan. She is the Provincial Disease Site Lead and the Multidisciplinary Tumor Board Chair for Breast Malignancies. Her clinical focus includes breast and thoracic malignancies, with research interests in mainstream genetic testing, quality improvement, and real-world outcomes.



**Jason Abramovitch,** Early Age Onset Metastatic Colorectal Cancer Survivor Under Surveillance

► **Session: Day 1, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

At the age of 36 Jason was faced with a Stage 3 B Colon Cancer diagnosis. His treatment consisted of surgery and 6 months of chemotherapy. Two weeks after his last chemotherapy treatment, Jason and his wife adopted a beautiful baby girl, Kira Marie! While adjusting to becoming a dad, Jason and his wife were left to pick up the pieces of the emotional, physical, mental, and financial toll cancer took on him and his family.

After being NED for almost 2 years, this September, a nodule was found on Jason's lung, and he underwent SBRT and now back on surveillance. Guidance and a second opinion through CCRAN gave him confidence in his decision to use SBRT as opposed to a major surgery.

Cancer has taken so much from Jason and his family but has also been a beautiful experience. He has had some incredible opportunities to grow, learn, and give back within the community. Cancer took his confidence and trust in his body and its ability and introduced constant self-doubt and worry which has been a challenge to navigate.

Although many things are different now Jason is proudly still working full time, spending time with family and friends, Director of Man Up to Cancer's yearly retreat, sitting on the Patient Advisory Board of CCRAN and the Ottawa Cancer Foundation, and participating in advocacy and storytelling around North America. Despite neuropathy and setbacks, Jason has gained the ability to run again and participate in his first 1/2 marathon since his diagnosis 4 years ago!



**Bukun Adegbembo, M.Sc.;** Director of Operations,  
Canadian Breast Cancer Network

► **Session: Day 2, 3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.**

Bukun Adegbembo is the Director of Operations with the Canadian Breast Cancer Network (CBCN). As the Director of Operations, Bukun is responsible for the overall operations of CBCN, including financial management, strategic planning, strategic partnerships, and the day-to-day operations of the organization. Bukun works in close collaboration with the Health Policy and Advocacy Lead, the Manager of Education, and the Chair of the Board of Directors to ensure that CBCN voices the views and concerns of breast cancer patients through the promotion of information sharing, education, and advocacy activities.



**Dr. Darren Brenner, Ph.D.;** Armstrong Investigator in  
Molecular Epidemiology; Associate Professor, Departments  
of Oncology and Community Health Sciences; Division Head  
– Preventive Oncology; Director of Research – Forzani &  
MacPhail Colon Cancer Screening Centre; Director – Cancer  
Screening, Detection and Risk Reduction Program, University  
of Calgary

► **Session: Day 1, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Dr. Darren Brenner is a molecular cancer epidemiologist and an Associate Professor in the Departments of Oncology and Community Health Sciences at the University of Calgary. He holds the Armstrong Investigatorship in Molecular Cancer Epidemiology at the Cumming School of Medicine. He is the Director of Research at the Forzani & MacPhail Colon Cancer Screening Centre and the Director for the Cancer Screening, Detection and Risk Reduction Program in the Charbonneau Institute. He is the current co-chair for the Canadian Cancer Statistics Advisory Committee and Advisor for the OncoSim All-Cancers Microsimulation Model. Dr. Brenner leads a research program at the University of Calgary focused on using big data and precision health analytics to model cancer risk and outcomes. His research is focused on the intersection of lifestyle, genetics and molecular pathways in the development of several cancers. Dr. Brenner is currently leading studies to examine the utility of biomarkers in the prediction of cancer risk. He is also examining the impact of lifestyle (obesity, physical inactivity, smoking, poor nutrition) and environmental factors on relevant genetic and molecular pathways in colorectal, breast and lung cancer risk. Dr. Brenner completed his Ph.D. in Epidemiology at the University of Toronto followed by a post-doctoral fellowship at the International Agency for Research on Cancer of the World Health Organization in Lyon, France. To date he has published over 240 peer-reviewed articles in leading journals in the areas of oncology and epidemiology.



**Michelle Audoin**, Patient Advocate and Community Collaborator; All.Can Canada Evidence Working Group; Thyroid Cancer and Metastatic Breast Cancer Patient

► **Session: Day 2, 3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.**

Michelle Audoin is an experienced and passionate patient advocate and community collaborator. She uses her living experience of cancer to shine a light on some of the disparities Black women experience when navigating a breast cancer diagnosis. Her advocacy work focuses on driving systemic change through partnerships including volunteer roles at CCTG, OICR PFAC, 3CTN, All.Can Canada, Princess Margaret, and Women's College Hospital.

Michelle uses her elementary school training to educate others by sharing her story and experiences on podcasts, panels, and awareness campaigns. She is most proud of raising two amazing and compassionate kids who support her cancer advocacy work.



**Dr. Shantanu Banerji, B.Sc. (Med), MD, FRCPC**; Medical Oncologist, CancerCare Manitoba, MacCharles Site; Senior Scientist, Research Institute in Haematology and Oncology, CancerCare Manitoba; Director, Precision Oncology and Advanced Therapeutics, CancerCare Manitoba; Assistant Professor, Department of Internal Medicine, Section of Haematology/ Oncology, University of Manitoba

► **Session: Day 2, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Dr. Banerji is a Medical Oncologist at CancerCare Manitoba with a practice focused on lung cancer and sarcoma. He is also the Director of Precision Oncology and Advanced Therapeutics where he guides the strategy to implement companion diagnostics for cancer care. His laboratory at the Paul Albrechtsen Research Institute is focused on the application of Comprehensive Genomic Profiling to guide the cancer discovery and treatment.



**Dr. Amanda Boldertson, RTT, FCAMRT**; Co-founder, Queering Cancer

► **Session: Day 2, 3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.**

Dr. Amanda Bolderston is a radiation therapist, educator and researcher. She is a Fellow and Past President of the Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists and current Editor in Chief of the Canadian Journal of Medical Imaging and Radiation Sciences. Her research areas include patient advocacy and improving affirming care for queer, trans and non-binary patients affected by cancer. She is a co-founder of the website Queering Cancer and recently completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the University Health Network in Toronto focusing on the experiences of queer and trans oncology healthcare professionals.





**Kathleen Barnard**, Founder and President, Save Your Skin Foundation (SYSF)

▶ **Session: Day 1, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Kathleen Barnard is Founder and President of Save Your Skin Foundation (SYSF), a national not-for-profit group dedicated to the prevention of non-melanoma skin cancers, melanoma, and ocular melanoma. In 2003, Kathy was diagnosed with stage 4 malignant melanoma. By the establishment of SYSF in 2006, her cancer had spread to her vital organs and her treatment options were limited. Fortunately, one of her sons discovered an immunotherapy trial treatment taking place in Alberta, Canada; this trial would save Kathy's life. While her cancer treatments have finished, the battle with melanoma is not over for Barnard. Kathy prioritizes patient care and support. Kathy was a key player in federal tanning bed legislation for Canada's Youth, and is the recipient of the British Columbia Community Achievement Award for her leadership in addressing and raising awareness around skin cancer issues. Additionally, Kathy is on the Conference Board of Canada advisory committee for Value of Oncology Innovation in Canada.



**Dr. Karine Bilodeau, RN, Ph.D.**; Associate Professor, Faculty of Nursing, University of Montreal; Researcher, Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital Research Centre

▶ **Session: Day 2, 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**

Dr. Karine Bilodeau is an associate professor at the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Montreal and a regular researcher at the Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital Research Centre. With strong clinical experience in oncology nursing, she has led a research program focused on optimizing healthcare services for cancer survivors. In recent years, Dr. Bilodeau has conducted research on cancer survivorship, particularly addressing the needs of young adults living with and beyond cancer. She is currently leading projects aimed at enhancing community services for young adults and integrating self-management educational innovations for them.



