

Resources and Support

for Patients and Caregivers

Included In This Booklet:

Practical Supports

- Booking Accommodation
- Places to Stay
- Finances and Traveling
- Parking and Volunteer Drivers

Emotional Supports

- Support Groups and Resources
- Caregiver Supports
- Cancer Support Services
- Helpful Websites
- Palliative Care Supports



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To Our Patients and Their Caregivers

When you have cancer, the focus is often on the physical side effects of your illness, symptoms, treatment choices, side effects and what the test results show. Your emotional health – your feelings and how you cope with them over time – is also important and deserves as much care as your physical health.

There is also no right or wrong way to feel when you or your loved one has cancer. Everyone will react to the diagnosis in their own way. Remember that you are never alone. There are people to help and support you. Some of them are in your home and community; others are at your hospital, place of worship or cancer centre.

This booklet is to inform patients and caregivers on the supports and resources that are available for those dealing with a new diagnosis or in active treatment for a blood cancer.

For a book that may help you manage the many emotions of a cancer diagnosis, we recommend:

- **Coping When You have Cancer. (Canadian Cancer Society, 2017).**

Copies may be found:

- **Online:** www.cancer.ca Click on Cancer Information and then on Resources, or use the search function

Who are My Health Care Team Members? And What Do They Do?

Attending Doctor (Hematologist): The “head doctor” in charge of your care. Hematologists specialize in blood diseases and disorders. This doctor is usually on duty for a month at a time on the inpatient and outpatient units. All attending doctors meet regularly to discuss your case.

Clinical Associate Doctors and Fellow Doctors: Doctors with advanced training in blood diseases and stem cell transplant. They will assess you most days and discuss your progress with the Attending Doctor.

Registered Nurse: Nurses assess your condition and progress, give your medications and assist with all aspects of your care. Your nurse is your main contact through treatment who will help monitor and support your health needs.

Pharmacist: Pharmacists monitor and prevent problems related to the medications your doctors order for you. They help you understand how to take medications at home.

Social Worker: Social Workers help you cope with your diagnosis and how it may affect you, your family, your living arrangements, your finances and other practical matters.

Registered Dietitian: Dietitians help manage your nutrition, symptoms and make the best food choices, especially when your appetite is low.

Physiotherapist: Physiotherapists help you maintain and regain your strength through treatment and recovery. They help you design an activity program based on your needs.

Occupational Therapist: Occupational Therapists help you manage everyday activities, moving safely, coping with illness. They assist you to arrange any equipment you may require both in hospital and when you leave.

Spiritual Care Counsellor: a chaplain is available for religious and spiritual needs, regardless of your beliefs. They provide spiritual care to people of all faiths and may arrange care by clergy in the community. Speak with your nurse to arrange a visit.

Nurse Navigator: nurses coordinate the planning, testing and appointments needed if your doctor recommends a stem cell / bone marrow transplant.

Patient Care Coordinator: “Charge Nurses” supervise each unit and are available to discuss nursing care, hospital services and your needs and concerns.

Clinical Operations Manager: Managers responsible for unit operations within the program, including patient care & policies.

Accommodation

It is important to stay within 45 minutes of Vancouver General Hospital. If you are from out of town or require accommodations closer to the hospital, our team can assist you to find accommodations. There are some patients who live in the lower mainland and book accommodation that is closer due to their symptoms and side effects of blood cancer, their caregiver situation, and/or as recommended by their doctor. Please discuss this with your attending doctor, social worker, or nurse navigator.

Places To Stay:

Jean C. Barber Lodge (Cancer Lodge)

- Phone: 604 – 879 – 9131
- Location: 575 West 10th Ave Vancouver, BC, V5Z 4C3
- 32 rooms with 62 beds for people with cancer and their caregivers.
- Most are shared occupancy (2 beds per room) with an attached bathroom.
- Amenities: lounge, dining room, outdoor patio, activity room, library and resource room, gym, meditation room, laundry room, free Wi-Fi. It should be noted there are no televisions in the rooms. There are communal televisions.
- BC residents, patients stay free, and their caregiver can stay for approximately \$60/night.
- For Yukon residents, patients can stay for approximately \$60/night.
- Cost of stay includes three meals a day and snacks.

