



**For immediate release**  
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## **WGH takes collaborative approach to better support the cancer journey in Yukon**

Whitehorse – Recognizing that it takes more than one care provider or clinic to support the cancer journey, Whitehorse General Hospital (WGH) has taken a collaborative approach with a specialized health care team that provides a comprehensive range of care and is better able to support chemotherapy patients here in the territory.

“A cancer diagnosis has a significant physical, emotional and financial impact on patients and their families,” says Karen Girling, WGH’s Director of Allied Patient Services. “It’s the beginning of what can be a complex journey – and all too often has meant Yukoners must regularly leave the territory for cancer care.”

WGH recently enhanced its range of service to ensure more of the cancer journey – from diagnostics, physician care and treatment to emotional support – has support a little closer to home.

Starting this month, the hospital is teaming with four local physicians, who received specialized oncology training from the BC Cancer Agency. These general practitioners in oncology (GPO) services will be integrated into the chemotherapy program, offering cancer patients access to dedicated medical care.

“Using current knowledge of cancer care and treatment, we are available at the hospital to assess and monitor patients here in Yukon,” says Dr. Danusia Kanachowski, one of the Whitehorse GPOs. “This is a very important role within WGH supported by family physicians and out-of-territory oncology specialists as well as the in-hospital team of nurses, pharmacists and support staff to ensure the best possible care.”

Since 2003, chemotherapy has been offered in Karen’s Room, a safe, quiet and comfortable environment at WGH for patients and their families. The service now has support from two Registered Nurses, who administer treatment and provide skilled and stable staffing for this highly specialized care. There is also a dedicated, on-staff pharmacist to review physician orders, prepare chemotherapy and serve as an expert resource for patients to discuss treatment and other medications or therapies.

Earlier in this year, WGH also re-introduced to Yukon the role of Cancer Care Navigator to help patients and their families access emotional, social and psychological support throughout the cancer journey. The navigator also serves as a practical guide to the health care system by providing information and support that assists patients in making informed decisions and accessing services and resources that are available in Yukon and outside the territory.

“Cancer patients have an advocate, who is connected to the entire patient care team and can help with many of the significant challenges that come with a cancer diagnosis...whether it’s finding educational material or preparing for treatment or a test,” adds Girling. “This also ensures continuity of support, so there’s always someone to turn to with questions about your care.”

In addition to surgical care, WGH is also home to important diagnostic services that support cancer care, including a laboratory that offers blood testing (on-site and for referral labs) which helps in diagnosis, treatment and management of the illness. The hospital also houses Yukon’s mammography program and several imaging technologies that assist in cancer screening and diagnosis. The addition of the new MRI program, opening in January 2015, will also play a pivotal role in cancer care for the territory.

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