**Dr. Christine Brezden-Masley, MD, Ph.D., FRCPC;** Senior Practicing Medical Oncologist and Medical Director, Cancer Program, Sinai Health; Director, Marvelle Koffler Breast Centre, Sinai Health; Marvelle Koffler Chair in Breast Research; Professor, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto; Associate Scientist, Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute

► **Session: Day 2, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Christine Brezden-Masley, MD Ph.D. FRCPC is a senior practicing Medical Oncologist and the Medical Director of the Cancer Program at Sinai Health System in Toronto, Canada. She is also the Director of the Marvelle Koffler Breast Centre at Sinai Health and holds the Marvelle Koffler Chair in Breast Research. She obtained her Ph.D. in Medical Biophysics at the Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto and her Medical Degree from the University of Toronto. She is a Professor at the Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto and an Associate Scientist at the Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute, Toronto, Canada.

She treats both breast and gastrointestinal (colorectal and gastric cancers) malignancies, which are her major areas of research interest. Her main area of clinical research is cardiotoxicity from cancer therapy and is the Past-President of the Canadian Cardio-Oncology Network (2017–2022). She also serves on the International Cardio-Oncology Society (ICOS) annual summit steering committees and co-chaired the 2022 Global Cardio-Oncology Summit in Toronto. She co-chairs the Junior Mentoring Program JuMP that fosters mentorship/sponsorship of junior medical oncology faculty across Canada and serves on the executive of WinC (Women in Cancer/All in Cancer). She is an advocate for patients and serves on CCRAN's Medical & Scientific Advisory Board, and as a board member of ReThink Breast Cancer and MyGutFeeling.



**Dr. Arielle Elkrif, MD;** Assistant Professor, Dept. of Hemato-Oncology, The University of Montreal Hospital Research Centre; Co-Director, CHUM Microbiome Centre

► **Session: Day 2, 12:15 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Dr. Arielle Elkrif, MD, is Assistant Professor in the Dept. of Hemato-Oncology, and a medical oncologist specialized in the care of patients with lung cancer and melanoma. She is Co-Director of the CHUM Microbiome Centre and conducts numerous microbiome-centered trials. She leads her research laboratory focused on the tumour microbiome at the CR-CHUM.



**Dr. Ronald Burkes**, Professor of Medicine, University of Toronto; Medical Oncologist, Mount Sinai Hospital/ Princess Margaret Cancer Centre/ University Health Network

▶ **Session: Day 2, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Dr. Ron Burkes is Professor of Medicine at The University of Toronto and staff medical oncologist at Mount Sinai Hospital/Princess Margaret Cancer Centre/University Health Network in Toronto. He was on the medical oncology training committee for the University of Toronto for 23 years and the program director for the medical oncology training program from 1996 to 2005 during which time he introduced the academic half day, the longitudinal clinic experience, the annual medical oncology research day and the staff medical oncology outstanding teaching awards. He was also the director of the Clinical Teaching Unit at the PMCC from 1999 to 2005 and established the teaching curriculum for the internal medicine residents rotating through the PMCC. He is now the Medical Oncology Mentorship Facilitator for the Division of Medical Oncology, Department of Medicine, University of Toronto. He has won numerous teaching awards including Departmental and University wide awards on 19 occasions, the Anderson Award in Program Development and the Hasselback Teaching Award at PMCC. He has presented at many local, provincial, national and international meetings. His research interests include lung and GI malignancies with a primary interest in lung, colorectal and gastric cancers. He has numerous publications including 130 peer reviewed, 154 non-peer reviewed and 2 book chapters.

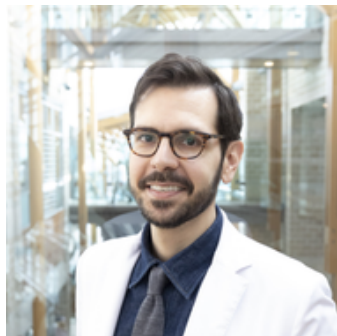


**Jennifer Catsburg, RN, MN;** Clinical Nurse Specialist, Adolescent and Young Adult Program, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, University Health Network

▶ **Session: Day 2, 9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.**

Jennifer Catsburg RN MN CON(c) is a Clinical Nurse Specialist with the Adolescent and Young Adult Program at The Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, focusing on supporting patients between in the ages of 18–39 on their cancer journey. This role includes counseling patients on fertility preservation, sexual health, diet, exercise, coping, body image related concerns, mental health and transitions to and from school or work. Fun Facts: Jennifer was once a flight attendant and enjoys travelling, baking with her 3 children, yoga and swimming.





**Dr. Joseph C. Del Paggio**, Medical Oncologist and Chief of the Department of Oncology, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre – Regional Cancer Centre

► **Session: Day 2, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Dr. Joseph C. Del Paggio is a Medical Oncologist and Chief of the Department of Oncology at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre – Regional Cancer Centre. He completed his medical degree at University of Ottawa, and subsequent Internal Medicine and Medical Oncology training at Queen's University and University of Toronto, respectively. He holds an Associate Professorship at Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) University, and serves as the Co-Chair for the Committee to Support Student Professionalism for the undergraduate curriculum. He continues to collaborate on research projects and peer-reviewed publications that focus on cost and benefit in cancer care. His primary treatment focus is on patients with gastrointestinal, genitourinary, head and neck, and central nervous system malignancies.

**Michelle Di Tomaso**, Co-Founder, Dense Breasts Canada; Stage 2B Breast Cancer Patient, Triple Positive, HER2+

► **Session: Day 1, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Michelle's personal journey with breast cancer led to significant changes in breast health awareness. Identifying a critical gap in breast cancer screening protocols related to breast density, her advocacy prompted significant changes with BC Cancer updating its website and implementing brochures to include breast density information.

Michelle spearheaded the impactful 'Tell Me My Breast Density' campaign, resulting in 2018 BC becoming the first province to notify women of their breast density and pay for the supplemental screening through MSP. Michelle's dedication and leadership transformed breast cancer screening not only in BC but also catalyzed significant change across Canada. Her involvement in the BC Cancer Breast Screening Working Group, participation in critical press conferences, and co-authored research in prestigious journals have revolutionized breast health practices, benefiting women nationwide.

Michelle was the recent recipient of the 2024 YWCA Women of Distinction Award in the Community Champion Category for Metro Vancouver. She continues to empower women to know their breast density and the screening options available to them as mammogram is not enough to confidently rule out the presence of breast cancer in women who have Dense Breasts.



**Dr. Cathy Eng, MD, FACP, FASCO;** Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, Nashville, TN; David H. Johnson Chair in Surgical and Medical Oncology; Professor of Medicine, Hematology and Oncology; Director for Strategic Relations; Co-Director, GI Oncology; Co-Leader, Gastrointestinal Cancer Research Program; Director, Young Adult Cancers Program; Co-Chair, NCI Gastrointestinal Steering Committee

► **Session: Day 2, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Cathy Eng, MD, FACP, FASCO, Professor of Medicine, Hematology and Oncology, is the David H. Johnson Endowed Chair of Surgical and Medical Oncology, Co-Director of GI Oncology and the Co-Leader of the Gastrointestinal Cancer Research Program, Director of Strategic Relations, and the Director of the Young Adults Cancers Program at Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center. She served as the Ambassador for the American Cancer Society ResearchHERS campaign in Nashville (2020–2022). She currently sits on the Board of Directors for the national patient advocacy group, Fight Colorectal Cancer. She is a highly sought mentor and served on the Vanderbilt-Ingram Mentorship Council and is currently a mentor on the T-32 grant and serves as a Professional Development Mentor. She served as the Director of the Developmental Research Program for the GI SPORE. She continues to assume leadership positions devoted to development of phase I–III clinical trials using novel therapeutics for biomarker discovery and enhanced drug utilization in colorectal, appendiceal and anal cancer. She was awarded the VUMC Biomedical Scientific Impact Award in 2023.

Nationally, Dr. Eng has also been highly active serving on ASCO, ECOG, and SWOG. She has served as the co-chair of the SWOG Rectal/Anal Cancer Subcommittee, the Vice-Chair for the SWOG GI Committee, Chairman of the NCI Rectal/Anal Task Force, served on the NCI GI Steering Committee, and is currently the co-Chair of the NCI GI Steering Committee. She was also chosen as a Fellow of the Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM), Class of 2022.