CIBC Centre for Patients & Families at Vancouver General Hospital

- They provide a list of places to stay that are affordable and close to the hospital.
- Go to www.vch.ca search “CIBC Centre for Patients & Families at Vancouver General Hospital”. Click on the top result. Scroll down towards the bottom of the page. Under the heading “Hospital resources” there will be “Places to stay in the Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) and G.F. Strong area. Click the “View” button.
- Call CIBC Centre for Patients and Families 604 – 875 – 5887 for assistance or e-mail centreforpatients@vch.ca
- If you have been put in touch with a nurse navigator or a social worker, they may help you locate the list and suggest timelines for booking accommodation.

Finances and Traveling

Please see **BC Cancer's Financial Information for Cancer Patients booklet**

Online: Go to www.bccancer.bc.ca search "financial assistance". Click the hyperlink "Financial Information for People with Cancer."

Note: Not all resources may pertain to you so please check in with your social worker if you have questions about financial support.

HopeAir

HopeAir covers round-trip flights for patients and their caregiver when having to travel long distances to and from medical appointments and treatments. You will need an appointment location and time prior to booking. Online: go to www.hopeair.ca Click on "Apply for Travel". If you do not have all the information required or have further questions, call 1-877-346-HOPE.

Travel Assistance Program (TAP BC)

TAP forms help reduce your travel costs (i.e. free passage on BC ferries, guaranteed boarding, and reduced air travel rates through Harbour Air). This form needs to be completed by your doctor. For more information go to www2.gov.bc.ca search "Travel Assistance Program". Click on the result "Travel Assistance Program (TAP BC)". You can also call 1-800-663-2668.

Save Your Receipts

You and your partner may be able to use them to claim costs on your income tax. If your family helps you pay for medical costs, they may be able to claim these costs too. Examples: receipts for getting to the hospital, parking, gas, taxis, prescription medication costs that you must pay, medical/assistive-mobility devices (canes, wigs, raised toilet seats, etc.). Type "medical expenses" on www.canada.ca to learn about medical expenses you can claim on your tax return.

Parking

Where can I find parking around Vancouver General Hospital?

You may be dropped off at the main entrances to the Jim Pattinson Pavilion or Leon Blackmore Pavilion. *Note:* these entrances are only active drop-off and pick-up allowed.

Parking Exemptions

The government of BC provides free parking at provincial health-care facilities for patients undergoing cancer treatment in acute-care. Please go to www.vch.ca and search “parking”. Click on “Parking at VCH sites”. Scroll down to “Parking exemptions”. Patients who are undergoing cancer treatment in acute care and visitors of patients undergoing cancer treatment in acute care are eligible for a parking exemption. On your first visit to the Leukemia/BMT Inpatient or Daycare unit, you can ask the booking clerks for information about parking.

VGH Parking Lot

Located at 890 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver (on Laurel Street). There are two entrances: Laurel Street and West 12th Avenue. If possible, we recommend that you park here for BMT/ Daycare appointments. See circled section on the map located on the next page.

Diamond Health Care Centre Parking Lot

Located at 2635 Laurel Street (between West 10th and West 12th Avenue). There is only one entrance, and it is accessible via Laurel Street.

Street Parking:

There are metered parking spaces near the hospital on West 12th Street, Laurel Street and on the upper ramp of the Jim Pattison Pavilion entrance. *Note:* these spaces are not free.

There is free street parking available on the street and don't mind walking a few blocks. Street parking closer to the hospital have a green 2-hour limit sign between 6am and 6pm. There is no time limit for these spaces at night between 6pm and 6am.

