

Launching the Princess Margaret Cancer Care Network

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Arden Krystal, President and CEO, Southlake, Dr. Keith Stewart, VP Cancer, UHN and Medical Director, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, on Thursday sign the certificate of partnership which sees the Stronach Regional Cancer Centre at Southlake Regional Health Centre become the first member of the Princess Margaret Cancer Care Network. (Photo: Courtesy Southlake Regional Health Centre)

The Princess Margaret Cancer Centre will offer improved access to, and more rapid dissemination of, cancer care clinical advice, advanced technologies, education and innovations through the creation of the Princess Margaret Cancer Care Network (PM Cancer Care Network).

Stronach Regional Cancer Centre (SRCC) at Southlake Regional Health Centre is the first member to join the PM Cancer Care Network.

Under an agreement, PM and the Stronach Regional Cancer Centre will work together to leverage both centres' respective strengths, resources, and expertise.

The PM Cancer Care Network will partner with interested healthcare institutions to provide advanced technologies, educational materials and care expertise enabling patients to receive optimal care while remaining in their home community, while also having access to PM if and when the need arises.

Members of the network share similar philosophies, united under one common goal: putting the needs of the patients first.

"The vision here is to share and extend the reach of our PM expertise with interested cancer centres around Ontario and eventually Canada," says Dr Keith Stewart, VP Cancer, UHN, and Medical Director of the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre.

"The launch of our PM Cancer Care Network puts that vision into action."

Dr. Peter Anglin, Physician Lead, Stronach Regional Cancer Centre at Southlake, says: "We are excited about our new partnership with the Princess Margaret Cancer Care Network. Southlake patients will have increased access to the expertise and cutting-edge technologies of one of the top five cancer centres in the world.

"The two organizations have always enjoyed close ties. This new expanded relationship will increase access to advanced diagnostics, personalized medicine, and clinical trials.

"We are privileged to be the first member of the Princess Margaret Care Network."



At Thursday's event at Southlake Regional Health Centre: (L to R) Dr. Charles Cho, Physician Lead, Radiation Oncology, Southlake, Calvin D'souza, Planning Associate Transformation & Strategic Partnerships, PM, Arden Krystal, President and CEO, Southlake, Dr. Keith Stewart, VP Cancer, UHN and Medical Director, PM, Lorrie Reynolds, Director, Central Regional Cancer Program at Southlake, Barb Steed, EVP Clinical Services, Southlake, Regional VP, Cancer Program, Dr. Andrea Bezjak, Medical Director, Princess Margaret Care Network, Meena Merali, Director, Transformation and Strategic Partnerships, PM and Dr. Peter Anglin, Physician Lead, Stronach Regional Cancer Centre. (Photo: Courtesy Southlake Regional Health Centre)

Partnership covers all aspects of the coordination of care and treatment

The partnership with the PM Cancer Care Network will cover all aspects of the coordination of care and treatment for patients, including:

Collaborative care models that enable easier access to clinical advice and second opinions

- Access to joint multidisciplinary cancer conferences (MCC)/tumour boards for support on complex cases
- Standard of care treatments close to the patient's home or equitable access to care for more complex issues, where and when appropriate

- Improved access and support for research, clinical trials and technology innovations
- Provision of patient, family and caregiver resources in a variety of languages

The PM Cancer Care Network also offers unique benefits to healthcare providers by enhancing access to educational materials, resources, customized courses and workshops.

The Princess Margaret Cancer Centre and Southlake, which serves the population of York Region, North York and South Simcoe County, have a history of working together on patient care, including an existing partnership in radiation oncology, shared-care models in leukemia, and formal and informal collaborations on clinical trials.

Seeking to 'level the playing field' for patients no matter where they live

This new agreement builds on that collaboration – expanding access to the highest quality of care while allowing patients to stay close to home under the supervision of their established care team at Southlake.

"We are very fortunate in Canada, benefiting from provincial structures that enable communication and collaboration between healthcare organizations," says Dr. Andrea Bezjak, a radiation oncologist and Medical Director of the PM Cancer Care Network. "Despite these structures and relationships, there are still differences in what centres can provide to their patients.

"The Princess Margaret Cancer Care Network seeks to level the playing field, ensuring patients have equitable opportunities to access the advanced care and knowledge available at a world-leading facility, regardless of where they live."

The network will also build patient, caregiver, and provider confidence through state-of-the-art cancer care that is medically rigorous and empathic, inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible for all.

"We believe that within this network of institutions, providers of care, their patients and patient caregivers will derive confidence and comfort from network membership, secure in the knowledge that their care is benefitting from enhanced access to the specialized and unique skills and technologies offered at one of the top cancer centres in the world," says Dr. Stewart.

In parallel, the PM Cancer Care Network will stimulate growth of the Princess Margaret's highly specialized care services, including complex surgery, advanced radiation technology and clinical trials of experimental therapies.

"This is just the first step," says Dr. Bezjak. The goal is to expand the network to multiple partner sites leading to a network of multidisciplinary teams collaborating, improving outcomes and advancing cancer care."

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