She has published in many peer-reviewed journals including Journal of Clinical Oncology, Lancet, Lancet Oncology, Nature Review, JNCI, New England Journal of Medicine, Annals of Oncology, Cancer, and Annals of Surgical Oncology. She has served as a consultant to the FDA and AHRQ, Cancer Research UK: Training & Career Development Board – Clinician Scientist Fellowship, the Italian Association for Cancer Research, the Dutch Digestive Foundation, the Stand Up to Cancer (SU2C) – Farrah Fawcett Foundation Joint Scientific Advisory Committee (JSAC) and the SWOG Impact Award.



**Dr. Mary Jane Esplen, Ph.D.;** Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto

► **Session: Day 2, 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**

Dr. Mary Jane Esplen is Professor and former Vice-Chair, Department of Psychiatry, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, former Clinician-Scientist at University Health Network and founded de Souza Institute – a National Centre of education for oncology health professionals. She has held Career Scientist awards from CIHR and NCIC for psychosocial oncology research, completing studies of psychotherapeutic treatments to support adjustment to being diagnosed with cancer or receiving genetic risk information in breast, colorectal or pancreatic cancer. Other areas of research include studies addressing body image among cancer survivors or the management of grief and loss. Dr. Esplen gives numerous workshops and keynotes and has received several awards, including the lifetime achievement award from Canadian Association Psychosocial Oncology and the Bernard Fox Memorial Award from International Psycho-oncology Society.



**Dr. Karen Fergus,** Clinical Psychologist, Odette Cancer Center, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre; Associate Professor, York University, Dept. of Psychology

► **Session: Day 2, 9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.**

Dr. Karen Fergus is a Clinical Psychologist and Associate Professor with the Department of Psychology at York University where she directs the Psychosocial Oncology Lab. She is cross appointed at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in the Odette Cancer Center where she has been practicing as a clinician and researcher for 25 years. She is the current Psychosocial Oncology Lead for Toronto Central North. Dr. Fergus's research interests include: differential impacts of cancer across the life cycle; illness-related loss and grief; couple resilience and couple adjustment to life-threatening illness; and the development and evaluation of educational and psychotherapeutic interventions to address these issues. Her research has been recognized by the U.S. National Council on Family Relations, and she was awarded the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, "Cause Leadership Award" in recognition of her advocacy for young women with breast cancer.





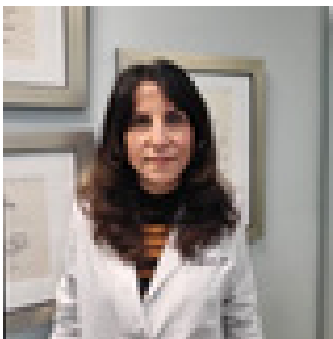
**Thomas Flannery, B.Sc., MBA; Stage 4 Prostate Cancer Patient; Prostate Cancer Foundation Canada**

► **Session: Day 1, 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

In 2011, Thomas was diagnosed with prostate cancer. His disease is advanced metastatic in nature and primarily located in his thoracic lymph system. Over the last 13 years, Thomas's treatment has consisted of a radical prostatectomy, two lymph dissections, hormone therapy, eventually chemotherapy, and second generation ARAT drug, darolutamide, which is effectively controlling his disease.

Thomas's education includes a B.Sc. in Biology Biochemistry and an MBA. He has worked in aerospace as an engineer, consulting, the music industry, and is now a builder.

Thomas's advocacy began in 2012 where he joined a local support group to assist other men with prostate cancer. His science background and general inquisitive nature have been useful attributes to assist in navigating the complex landscape of prostate cancer and permitted him to communicate very effectively with the myriad of health care professionals and other men. Thomas has participated as a patient advocate in numerous research grant reviews, as part of the Scientist–Survivor Participant program with AACR 2023, with CIHR, and as a Patient Participant with BioCanRx at their Summit for Immunotherapy. He has met international researchers while participating as a Patient Representative in grant reviews, furthering his understanding of this disease. As one of the leaders in the PCFC (Prostate Cancer Foundation Canada), Advanced Cancer Support Group and as a participant in the Toronto Warriors he has been counselling men with advanced metastatic disease both locally and nationally in Canada helping them understand their disease and to enable them to effectively engage their medical teams.



**Dr. Iris Gorfinkel, MD, CM; Principal Investigator and Founder, PrimeHealth Clinical Research**

► **Session: Day 1, 3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

Dr. Gorfinkel is a family physician in Toronto. She is a Principal Investigator and Founder of PrimeHealth Clinical Research where she has participated in over sixty phase 2 and 3 clinical trials with an emphasis on primary care and vaccination. She has been a medical contributor to radio and television for CBC, Corus Media and Zoomer Media.



**Stephanie Florian**, Weather Anchor, Reporter and Actor;  
Caregiver of Spouse who succumbed to Early Age Onset  
Metastatic Colorectal Cancer

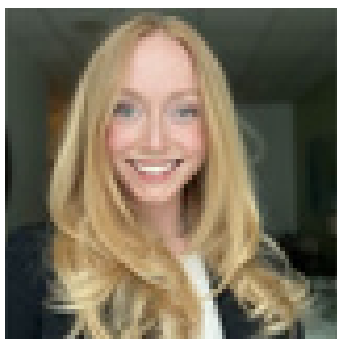
► **Session: Day 2, 9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.**

Stephanie Florian is a weather anchor / reporter and UBCP/ ACTRA actor.

Stephanie met the love of her life 'Hot Rod' 20 years ago while training to be adventure guides. Living life to the fullest with their two beautiful sons Cash (14) and Presley (9), Steph and Rod were building their dream life full of love and laughter... planning a long future ahead.

In October 2020 just days before his 43rd birthday, Rod was diagnosed with Stage 4 Colorectal Cancer. Steph, Rod, Cash and Presley were in shock. No Signs. No symptoms. In a heartbeat, their family as they knew it exploded. Seven months later, Rod was officially in palliative care; all hopes and dreams dashed despite trying countless traditional and holistic treatment options. March 6, 2022, Rod passed away peacefully at home surrounded by love and family.

CCRAN, Rod's excellent team of doctors, community nurses, therapists and healers all took a pivotal role in their Colorectal Cancer journey. Stephanie now hopes that if she can help other families to navigate the darkness and the depths of this devastating disease, she will sleep at night knowing she has done something to help other young families like hers. Knowledge is power and the ability to communicate her experience and the lessons learned along the way is a gift Stephanie plans to embrace and to share.



**Madison Fullerton**, VP, Operations & Community  
Partnerships, Praxus Health

► **Session: Day 2, 3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.**

Madison Fullerton is a founding member and the Vice President of Operations and Community Partnerships at Praxus Health (formerly 19 to Zero), a health not-for-profit. With a background in public health and clinical exercise physiology, Madison has extensive experience collaborating with diverse communities to promote healthy behaviors, including cancer screening and physical activity. She is currently co-leading, in partnership with Alberta Health Services, a pilot program to implement HPV self-sampling for cervical cancer screening among under screened populations in Alberta. Alongside her role at Praxus Health, Madison is pursuing a PhD in Medical Sciences at the University of Calgary, and serves as Co-Chair of Emerging Health Leaders in Calgary.



**Elise Gasbarrino**, Founder & Executive Director, Pink Pearl Canada; Early Age Onset Ovarian Cancer

► **Session: Day 1, 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

With a love for fashion since childhood, Elise Gasbarrino has worked with luxury fashion brands in NYC. While pursuing her career in her early twenties, she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. As she underwent rigorous cancer treatment, she realized a gap in cancer support for young women. Elise envisioned a way to connect with other young women facing similar challenges and providing an environment to conquer these challenges together.

Her vision transpired into Pink Pearl Canada, a thriving charitable organization focused on bringing together young women affected by cancer through a network of peer support and innovative programs. In 2017, Cancer Care Ontario recognized Elise's exemplary and compassionate work in cancer care by honouring her with the Human Touch Award. In 2016, Elise received the Burberry Icon Award for her demonstrative work in social responsibility. Elise is passionate about supporting initiatives that support women, and about self-growth through continual learning and new experiences.