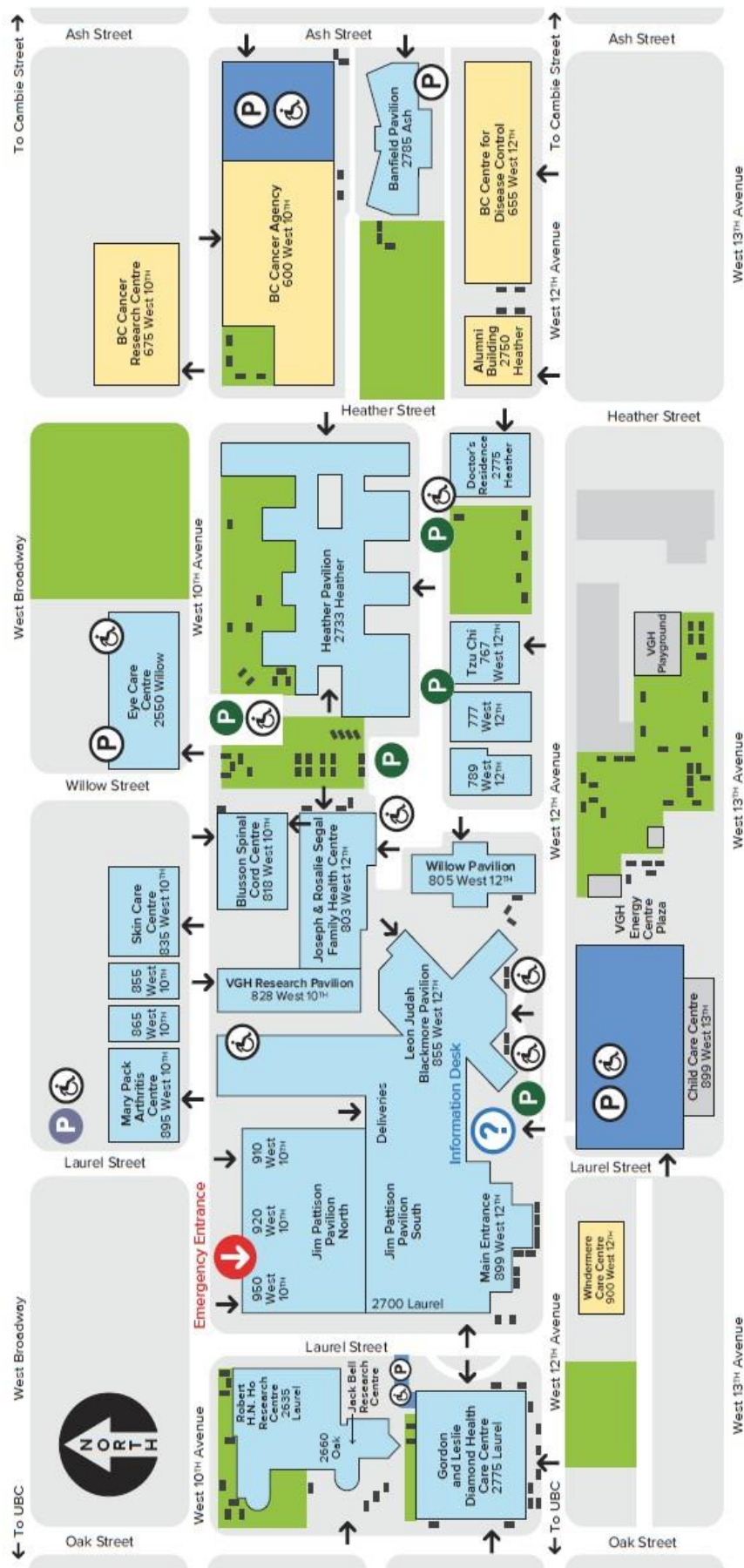
SPARC Disability parking permit

Applications for disabled parking permits require approval from your doctor. To find out if you qualify, go online www.sparc.bc.ca search “parking permits” and click on “continue reading”. Scroll down and click “Apply for your permit”. Call 604-718-7744 or toll free at 1-888-718-7794 for parking permit inquiries.

Vancouver General Hospital Hospital Zone Map with Seating Areas



- Hospital Complex
- Streets & Driveways
- Public Parkade
- Short-term Parking
- Related Facilities
- Building Entrances
- Accessible Parking
- Arthritis Patient Parking
- Emergency Entrance
- Information Desk
- Green Space
- Seating Areas



Volunteer Drivers

Volunteer Cancer Drivers Society (VCDH)

604 – 515 – 5400

Not-for-profit organization that provides complimentary transportation for residents with cancer in Greater Vancouver and Fraser Valley.

