

Canadian  
Cancer  
Society

BRITISH COLUMBIA AND YUKON

## Canadian Cancer Society/ UBC Centre For Cancer Prevention

### *Background*

The Canadian Cancer Society, BC and Yukon Division (BCY) have developed a comprehensive prevention strategy based on scientific evidence that provides a broad approach to the health of populations. Advocating for healthy public policies has the greatest opportunity to reduce the overall incidence of cancer (number of cancer cases). Cancer is one of the greatest threats to the health of British Columbians but it can be reduced by giving more priority to prevention strategies.

Although the prevention strategy is based on current evidence, there is a need to generate more knowledge to gain a better understanding of the links between specific types of cancer and factors including diet, physical activity, obesity, environmental exposures, and new and emerging risks.

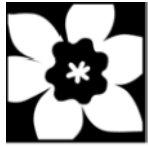
### *A number of other activities are also needed to*

- Apply existing knowledge to ensure that research is put into practice, not only for policy development, but for community programs and clinical care;
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- Develop targeted education and intervention programs for researchers and community members to share strategies to prevent cancer and other chronic diseases;
- Collaborate with policy makers to identify policies which will have the greatest impact on reducing cancer and other diseases; and
- Develop an integrated approach to cancer prevention that is based on partnerships between academics, community organizations, health care organizations, policy makers and others.

The establishment of the Canadian Cancer Society Chair in Cancer Primary Prevention within the School of Population and Public Health in the Faculty of Medicine at UBC was the natural progression of the Society's commitment to reduce the numbers of preventable cancers. Based on current trends over the next twenty years, there will be a 60% increase in the number of people diagnosed with cancer due to a growing and aging population if people continue with unhealthy behaviours.

The recruitment of Dr Carolyn Gotay to the Canadian Cancer Society Research Chair for the Primary Prevention of Cancer was very fortunate because of Dr Gotay's considerable experience and expertise in cancer prevention.

Dr Carolyn Gotay, who has a PhD in Social Psychology, is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and Susan G Komen Foundation Professor of Survivorship. Dr Gotay has a distinguished career in cancer prevention and control and led community



liaison and outreach to minority populations at the Cancer Research Center at the University of Hawaii prior to moving to Canada. She has made a significant contribution to cancer control through her work as a researcher, educator, editor, advisor and advocate. Dr Gotay is a member of the Advisory Council and Primary Prevention Action Group for the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and chairs the Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute National Advisory Committee on Research on Prevention

*Dr Gotay's portfolio includes*

- taking up a leadership role in cancer prevention research in BC;
- promoting the importance of cancer prevention research in BC and Canada;
- linking research to practice in population health;
- recruiting and training new cancer prevention researchers;
- influencing the education of physicians who provide practice in all chronic disease areas;
- encouraging improvements in the health care system through evidence-based policy recommendations designed to reduce the incidence of cancer (and other chronic diseases) in all populations;
- providing information that will become the foundation of more effective cancer prevention strategies and healthy public policies;
- and, over time, influencing provincial, national, and international standards and public policy for cancer prevention and other chronic diseases.

*Canadian Cancer Society/ University of BC Centre for Cancer Control*

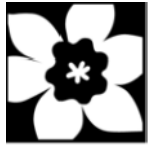
The Canadian Cancer Society, BC and Yukon Division is now in a position to continue its leadership and demonstrate a further commitment to prevention by leveraging the role of the research chair and developing a Centre for Cancer Prevention in partnership with the University of British Columbia. The establishment of a comprehensive, province-wide Cancer Prevention Centre reflects a bold, progressive vision that will provide a legacy of healthy living and reduce the burden of illness for British Columbians and their children.

*Phase I – Summary of Activity*

During Phase I, Establishment of the Chair, Dr. Gotay has established a strong presence in Canadian cancer organizations, including participation in key networks like the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, Primary Prevention Action Group and Advisory Committee, and Founding Chair of the CCSRI National Advisory Committee on Research on Prevention

She has also formed associations with key British Columbian organizations including an appointment as an Affiliate Scientist with BC Cancer Agency, and Co-Investigator with NEXUS, based at the UBC Faculty of Nursing. Dr. Gotay has become an active member within the UBC academic community, including her membership on doctoral oral examinations and participation in teaching.

Dr. Gotay has recruited a second researcher associated with the Chair whose area of expertise and research focus is physical exercise and cancer prevention, thanks to the generous donation of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, BC and Yukon Chapter.



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Dr Gotay has submitted grant applications for Oral Cancer Control; Preventing and Reducing Obesity in Breast Cancer Survivors; and Breast Cancer Survivorship In British Columbia's Rural, Remote, Northern and First Nations Patients.

#### *Phase II – Next Steps*

This second phase in the evolution of a Centre for Cancer Prevention is to establish a sufficient quantity of cancer prevention research expertise. Funds are needed for additional staff in research, programs and administration; pilot funding; student internships; community research forums and a Secretariat for an external advisory committee.

While the Society has not as yet secured major and on-going funding through an endowment at this stage, it has begun to lay the foundation for Centre activities with funding of approximately a half a million dollars from the CCS – BCY in January of this year.

A solid foundation can be built using links within the university community, partnerships with affiliated organizations and the involvement of the public on research projects that address priority areas for BC.

Prevention projects could include:

- Developing and testing effective prevention messages
- Understanding factors that lead to tobacco-free schools
- Reducing exposure to environmental carcinogens through public education
- Developing incentives to attract researchers to cancer primary prevention research
- Building training opportunities and
- Enhancing UBC/community collaborations through a community cancer prevention research forum or lecture series

#### *Phase III – Establishing a Dedicated Location for the CCS/UBC Cancer Prevention Centre*

While Phase II builds on research expertise and capacity through a virtual network, the Society anticipates establishing a dedicated physical site for the CCS/UBC Prevention Centre in the future.

During Phase III, cancer prevention activities, education and intervention programs for cancer survivors and the general public can be extended and staged in a dedicated space. More detailed information about this phase will be provided in greater detail during Phase II.

#### *Summary*

As the Canadian Cancer Society, BC and Yukon Division embarks on a new five year strategic plan,\* there is an opportunity to take a significant step forward to achieve a strategic goal of leveraging the research Chair in Cancer Primary Prevention by developing a Centre for Cancer Prevention in partnership with the University of British Columbia (UBC).



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This exciting initiative provides a compelling case to raise funds in support of prevention priorities to the benefit of the cancer cause.

Ultimately, the centre will generate new knowledge, apply existing information, and lead to the development of educational and interventional programs for new researchers, cancer survivors and the public.

"Prevention will be the key to cancer control. The establishment of a Cancer Prevention Centre moves us many steps closer to the fulfillment of our mission to eradicate cancer and enhance the quality of life of people living with cancer," said Barbara Kaminsky.

\*approved by the Board January 23, 2009.

April 2009