Her entrepreneurial spirit has led her to invest in female-founded start-up organizations including Style.ca, an online lifestyle space for modern Canadians. Elise splits her time between New York City and Niagara to spend quality time with her family and close friends.



**Julia Girmenia**, Key Collaborator, Rethink Breast Cancer; Stage 4 Early Age Onset Inflammatory Breast Cancer Patient

► **Session: Day 2, 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**

Julia (she/her) is a passionate advocate, dedicated traveller, and "stage 4 thriver" diagnosed at 33 with Inflammatory Breast Cancer (Her2+). Julia found healing through Rethink's Stretch, Heal, Grow retreat, and various community programming. She is committed to changing the negative narrative surrounding life with Metastatic Breast Cancer and raising awareness about the disease. With over 15 years of experience in Canada's charitable sector, Julia has led the delivery of high-impact initiatives focusing on arts & culture, climate action, food insecurity and women's health. She has spoken on numerous media platforms and fundraisers to inspire change and drive awareness for these important issues. Julia is fueled by her love for adventure and connecting with people. MBC can't stop Julia from bringing joy, energy, and a zest for life to everything she does.





**Jenn Gordon**, Lead, Strategic Operations and Engagement, Rethink Breast Cancer

▶ **Session: Day 1, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

▶ **Session: Day 2, 3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.**

Jenn Gordon is the Lead, Strategic Operations and Engagement at Rethink Breast Cancer where she works with stakeholders including health care professionals, government agencies and industry partners to ensure the experiences of people living with breast cancer shape priorities, policies and decisions. Having worked with the breast cancer community for over a decade, Jenn strives to develop collaborative opportunities to address the many unmet needs of people living with breast cancer.



**Dr. Robert Grant, MD, Ph.D., FRCPC**; Medical Oncologist, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, University Health Network; Hold'em for Life Professor in Cancer Research, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto; Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto; Associate Member, Institute of Medical Science, School of Graduate Studies, University of Toronto ; Adjunct Scientist, ICES; Associate, Ontario Institute for Cancer Research

▶ **Session: Day 2, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Robert Grant is an MD/ Ph.D. Clinician Investigator at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, also affiliated with the Institute for Medical Science at the University of Toronto, ICES, and the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research. He is a practicing medical oncologist, specializing in the treatment of pancreatic and biliary cancers. His research focuses on applying artificial intelligence to clinical and genomic data to improve outcomes for people with cancer. He holds several awards, including the Hold'em for Life Professorship and the Marathon of Hope Clinician Scientist Award. He is currently the Principal Investigator of the AIM2REDUCE study, Co-Principal Investigator of the Legresley Biliary Registry, and Co-Lead of the PanCuRx Translational Research Initiative.



**Laura Greer**, Senior Vice President and National Health Sector Lead, Health and Wellness, Hill & Knowlton; Breast Cancer Advocate

► **Session: Day 1, 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

Laura brings more than 25 years of health public affairs experience, integrating communications, stakeholder, digital and government relations strategies to achieve public policy and business objectives. She has worked extensively in oncology, chronic disease and rare disease, leading advocacy campaigns that engage patients, health professionals and government stakeholders. At H&K, she has led accounts in the pharmaceutical, health professional, digital health, seniors care, hospital, regulator and not-for-profit sectors, including serving as executive director of a patient advocacy organization. Laura has a demonstrated track record of success and an established network of health system partners. Laura serves as strategic lead for the Cancer Action Now Alliance and the Right2Survive lung cancer campaign.

While having worked professionally in cancer advocacy for many years, it became very personal when Laura was diagnosed with metastatic lobular breast cancer in late 2021. She uses this firsthand patient experience to inform communications and advocacy strategies.

Before joining the firm, Laura spent more than a decade working in Ontario's hospital sector, gaining first-hand experience inside the health system. She was a senior member of the public affairs team at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), focusing on developing and implementing public affairs and public relations programs, including reactive and proactive media relations, internal communications and issues management. As head of the research public affairs portfolio, Laura built the public profile of the SickKids Research Institute, with a particular focus on genetics, genomic and stem cell research. She also developed government and stakeholder relations programs to secure sustainable funding for research and innovation.

Laura holds a bachelor of arts (Honours) in political science from McGill University and a graduate diploma in journalism from Concordia University and worked in print journalism before entering the field of public affairs. She lives in Toronto with her husband and two teenage sons.



**Dr. Usmaan Hameed**, Colorectal Surgical Oncologist, North York General Hospital

▶ **Session: Day 2, 9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.**

Dr. Hameed completed his residency and Surgical Oncology fellowship at the University of Toronto in 2015. He has an interest in minimally invasive and transanal approaches to gastrointestinal malignancies, organ preservation in the setting of rectal cancer, and surgical innovation to improve surgical safety. He is the clinical lead of the GI cancer program at North York General Hospital, which has recently established a Young Onset and Elder Onset colorectal cancer program.



**Eric Hamilton**, Stage 4 Colorectal Cancer Patient

▶ **Session: Day 2, 9:35 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.**

Eric Hamilton is a Stage 4 colorectal cancer patient living in Edmonton, Alberta. He and his wife Jasmine have two children: Byron, aged 11 and Julianne, aged 8. While continuing systemic treatment, he works full-time as a Senior Policy Analyst with the Government of Alberta. Diagnosed with colon cancer at Stage 3 initially in June 2022 at age 41, he underwent a successful colon resection surgery and adjuvant chemotherapy. Unfortunately, 18 months later, the disease was found to have spread to his liver and nearby lymph nodes. Eric then underwent a liver resection and currently has disease only in the retroperitoneal lymph nodes. He hopes to regain his health in the long term and to be off treatment eventually. Eric understands the young-onset patient experience well. He advocates for aggressive, curative treatments for himself and other under-50 CRC patients who may also have young families, careers, and potentially decades left to live. He and his family appreciate the support CCRAN has provided them through one-on-one support and through patients and caregiver support groups. Despite being in treatment, Eric is determined to make the best of life through camping, cycling, and most recently learning to play the piano.





**Anthony Henry, B.A.(Econ.);** President, The Walnut Foundation

▶ **Session: Day 2, 3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.**

Anthony is currently President of The Walnut Foundation, a Black men's prostate cancer support and self-help group. He previously served as an advisor to the board from 2012 to 2019 and as First Vice-President from October 2019 to June 2023. Prostate cancer is prevalent in Anthony's family. He is one of four family members with prostate cancer and so he is very passionate about the issue. Anthony, like a number of the men at The Walnut Foundation, have decided that the best way to improve health outcomes for Black men is to be there as a support, to provide guidance to other men in our community who are so impacted before diagnosis, during treatment and post treatment. He believes we owe this to our men until such time as research can catch up and help to improve the odds for black men on the prostate cancer incidences and mortality file. He further believes we need to remove the shroud of secrecy around prostate cancer and start dialoguing more to help each other. He is a trained Peer Navigator with the True North Peer Navigator Program which operates out of Princess Margaret Hospital. He also volunteers with the annual Movember campaign which seeks to raise awareness and funds to support prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and men's mental health. Professionally, Anthony has over 30 years' experience as a Financial Advisor.



**Brenda Clayton, MN;** President & Founder, Cholangio-Hepatocellular Carcinoma Canada

▶ **Session: Day 1, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Brenda was the primary caregiver for her daughter, Rebecca, who passed away from cholangiocarcinoma (CCA). Rebecca was diagnosed in June 2020 at the beginning of the pandemic and died June 30, 2021. It was Rebecca's wish to carry on her fight against cholangiocarcinoma. Brenda and her family formed the Cholangio-Hepatocellular Carcinoma Canada charity to both honour Rebecca and carry out her wishes. Brenda is a retired Registered Nurse.



**Michelle Hoad**, CEO, Medical Laboratory Professionals' Association of Ontario (MLPAO)

► **Session: Day 1, 2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.**

Michelle is the CEO of the Medical Laboratory Professionals' Association of Ontario. The MLPAO is the largest provincial lab association in Canada. Michelle joined the MLPAO in October 2016 and over the past 7 years have seen a 73% growth in membership. The MLPAO have positioned themselves as the voice of med lab professionals in Ontario are go to place for government, media and stakeholders for lab human health resource information. Prior to joining the MLPAO, Michelle consulted with several provinces in helping them raise the profile of med lab professionals with government and media. She also spent 25 years in the for-profit sector working with Fortune 500 companies.