Areas Served

North and West Vancouver, Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminster, Richmond, Delta, Surrey, White Rock, Langley, Abbotsford, Mission, Tri-Cities (Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody), Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Chilliwack

Hours of Operation

Available Monday-Friday between 8:00 am – 6:00 pm.

Closed weekends and public holidays

Booking A Ride

Go to www.cancerdrivers.ca and click on “Book A Ride” or call the dispatch line and leave a message 604 – 515 – 5400. Volunteer Cancer Drivers Society require appointments.

Please book two days in advance.

Food and Nutrition

Better Meals

1 – 888 – 838 – 1888

This BC company is available from mid-Vancouver Island to Victoria area and from the Okanagan to Vancouver area. Offers frozen, diet specific meals as well as fresh sandwiches and wraps. Items are delivered once a week (specific day will be dependent on delivery address). Delivery is free and minimum order is \$30. www.bettermeals.ca

Meals On Wheels

604 – 733 – 6614

This hot meal delivery program is available for those requiring temporary assistance during illness. Volunteers deliver a hot lunch from Mondays – Fridays (not including statutory holidays). Meals on Wheels also have frozen meals available to add on to the hot meal delivery to prepare for weekends/holidays. Go to www.vch.ca and search “Meals on Wheels”. Click on the “Meals on Wheels” result. Scroll down and click on “Meals on Wheels – carebc.ca”

Try Safe Take – Out Food Restaurants.

Download food delivery apps (i.e. Uber Eats®, DoorDash®, Skip the Dishes® in Vancouver) for easier access to online menus. To find a reputable restaurant, go to www.vch.ca search “Restaurant Inspections and Reports”. Scroll down and click on “View inspection reports”.

Most major grocery stores allow you to enter your grocery list over the phone or online. You may pick up your order in the store or have it delivered for a fee.

Please connect with a dietitian, within our program, if you have any questions or concerns.

The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society

The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada mission is to support patients and their families who are facing the diagnosis of a blood cancer. Find more details at:

www.bloodcancers.ca

For those wanting to learn more about their diagnosis and treatment, this group offers the following booklets. Please note the “Guides” versions typically use simpler language.

- Understanding Leukemia
- Acute Lymphoma Leukemia (ALL)
- Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia: A Guide for Patients and Families
- Chronic Myeloid Leukemia (CML)
- Chronic Myeloid Leukemia: A Guide for Patients and Families
- Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML)
- Acute Myeloid Leukemia: A Guide for Patients and Families
- Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL)
- Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia: A Guide for Patients and Families
- Myelodysplastic Syndromes
- The MDS Guide
- Myeloma
- Myeloma: A Guide for Patients and Families
- Hodgkin Lymphoma
- Lymphoma: A Guide for Patients and Families
- Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma

More information on specific blood cancers and disorders is available online.

Copies may be found:

- **Online:** www.bloodcancers.ca located under “I have a blood cancer”

Canadian Cancer Society

In addition to excellent online resources, the Canadian Cancer Society has telephone assistance for questions on cancer treatments, side effects, clinical trials, coping, emotional support services, prevention, community supports and approved complementary therapies. Find more details at:

www.cancer.ca

or

Call: 1 – 888 – 939 – 3333

Among the many booklets this group offers, you may be interested in:

- *Life After Cancer Treatment*
- *Advanced Cancer*
- *Canadian Cancer Statistics*
- **Chemotherapy and Other Drug Therapies*
- *Clinical Trials*
- **Coping When You Have Cancer*
- **Eating Well When You Have Cancer*
- *Listen First: And 9 other ways to support someone with cancer*
- *Pain Relief: A guide for people with cancer*
- *Questions to Ask When You Have Cancer*
- *Radiation Therapy: A Guide for People with Cancer*
- *Sex, Intimacy and Cancer*
- *When Your Child Has Cancer*

*Recommended booklets applicable to all patients and family members

Copies may be found:

- **Online:** www.cancer.ca located under Cancer information → Resources →
Read our guides and publications