She is a Certified Association Executive, has been invited to speak at many lab industry events across the country and has made tremendous progress in the Ontario government influencing policy and obtaining much needed funding for lab professionals. Through COVID she had over 250+ media appearances in Ontario and across the country reinforcing the message that med lab professionals are at the center of healthcare, and that healthcare is more than just doctors and nurses.

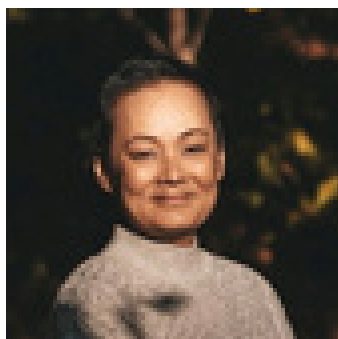
She is a certified personal trainer, fitness instructor and competitive golfer. She lives in Stoney Creek, Ontario with her husband and two fur babies, Vegas and Maui Hoad.

**Katie Hulan**, Lung Health Advocate; Early Age Onset Stage 4 ALK Positive Lung Cancer Patient

► **Session: Day 1, 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

Katie is a marketing professional and lung health advocate. She was diagnosed with Stage 4 ALK Positive lung cancer at 33 years old. Being diagnosed in Toronto and continuing care in Victoria, BC, Katie has perspectives on the different cancer care experiences provincially. When she is not working in her marketing career, you'll find her out hiking, exploring new areas or things to do, learning, or spending time with friends and family.





**Kathryn Hum, Patient Advocate; Early Age Onset De Novo Metastatic Breast Cancer Patient**

▶ **Session: Day 2, 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**

Kathryn Hum (she/her) was diagnosed with de novo metastatic breast cancer at the age of 40, four months after giving birth to her second child. Kat lives in Toronto with her two young children and has been receiving ongoing treatment for three years now, including radiation, gamma knife surgery, targeted hormone therapy, and chemotherapy. By sharing her experiences to date – the successes, challenges, and lessons learned – Kat is hoping others within the community might gain valuable insights from her journey.

With a professional career in research management, she brings over 10 years of academic training and non-profit experience related to team leadership, community advocacy, program development, knowledge mobilization, grant writing, and fundraising/event planning. Kat is passionate about supporting research that targets MBC-related projects and advocating for health policy changes that extend and improve the quality of life for women living with MBC. Kat has worked with Rethink Breast Cancer on a number of initiatives, including volunteering as a peer mentor in the Mentoring Matters program and contributing her perspective to the Rethink and Pfizer joint MBC RFP, and has recently become a Key Collaborator and MBC advisor.



**Dr. Gabriela Ilie, Ph.D.; Co-Founder, CancerPEP.org; Associate Professor of Epidemiology, Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University**

▶ **Session: Day 2, 2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.**

Dr. Gabriela Ilie is an Associate Professor of Epidemiology in the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University and the Endowed Soillse Scientist in Prostate Cancer Quality of Life Research. With over 20 years of experience in mental health, quality of life, and patient reported outcomes research, her work focuses on translational research, using evidence-based data to develop patient education and empowerment programs that meaningfully enhance the lives of individuals affected by cancer and chronic conditions.





**Dr. Jason Karamchandani, MD;** MD; Associate Professor, Departments of Pathology, Neurology and Neurosurgery, McGill University; President, Canadian Association of Pathologists

▶ **Session: Day 1, 2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.**

Dr. Jason Karamchandani graduated from Harvard College followed by medical school at Stanford University School of Medicine, where he remained for his residency training in anatomic pathology, and then fellowship training in surgical pathology and neuropathology. Dr. Karamchandani went on to practice neuropathology at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, before moving to practice neuropathology full time at the Montreal Neurological Institute. He is currently the Scientific Director of the MNI's Open Science C-BIG Repository and patient registry. He has authored or co-authored over 80 journal articles in peer-reviewed publications as well as 5 book chapters. He is the current president of the Canadian Association of Pathologists.



**Sam Karikas, Invasive Ductal Cell Carcinoma Patient**

▶ **Session: Day 1, 2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.**

Sam holds a BFA in Film & Video, a university certificate in Public Relations, and is trained in Organizational Innovation, transformation and design-thinking, with 16 years career experience in the non-profit, private, and public sectors. With a background in creative strategy and innovation, Sam is currently a CEO in the non-profit sector, working on a project for their museum to be established as a Canadian National Museum. In her spare time, Sam reads, writes, is a jury head for the Yorkton Film Festival, and sits on the Globe Theatre's Board of Directors.



**Dr. Pashtoon M. Kasi, MD, MS;** Medical Director, GI Medical Oncology; Associate Clinical Professor, Department of Medical Oncology & Therapeutics Research, City of Hope, Orange County, California

▶ **Session: Day 2, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Pashtoon Kasi, MD, is a gastrointestinal cancer specialist considered one of the nation's leading experts in the genomics of cancer and the development of personalized therapies. He sees GI cancer patients at City of Hope's Orange County Lennar Foundation Cancer Center in Irvine, CA. Dr. Kasi is known for his work on the "NEST" clinical trial which determined that a combination of immunotherapy drugs called botensilimab and balstilimab were effective in markedly killing colorectal cancer when given before surgery (neoadjuvant), thereby allowing the body to fight the tumors "roots up." This potentially offers new hope for cure for patients with this and other cancers. Additionally, he is highly regarded for his investigation of liquid biopsies, frequently collaborating with international researchers and industries.

Prior to City of Hope, Dr. Kasi was director of colon cancer and precision medicine research at Weill Cornell Medicine, where he led investigators studying liquid biopsies and their applications in diagnosing and treating colorectal and other cancers. He was also an associate professor at the University of Iowa and an assistant professor at Mayo Clinic.

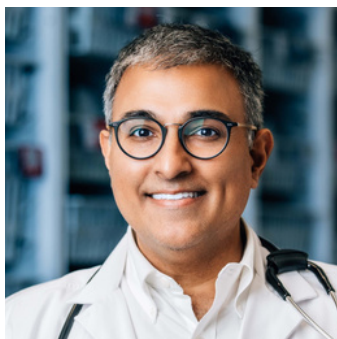
Dr. Kasi served a surgical internship at University of Texas Health Science Center and joined the International Scholars Program at the University of Pittsburgh for his residency. He also completed fellowships in oncology and hematology at Mayo Clinic and also a postdoctoral masters in clinical and translational research at Mayo.

**Frank Pitman, Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator, CCRAN**

▶ **Session: Day 2, 3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.**

Frank's experience with cancer began when his youngest sister Elaine was diagnosed with stage 4 colorectal cancer in 1999. Frank was her caregiver until her death a year later. Frank was subsequently diagnosed with stage 2 colon cancer in 2007 and is now cancer-free. After completing his treatments, he volunteered as a colorectal cancer coach in 2008 and continues to be involved in patient and caregiver support and colorectal cancer awareness activities. He is a proud member of the CCRAN team.





**Dr. Shaqil Kassam, MD, M.Sc., FRCPC;** Medical Oncologist, Stronach Regional Cancer Centre

► **Session: Day 2, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Dr. Kassam is a Staff Medical Oncologist at the Stronach Regional Cancer Centre in Newmarket Ontario, specializing in the treatment of Thoracic, Gastrointestinal, Neuroendocrine and Genitourinary malignancies. He is also the Skin cancer Lead Oncologist for the Centre and is also the Centre's Immunotherapy and NGS expert where he is instrumental in developing the Molecular diagnostics department at Southlake Regional Health Centre.

Dr. Kassam is currently the Medical Director of research at the Southlake Regional Health Centre, where he has consolidated research activities at the Centre and also facilitates further research in the areas of Cardiology, Medicine and Intensive care. He is also the head of Oncology Research at the Stronach Regional Cancer center – where he has brought several international Phase III randomized trials to the centre. Dr. Kassam is currently the Primary Investigator on several open and in progress trials at the Cancer Centre.



**Dr. Ania Kielar, MD, FRCPC, FCAR;** President, Canadian Association of Radiologists

► **Session: Day 1, 2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.**

Dr. Kielar is a radiologist at the JDMI (Joint Division of Medical Imaging) in Toronto. She completed medical school and residency at the University of Ottawa. She completed her fellowship in abdominal cross-sectional imaging at the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor, USA. She subsequently returned on staff at the Ottawa Hospital. She was the division director of the abdominal division at The Ottawa Hospital from 2010 until 2017. During this time, she also worked part-time as a community radiologist, as she enjoys all facets of radiology. In 2018, she joined the University of Toronto and the imaging department. She is currently the deputy chief for quality and practice improvement at the Joint Department of Medical Imaging as well as the Vice Chair at large for the department of Radiology at the University of Toronto.

Dr. Kielar has published more than 115 peer-reviewed manuscripts, 15 book chapters and delivered invited educational lectures at numerous international radiology meetings. She is actively involved in the ACR LI-RADS group as well as participating in various national and international committees. She is grateful for the opportunity to serve the CAR in this new capacity.





**Anwar Knight**, Award-Winning Broadcaster, Producer & Environmentalist; Hodgkin's Lymphoma Survivor

▶ **Session: Day 2, 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**

Anwar Knight is an award-winning broadcaster, producer, and environmentalist known for his authenticity and engaging storytelling. For nearly 20 years, Anwar held a central role at CTV News, Canada's most-watched newscast, becoming a familiar face in millions of Canadian households. He has also contributed to major publications including Harrowsmith Magazine and reported live on location from over 1,000 different locations across the GTA.

Away from the studio, Anwar is a dedicated eco-ambassador and passionate environmentalist, through his lens, he reveals the breathtaking beauty of our world, inspiring everyone to contribute to its preservation. He hosts and produces the top-ranked podcast The Big Blue Marble and was honored by the Credit Valley Conservation Authority with the "Environmental Awareness" award. Today, Anwar can be seen on The Weather Network and CBC News Network, and he also shares his extensive knowledge as a Journalism Professor helping guide the storytellers of tomorrow.

Anwar is also a cancer survivor, having been diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma. His personal health journey inspired him to create Hope Happens, an online national support platform for cancer patients and their families. His former blog, Anwar's Journey: The Hodgepodge of an Optimist, chronicled his recovery and left a lasting impact, inspiring others dealing with cancer.

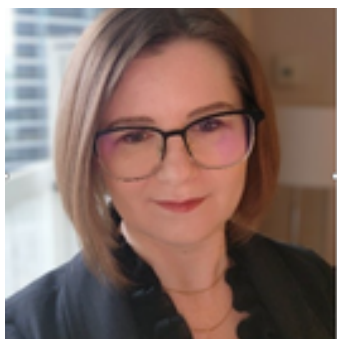
In his spare time, Anwar supports various charities, including the Lymphoma Foundation Canada, where he served as a board member, Eden Food For Change, Peel Crime Stoppers and Starlight Children's Foundation.



**Rachelle Kosokowsky, BA, BSW, MSW, RSW;** Clinical Oncology Social Worker, Saskatchewan Cancer Agency

▶ **Session: Day 2, 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**

Rachelle obtained her Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Regina in 2010 and her Master of Social Work from the University of Toronto in 2013. She has been employed as a Clinical Oncology Social Worker for the Saskatoon Cancer Centre for the last 9 years. Prior to this, Rachelle worked in a variety of settings, including work in non-profit youth advocacy, community crisis work, and as a medical social worker within the Saskatchewan Health Authority. As a Clinical Oncology Social Worker, Rachelle has implemented programming at the Saskatoon Cancer Centre including the Androgen Deprivation Therapy Education Class and Dignity Therapy for end-of-life patients.



**Cassandra Macaulay, B.Sc., MHS, RTNM;** Deputy Chief Research Officer, CCRAN

▶ **Session: Day 1, 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**

▶ **Session: Day 1, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Cassandra is the Deputy Chief Research Officer at the Colorectal Cancer Resource & Action Network (CCRAN). She leads and contributes to CCRAN's patient-focused and evidence-based initiatives to provide support, education, and advocacy for colorectal cancer and other tumour-type patients and caregivers, as well as those at risk of developing the disease.

Cassandra has a clinical background as a Medical Radiation Technologist in addition to a graduate degree in health studies and leadership. She has worked in both patient-facing and project management roles and led the start-up of two nuclear medicine programs which improved access to diagnostic imaging in her community. She is passionate about health quality and improving the patient experience and is honoured to have the privilege of supporting, educating, and advocating on behalf of cancer patients.



**Dr. Helen Mackay, MBChB, B.Sc., MRCP, MD;** Medical Oncologist, Odette Cancer Center, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre; Head, Division of Medical Oncology & Malignant Hematology, Odette Cancer Center, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre; Senior Scientist, Sunnybrook Research Institute; Professor, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto

► **Session: Day 2, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Dr. Helen MacKay is a Medical Oncologist and Professor of Medicine at the University of Toronto. She is Head of the Division of Medical Oncology and Malignant Hematology at the Odette Cancer Centre at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, and Senior Scientist at the Sunnybrook Research Institute. Dr. MacKay's clinical practice and research focus is on gynecological cancers. Her research involves collaborating with translational and basic scientists in the development and validation of novel therapeutic strategies.

She is the former President of the Society of Gynecologic Oncology of Canada (GOC). She co-chairs the National Cancer Institute (NCI), US, Ovarian Cancer Task Force. Dr. MacKay was also appointed to the NCTN Core Correlative Sciences Committee of the NCI (US) in June 2022. She is the past chair of the Ovarian Group and sits on the executive of the Gyne committee of the Canadian Cancer Trials Group (CCTG), and represents CCTG at the Gynecologic Cancer Intergroup. She is a past chair of both the Gynecologic Cancer Education and Scientific Committees for the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). With specific reference to uterine cancers, she is a member of the TRANSPORTEC group, and sits on the Corpus Committee of NRG, and was the co-chair of the NCI Endometrial Cancer Clinical Trials Planning Committee.





**Dr. Sasha Mallya, Ph.D., R.Psych;** Clinical Psychologist,  
Arthur J.E. Child Comprehensive Cancer Centre

▶ **Session: Day 2, 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**

Dr. Sasha Mallya is a clinical psychologist who completed a fellowship at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, within the Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Oncology Program and the Pencer Brain Tumor Centre. After her fellowship, Dr. Mallya worked for several years at the Calgary Chronic Pain Centre, within the AYA stream and neuromusculoskeletal pain and headache streams. She is now a staff psychologist at the newly opened Arthur J.E. Child Comprehensive Cancer Centre in Calgary, focused clinically on patients with head and neck cancers and brain tumours, and facilitating mindfulness-based cancer recovery groups. She is involved in clinical research and teaching students, residents, and practicing professionals.



**Joanne Nagy,** Stage 2 Invasive Ductal Carcinoma Patient,  
Triple Positive

▶ **Session: Day 1, 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

At 30, Joanne was diagnosed with Stage 2 Invasive Ductal Carcinoma, after finding a lump in her breast. The doctor she saw said it was nothing, it was fibrous tissue from the drugs she had been taking trying to conceive their third child. Joanne had to persist to get an ultrasound requisition & ended up booking one about 6 weeks away. She confided in someone who encouraged her to get an ultrasound sooner. She would have confirmed breast cancer 3 days later by mammography and more tumours grow between scans including a benign cyst in her opposite breast. Joanne's treatment started the day before her initial scheduled ultrasound. She still remembers the ultrasound clinic calling her to reschedule her missed appointment, and thinking thank God she didn't listen to the doctor.



**Dr. José Perea, MD, Ph.D.;** Chief, Department of Surgery, Vithas Arturo Soria University Hospital; Professor of Surgery, European University of Madrid; Principal Investigator, Institute of Biomedical Research of Salamanca

► **Session: Day 2, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Dr. Jose Perea is an MD and Ph.D., with specialties of General and Digestive surgery and with special interest in surgical oncology. He has developed three clearly defined and interrelated aspects during more than 15 years, focusing his research specifically on early-onset colorectal cancer.