BC Cancer Resources

BC Cancer plans, coordinates and evaluates cancer care with the health authorities across BC to provide equitable and cost-effective health care for people living with or affected by cancer

www.bccancer.bc.ca

Resources for emotional support, practical support, exercise, nutrition, managing side effects and more can be found on the website, under Health Info → Coping with Cancer

There may be additional community cancer support programs near you. Please check your local listings or go on the website under Health Info → Our Services → Centres & Clinics

BC Cancer Patient and Family Counselling

Counsellors are available to talk with at your regional cancer centre and over the phone. On the website found under Our Services → Services → Supportive Care → Patient Family Counselling

BC Cancer Support Programs

BC Cancer locations offer programs to help you and your caregivers cope with your diagnosis and the impact it has on the lives of you and your loved ones. On the website, found under Our Services → Services → Support Programs

BC Cancer Libraries

BC Cancer has patient education materials in various locations. You can find the library on the website under Our Services → Services → Library

Canadian Blood Services

Please encourage friends, family, and associates to donate blood and register as a stem cell donor with Canadian Blood Services. More information about this and the process of searching for an unrelated stem cell donor can be found at:

www.blood.ca

or

Call: 1-888-236-6283

Blood Cancer Support Groups

See below for information on online and face to face support groups.

- **Leukemia & Lymphoma First Connection**

1 – 833 – 222 – 4884

www.bloodcancers.ca

On the website, scroll down and click on “First Connection Peer Support Program”

- **Myeloma Canada**

1– 888 – 798 – 2242

www.myeloma.ca

Click on “Find Support” on the top left of the website. There are Local, Online, and Peer support options.

- **Canadian Cancer Society**

1-888-939-3333

www.cancerconnection.ca Here you will find groups and discussions

- **Aplastic Anemia & Myelodysplasia Association of Canada**

1 – 888 – 939 – 3333

www.aamac.ca

Click on “Meetings & Events”. Filter to British Columbia. Then click on “Patient Support Group Meeting”

There are many other support groups and services for patients, caregivers, and young adults. Please connect with your social worker to find out more information.

At Vancouver General Hospital

Volunteer Information desk

Is in the main entrance of Jim Pattison Pavilion. They can help you find the location of your appointment or test.

Translators/Language Interpreters

Spoken language interpreters are available to help with communication between staff and patients who have limited English. Video and phone interpreters are available on our units. In person interpreters can only be requested by our staff, please let us know if there is an appointment or discussion you would like to have an in-person interpreter for.

Spiritual Health and Multi-Faith Services

604 – 875 – 4151

Ask your nurse for a referral to our Spiritual Care services; non-denominational professionals can meet with you, regardless of your beliefs. There is a Sacred Space on the ground floor of Leon Blackmore Pavilion near the elevators. This is a quiet room, open to everyone, for prayer, meditation, reflection, and ceremony. Find more information at www.vch.ca Search “Spiritual Health and Multi-Faith Services” and select the top result.

CIBC Centre for Patients & Families at Vancouver General Hospital

604 – 875 – 5887

Located in the VGH main lobby, this is a quiet area where caregivers can access computers, phones, printers, copiers, fax machines and reading/media rooms. A librarian is also available to help recommend books & resources. Find more information at www.vch.ca Search “CIBC Centre for Patients and Families” and select “CIBC Centre for Patients & Families at Vancouver General Hospital”.

Indigenous Patient Navigators (IPNs) at Vancouver General Hospital

604 – 314 – 8069

Ask for a referral to the Aboriginal Patient Navigator Program for requests for traditional ceremonies such as smudging, cedar and elder fan brushings or blanketing. See the link for the First Nations Health Authority’s “Living with Cancer” Guide. Find more information at www.vch.ca Search “Indigenous Patient Navigators”. Scroll down and select “Indigenous Patient Navigators (IPNs) at Vancouver General Hospital”.

Helpful BC Resources and Websites

My Care Compass

Access your test results online from Vancouver Coastal Health (outpatient results only), Life labs & other health centers in BC. Search My Care Compass in google. Click on the top link and then click on “British Columbia”.