He has been a surgeon in the Colorectal Surgery Unit at the 12 de Octubre University Hospital for 10 years, and later at the Jiménez Díaz Foundation University Hospital. In both institutions he has been Principal Investigator in the Research Institute. He has also been Adjunct Professor of Surgery for 9 years of the Medicine School of the Complutense University, in Madrid. In addition to being a member of different committees within the Department (Research, Teaching, and Postgraduate), he is currently applying for accreditation for University Full Professor. He has coordinated seven Ph.D. students, and currently another five.

He is now Chief of the Department of Surgery at Vithas Arturo Soria University Hospital, where he is also Professor of Surgery for the European University of Madrid. He is also the Principal Investigator at the Institute of Biomedical Research of Salamanca. His research interests cover different aspects of colorectal cancer, especially in early-onset and multiple primary CRC forms, apart from hereditary syndromes. In recent years he has been developing a network of collaboration between different centers in Spain (Spanish Early-Onset Colorectal Cancer Consortium, SECOC), and is now also developing a worldwide collaboration for the study of this subtype of CRC (GEOCODE: Global EOCRC Database). This dedication to the early-onset CRC has led him to be an international reference on this field, having participated in various initiatives focused on fixing the theoretical lines of future research of this subtype of CRC. He chaired and coordinated the Annual Early-Onset CRC International Symposium in Madrid, which has been held annually from 2020 in collaboration with Fight Colorectal Cancer.



**Dr. Ravi Ramjeesingh, MD, Ph.D., FRCPC;** Medical Oncologist & Assistant Professor, Chair of the HPB Cancer Disease Site Group Halifax, Division of Medical Oncology and Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, Nova Scotia Cancer Centre & Dalhousie University

▶ **Session: Day 2, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Dr. Ramjeesingh is an Associate Professor in the Division of Medical Oncology at Dalhousie University. He completed his MD (2008) and Ph.D. in cancer research (2004) at the University of Toronto. He completed his residencies at Queen's University and a clinical trials fellowship at the Canadian Cancer Trials Group. His main clinical expertise is in the areas of hepatopancreobiliary (HPB) cancers and breast cancer. He is currently the chair of the HPB Disease site group in Nova Scotia and is the Medical Director of AACRU, the Nova Scotian oncology clinical trials group. Nationally, he is a founding member of the Canadian GI Oncology Evidence Network and is a board member of Craig's Cause Pancreatic cancer society. His research activities are in the fields of health service delivery, and translational research in oncology.



**Meg Sears, Ph.D.;** Chair, Prevent Cancer Now; Sr. Research Associate, Ottawa Hospital Research Institute

▶ **Session: Day 1, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Meg Sears (PhD) has advanced environmental health for decades. As Chair of Prevent Cancer Now she applies robust scientific approaches to advocate for primary cancer prevention. Initially trained in applied chemistry, she has collaborated with and learned from expert clinical and medical researchers and methodologists. Notable publications include: "Medical Perspective on Environmental Sensitivities" for the Canadian Human Rights Commission, leading to a policy under the Canadian Human Rights Act; a CIHR/SSHRC funded review of environmental, public health and medical approaches for toxic elements; guidance documents addressing toxicants, indoor environments, and COVID-19 with the Canadian Committee on Indoor Air Quality; and outcomes of rich collaborations with environmental health, science and policy experts and groups.





**Ken Noel**, Executive Director, The Walnut Foundation; Black Prostate Cancer Survivor

▶ **Session: Day 1, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Ken is a Black Prostate Cancer survivor and the Executive Director of the Walnut Foundation, a Men's Health Interest and Prostate Cancer support foundation which focuses on raising awareness in the black communities about their increased risk of Prostate Cancer. The Walnut Foundation brings the relevant contacts to black prostate cancer organizations across Canada and relevant connections to black focused community health centres in the Greater Toronto Area and beyond. In addition, Ken is a trained and certified peer navigator to guide men through their prostate cancer journey. In this role, he listens to men's issues in traversing the health care systems during their treatments and is aware of the challenges they face.



**Matt Reidy**, Founder, Genomic Focus; Long-term, Stage 4 Cancer Survivor

▶ **Session: Day 2, 2:45 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.**

Matt is not just the founder and visionary behind Genomic Focus, but also a testament to the profound impact and potential of targeted cancer treatments. As a long-term stage 4 cancer survivor, his life story took a hopeful turn with the advent of biomarker testing and advanced targeted and immunotherapy treatments. His experience underscores the pivotal role that genomics plays in revolutionizing cancer outcomes. At Genomic Focus, Matt's journey fuels their dedication to helping cancer patients and their caregivers.



**Dr. Rob Rutledge, MD, FRCPC**; Co-Founder, CancerPEP.org; Radiation Oncologist; Associate Professor, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia

▶ **Session: Day 2, 2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.**

Dr. Rob Rutledge, MD, FRCPC has been a full-time Radiation Oncologist for over 27 years treating breast, prostate and pediatric cancers, and is an Associate Professor at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. His passion is empowering people with science and wisdom-based healthy lifestyle habits and healing techniques. He has organized and delivered hundreds of free public talks and day-long seminars, and over 60 weekend retreats in 30 cities attended by 2000+ participants. He is the co-founder of CancerPEP.org, a comprehensive home-based six-month daily Patient Empowerment Program proven to improve the mental and physical health of people on the cancer journey.



**Filomena Servidio-Italiano**, Hon B.Sc., B.Ed., M.A.; President & CEO, CCRAN

- ▶ **Session: Day 1, 9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**
- ▶ **Session: Day 1, 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**
- ▶ **Session: Day 1, 5:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.**
- ▶ **Session: Day 2, 9:35 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.**
- ▶ **Session: Day 2, 4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

Filomena is the President and CEO of the Colorectal Cancer Resource & Action Network (“CCRAN”) – a patient-focused organization championing the health and wellbeing of Canadians touched by colorectal cancer and others at risk of developing the disease. Her undergraduate and graduate work lie in the biological sciences and educational studies. As a caregiver to her father, who was afflicted with and succumbed to metastatic cancer, his journey has served as the impetus for the founding of CCRAN, one month post his passing in August of 2006.

The past seventeen years have been dedicated to the cause of **supporting, educating, and advocating** on behalf of colorectal cancer patients and caregivers, to improve patients’ quality of life and longevity by furnishing evidence-based information and access to unique and novel patient programs, such as CCRAN’s innovative **“My CRC Consultant”**, an online tool providing the metastatic patient with evidence-based and expert reviewed, potential therapeutic options based on the patient’s tumour’s molecular profile. She has been working closely with valued health care professionals across the continuum of colorectal cancer care to ensure content acumen in the management of colorectal cancer. She is humbled to be published alongside world-renowned experts in areas such as colorectal cancer management, PROs and PROMs, early age onset colorectal cancer awareness and education, promoting national LDLT efforts, education on molecular profiling, and more.

Filomena is a strong proponent of HTA patient evidence submissions since the inception of pCODR, ensuring the patient voice is captured and well incorporated into her HTA patient evidence submissions. She prepares these submissions not only for colorectal cancer drug therapies under review, but within therapeutic areas for which there are no representative patient advocacy groups or on behalf of patient advocacy groups who may not have the capacity to make these critically important submissions. She strives to secure robust patient and caregiver participation to help identify patients’ unmet needs, as well as capture their fundamentally important values, preferences, and priorities with the goal of ultimately ensuring reimbursement of effective treatments based on thoughtful and compelling input. She continues to be a passionate advocate for the Canadian cancer patient and their caregiver.

## ABOUT CCRAN

The Colorectal Cancer Resource & Action Network (“CCRAN”) is a national, not for profit patient organization dedicated to **supporting, educating, and advocating** on behalf of colorectal cancer patients and caregivers across Canada to help improve the quality of life and longevity for patients diagnosed with colorectal cancer. It is a patient-focused organization whose programs are inspired by two patient advisory councils, one of which is dedicated to Early Age Onset Colorectal Cancer (EAOCRC). CCRAN has expanded its mandate to now be serving a population of cancer patients outside of the colorectal cancer space through their HTA patient evidence submissions, educational events and advocacy initiatives to help reduce the burden of cancer in Canada.