Health Link BC (Call 8-1-1)

Call 811 for general questions regarding your health. Offers online support and telephone access to nurses, dietitians, exercise professionals, pharmacists and translators.

www.healthlink.ca

Look Good Feel Better Program

Free programs that help individuals cope with any appearance-related effects to cancer and treatment with confidence. They strive to treat the whole person through workshops, online forums and peer support.

www.lgfb.ca

Fertile Future

This is a Canadian website with valuable information regarding fertility issues and options for men and women diagnosed with cancer. Check their services and assistance with costs related to fertility services. The Power of Hope is a cost reduction program that offers financial assistance to qualifying cancer patients. It is available at Olive Fertility Centre in Vancouver. Please see www.fertilefuture.ca under the “Power of Hope” heading.

Access and Assessment Centre (AAC) at Vancouver General Hospital

Helps individuals and families access mental health and substance use services in Vancouver. Go to www.vch.ca and search “access and assessment centre”. Click “Access and Assessment Centre (AAC) at Vancouver General Hospital”.

Young Adult Patients

YACC (Young Adult Cancer Canada)

connect@youngadultcancer.ca

YACC supports young adults across Canada dealing with cancer. They offer information, retreats, workshops, support during treatment, goal-setting strategies for life after treatment and connection to other young adults. www.youngadultcancer.ca

Stupid Cancer

contact@stupidcancer.org

Founded by an individual diagnosed with cancer at the age of 21. Organization is based in New York. Meetups, webinars, discussion series. www.stupidcancer.org

The Callanish Society

604-732-0633 or email info@callanish.org

An organization in Vancouver with outreach programs, counselling, retreats, and group programs for people living with cancer. www.callanish.org

*For more young adult resources or for young adult caregiver supports
please connect with a social worker.*

Palliative Care

Palliative care is a type of medical care that focuses on improving quality of life for people with serious illnesses, regardless of treatment outcomes: age, stage, prognosis. It can be provided at home, in hospitals, and other settings. Palliative care is a holistic approach aimed to help manage your symptoms (physical, emotional, spiritual). It also focuses on in-depth communication that helps you and your loved ones match your treatment options with your goals. This level of communication also improves overall care coordination. Palliative care helps you gain the strength to manage and continue with your daily life. It improves your ability to tolerate medical treatments, and it gives you more control by improving your understanding of your choices for treatment. It's an extra layer of support whilst you navigate living with a serious illness.

How Do You Know If You Could Benefit from Palliative Care?

If you are suffering from pain or other symptoms (physical, spiritual, or emotional) caused by either your disease or the side effects of treatment, ask your health care team for a palliative care referral. Symptoms of blood cancers may include pain, fatigue or low energy, cuts and bruises that take a long time to heal, bleeding from minor wounds, frequent nose bleeds, fevers or night sweats, frequent infections that are hard to fight, unexplained weight loss, achy bones and joints, depression and anxiety, among others. For more information, go to www.lls.org search "palliative care" click the top result titled "Palliative Care".

Home Based Palliative Care

If you are someone who has challenges leaving your home to attend medical appointments, a palliative care team can come to you. Ask your health care team for a referral to a palliative care team at your local community health centre.

Hospital Based Palliative Care

Most hospitals in the lower mainland have access to a palliative care consultant or team. Ask your health care provider for a referral.

Outpatient / Ambulatory Based Palliative Care

Referrals must be made through your Physician or Nurse Practitioner

Nancy Chan Ambulatory Palliative Care Clinic (Vancouver)

604 – 659 – 1160

An outpatient clinic that offers consultations to clients and families who are living with a serious illness and may be experiencing symptoms and distress which may be affecting their quality of life. Go to www.vch.ca Search “Nancy Chan Ambulatory Palliative Care Clinic.” Click and read through the results.

Services may include one or more of the following:

- *Palliative specialty consultation by Physician, Nurse, Social Worker and/or Spiritual Care Practitioner*
- *Symptom assessment and management*
- *Care planning, documentation, and communication to referral source (specialists, outpatient clinics, home health and GPs)*
- *Counselling and individualized education*
- *Spiritual care and counselling*
- *Self-management support and coaching – clients set goals and participate in action planning for ongoing and crisis-management planning*
- *Caregiver support/education*

North Shore Palliative Outpatient Clinic (North Vancouver)

604 – 984 – 3743

The North Shore Palliative Outpatient Clinic offers services for patients registered with the North Shore Palliative Care Program who require additional support managing complicated pain and symptoms or end-of-life/palliative planning. Appointments are provided by a palliative physician or nurse practitioner. Outpatient Clinic appointments are not meant to replace routine medical care performed by the patient's primary care provider.

BC Cancer Pain and Symptom Management Clinic

Vancouver: 604 – 877 –6000 Ext. 672752

Surrey: 1 – 800 – 523 – 2885

Abbotsford: 1 – 877 – 547 – 3777 Ext. 647470

Our clinics can help you:

- *Improve pain control*
- *Cope with other physical problems related to cancer (e.g., severe nausea, shortness of breath, fatigue)*

Our clinics can also:

- *Support you and your family with emotional and social concerns that come with living with cancer*
- *Assist with care planning and decision-making, especially around transitions between hospital/home care settings.*

Grief/Bereavement Resources

- **Vancouver Hospice Society**

Offers various types of grief support to eligible individuals

www.vancouverhospice.org click on the services heading and then click on “grief support”.

- **Fraser Health Hospice Societies**

Burnaby, New Westminister, Crossroads (Coquitlam), Surrey, Peace Arch and Abbotsford all have grief support programs. Please connect with your doctor or nurse practitioner for further information.

Other Resources

- **British Columbia Hospice Palliative Care Association**

604 – 267– 7024

An association dedicated to the providing quality end-of-life care for British Columbians. It is a good place to find local information and resources.

www.bchpca.org

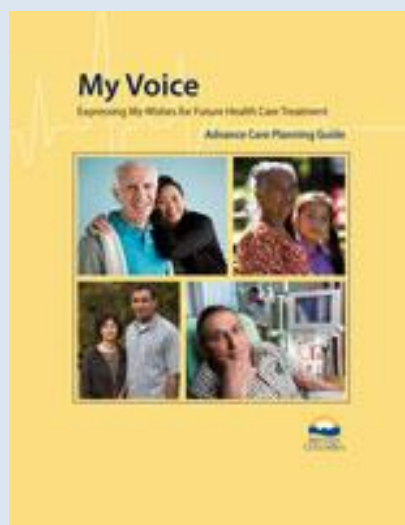
The BC Bereavement Helpline

1–877 – 779 – 2223

Trained personnel are available to assist bereaved callers with understanding responses to loss and to inform them of community resources, as appropriate. www.bcbh.ca

My Voice

Use the workbook, *My Voice: Expressing My Wishes for Future Health Care* to guide you and write down your options.



Online: Go to www2.gov.bc.ca search “advance care planning”. Click on “Advance Care Planning”. Scroll down and you will see links to the booklet available in pdf format.

Hope...

Hope is being honest with yourself about your situation, while still looking forward to positive outcomes in your future. Hope may not be easy to find. The changes that come with cancer can be overwhelming and cause a great deal of uncertainty. Hope can help you find the strength and courage to face these concerns.

Focus on wellness. Try to be hopeful. Sometimes this means looking for the good even during trying times. Try to use your energy to focus on wellness and doing things that make you happy. Remember that you are never alone. There are people to help and support you. Some of them are in your home and community; others are at your hospital, cancer centre or place of worship.

There is no right or wrong way to hope.

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Please note that the information contained in this manual is not intended to replace the advice of your health care team. Use this as a reference and education guide. Consult your health care team if you have any questions or concerns. Authors: Amy Healy 06/2019, Sally Moore 11/2025, Patsy Vanee 05/2025, Annabel Francis 02/2025 Nikki Stiver 02/2025, Tanisha Bors 02/2025, Nogol Salehi 02/2025, Gretchen Olund 02/2025, Amy Chen 02/2025, Prachi Sony 02/2025 Editor: Claudine Kee 05/2025 Formator: Mimi Gee 08/2025

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