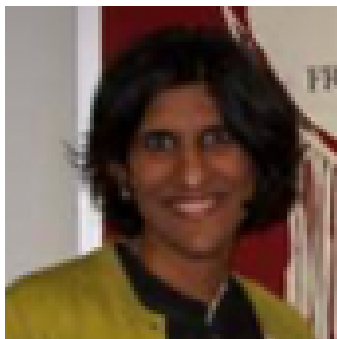
**Dr. Monika Slovinec D'Angelo, VBHC Expert; Chief Research Officer, CCRAN**



- ▶ **Session: Day 1, 9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.**
- ▶ **Session: Day 1, 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**
- ▶ **Session: Day 1, 2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.**
- ▶ **Session: Day 2, 10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.**
- ▶ **Session: Day 2, 9:30 a.m. – 9:35 a.m.**
- ▶ **Session: Day 2, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Monika Slovinec D'Angelo, Ph.D. is a health scientist with broad experience in population health and healthcare transformation. She specializes in health promotion, chronic disease prevention and optimized management, with expertise in intervention and implementation research, program development and evaluation, stakeholder engagement, and strategic capacity building at organizational and system levels. She has worked across healthcare delivery, health research, and academic organizations, and in consultancy roles, collaborating with health system stakeholders nationally and internationally to develop and deploy evidence-based solutions in support of innovative initiatives and sustainable programs and systems. She is a firm believer of health in all policies and applies systems thinking to problem solving. Her passion lies in co-creating strategic solutions to promote health and wellbeing across populations.

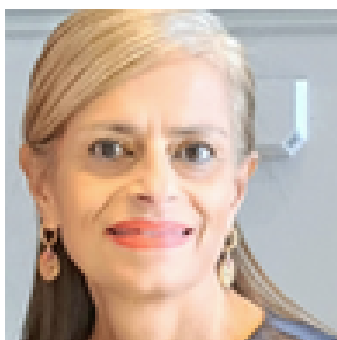




**Dr. Neety Panu, MD, FRCPC, CRCP(C):** Lead Radiologist, Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre

► **Session: Day 1, 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

Dr. Neety Panu is the Lead Radiologist at Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre. She previously served as the Medical Imaging Lead for the Linda Buchan Centre, and the Cancer Care Ontario Imaging Lead for the Northwest Region. Dr. Panu is a Clinician-Scientist with the Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute and is Principal Investigator with the HIFU clinical trials. She serves on CCRAN's Medical & Scientific Advisory Board and is a lecturer at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine.



**Teresa Tiano, Chair and Co-Founder, My Gut Feeling; Stomach Cancer Survivor and a 9-Time Cancer Survivor**

► **Session: Day 1, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Teresa is a thirteen-year stomach cancer survivor. Teresa was diagnosed in 2011 with Stage 2B adenocarcinoma and had a laparoscopic subtotal gastrectomy followed by chemo and radiation. At the time there was very little in the way of support or awareness for this disease. Teresa was determined to change that. In 2016, she and Katy Kosyachkova co-founded My Gut Feeling – Stomach Cancer Foundation of Canada the first and only volunteer-led non-profit organization dedicated to those who are on the stomach cancer journey. Teresa also has Lynch Syndrome, a genetic condition which puts her at high risk for many types of cancer. To date, she has survived nine different cancer occurrences.

Teresa has 30 years of experience in the non-for-profit world, and 15 years of governance, strategic and administrative experience in the cancer sector directly. Through her patient advocacy she has brought the patient voice to the forefront by being a member of international research projects, being a member of various patient advisory boards and a speaker at national and international conferences. Most importantly, her volunteer work with My Gut Feeling for the past 8 years has allowed her to support patients, survivors and caregivers so that no-one has to go through this journey alone. Teresa holds an Honours BA in History and Literature from the University of Toronto. She is married and lives with her husband in Toronto.



**Dr. Tomotaka Ugai, MD, Ph.D.;** Faculty Member, Cancer Epidemiology Program, Dana-Farber / Harvard Cancer Center; Chair of International Cancer Spectrum Consortium; Principal Investigator in Early-Onset Cancer (EOC) Program; Department of Pathology, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School; Department of Epidemiology, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

► **Session: Day 1, 12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Dr. Ugai is a junior faculty member at Brigham and Women's Hospital/Harvard Medical School. He is an MD/ Ph.D. physician scientist with expertise in pathology, clinical oncology, cancer epidemiology, and molecular epidemiology. His current research focuses on early-onset cancers and tumour biomarkers, including immune and microbial characteristics of cancer. Dr. Ugai is a founder of the International Cancer Spectrum Consortium, which is an interdisciplinary working group with faculty, postdocs, and students from various institutions across the globe. Dr. Ugai's group aims to build up a resource that integrates lifestyles and biomarkers including genetics and tissue molecular markers to (a) develop effective prevention and early-detection strategies, and (b) identify novel biomarkers to guide early-stage clinical decisions. His work has been recognized by several awards and grants, including American Institute for Cancer Research Investigator Initiated Grant, Brigham and Women's Hospital Faculty Career Development Award, and Prevent Cancer Foundation Research Grant.



**Michele Wright,** Coordinator, Patient Care Initiatives, Lung Cancer Canada

► **Session: Day 1, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

**Session: Day 2, 3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.**

Michele Wright is the Coordinator, Patient Care Initiatives at Lung Cancer Canada. After obtaining her degree in Developmental Psychology and Sociology at the University of Toronto, Michele has worked in health care supporting patients for over 20 years. Her previous roles include Patient Care Coordinator for Heart and Lung Transplant at SickKids Hospital in Toronto. She values a person-centered approach and seeks to empower patients to take a partnership role with their health care providers. During the pandemic, she moved to rural Tottenham, ON, with her husband and bulldog, where they make maple syrup and raise bees.



**Bridget Veltri, CCCLS, M.Sc.;** Certified Child Life Specialist,  
Hamilton Health Sciences – McMaster Children's Hospital &  
Juravinski Hospital and Cancer Centre

► **Session: Day 2, 9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.**

Bridget Veltri is a Certified Child Life Specialist at Hamilton Health Sciences. She holds a Master of Science in Child Life and Pediatric Psychosocial Care, during which she completed two clinical internships: one at Stollery Children's Hospital in Edmonton, Alberta, and the other at Cape Breton Regional Hospital in Sydney, Nova Scotia.

Bridget has worked in various roles across McMaster Children's Hospital and Juravinski Hospital and Cancer Centre. For the past three and a half years, she has served as the Child Life Specialist on the Supportive Care Team in the Psychosocial Oncology department at Juravinski, supporting children, youth, and families of adult oncology patients. Additionally, she has been part of the pediatric palliative care team, the pediatric diabetes/rheumatology clinic teams, and the inpatient medicine team at McMaster.



**Suzanne Wood, Early Age Onset Stage 4 Colon Cancer Patient**

► **Session: Day 2, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Suzanne Wood was diagnosed with stage 4 Colon Cancer in July 2022 at the age of 45. She was diagnosed when liver metastases were seen on a routine abdominal ultrasound during her annual executive health physical. Initially, her tumours were deemed resectable and she had a right hemicolectomy and a major liver resection in late 2022. Post surgery CT scans identified a large Krukenberg tumour on her right ovary and the tumour and both ovaries were removed in February 2023. Unfortunately, Suzanne's cancer has continued to metastasize, and she has undergone surgery and radiation to treat tumours in her brain, spine and lungs. She is currently undergoing biweekly chemotherapy to stabilize her cancer.

Suzanne and her oncology team have used ctDNA and genetic testing to help guide her treatment plan.

Suzanne lives in Toronto with her husband and three sons. Prior to taking a healing sabbatical, she worked in law firm management.



# EAOC|24

EARLY AGE ONSET CANCER SYMPOSIUM

