



## Simcoe Muskoka Regional Cancer Program Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) Newsletter The Summer 2023 Edition

**“Everything good, everything magical happens between the months of June and August.”**

**~ Jenny Han**

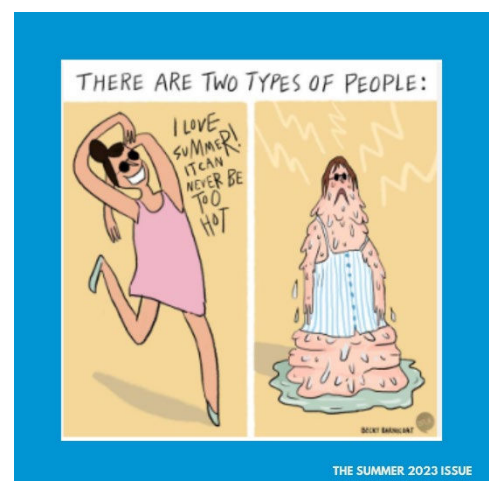
*Welcome to the “lazy” days of summer. I have lazy in quotes because I am not sure how good anyone is at being “lazy” these days! It is something I want to challenge you all on this summer. Taking time to slow down and carve out some time for YOU. We are here to help you with some ideas:*

*How about enjoying one of the prepared meals you can pick up at RVH we talk about in this issue.  
Or maybe join a cool opportunity to invest in some self-care on your cancer journey.  
Or learning more about spiritual care that is available to all patients and caregivers at RVH.  
Last but not least, I can’t think of a better way to kick off the summer season then a picnic, BBQ or a summer night dinner with **potato salad**! We have a great recipe for you in this issue.*

*Whatever your plans are for this summer, be safe, be happy, and be well friends.*

**~ Jennifer McCloskey, Cancer Program PFAC patient member**

*Which one are you?!*



# RVH to enhance cancer diagnosis with new, advanced PET-CT technology

Submitted by Jessica Dolan, RVH Corporate Communications

In March, Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) received a very special delivery – the first PET-CT scanner in the region!



*The new PET-CT Scanner arrived at RVH on March 31, 2023.*

The scanner arrived in several pieces and is securely stored in a temporary holding area in RVH's Main lobby next to the Imaging Department, its permanent home. Once construction is completed, the scanner is expected to be up and running by late fall.

“RVH has always focused on putting the best tools in the hands of the most skilled professionals,” says Gail Hunt, RVH President and CEO. “With this delivery, we are taking another significant step forward for our patients to more easily access the latest technology, so they can be diagnosed and treated faster, and ultimately on the road to recovery sooner.”

PET-CT uses a dual imaging system that combines important diagnostic functionality (PET) with the anatomical assessment of tissues and organs (CT). The painless, non-invasive scan is very sensitive, and through advanced technology uses molecular imaging to detect certain cancers, such as lung, breast and colon. The PET-CT scan is interpreted by radiologists to describe to oncologists exactly where the cancer is located, as cancer cells absorb the small amount of radioactive compound injected into the patient.

To put it simply, the scanner is a real game changer. It means patients will quickly receive an earlier, accurate diagnosis, allowing them to either proceed to treatment or get on with living their lives if the diagnosis is negative.

“We understand and can't lose sight of the fact that behind our list of patient names, there are people – real people,” says Dr. Raj Grover, RVH Medical Director of Medical Imaging. “These people are waiting at home worried about the next test, worried about their own diagnosis, or their parent's or child's. We never lose sight of that, and we keep that with us every day. Much of the work we do, including advocating for new equipment, is to reduce the stress, anxiety and wait-times our patients and their families experience.”

The new PET-CT scanner will bring care closer to home, ensuring residents from across the region do not have to travel long distances at a time when they are most anxious and afraid. This is exciting news for the more than 700 patients who travel outside Simcoe Muskoka to access a PET-CT each year.



*Dr. Raj Grover, RVH Medical Director of Medical Imaging.*



*Patient, Stu Wallace, and his family.*

Patients like Stu Wallace, who, while waiting for a diagnosis, had to travel hundreds of kilometers from his home in Port Sydney to access a scanner. “It was such a stressful time for me and my family,” says Stu. “Having a PET-CT at RVH will be such a great relief for other families going through a similar journey.”

Once the PET-CT is running, the Diagnostic Imaging team will gradually ramp-up the amount of patients they are able to see each week. RVH anticipates performing 1,000 scans the first year the PET-CT is in operation.

“Obviously, we wish that on opening day we could satisfy all requests and offer PET scans to all patients in the region who need it, but learning and operating a new program and modality will take time,” says Dr. Cory Ozimok, Diagnostic Radiologist and Nuclear Medicine Physician. “In general, we will prioritize patients who need the scan to make a treatment decision in situations that are very time sensitive.”

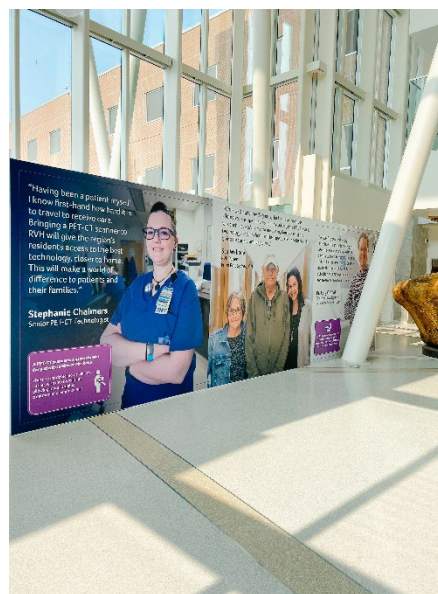


*Dr. Cory Ozimok, Diagnostic Radiologist and Nuclear Medicine Physician.*

There are currently only 14 PET-CT scanners in eight Ontario cities. RVH will be the only hospital between Newmarket and Sudbury to offer this service. As RVH expands its program in the future, the PET-CT can also be used to assess other conditions, including heart disease.



*Location for our new PET-CT scanner area is currently under construction.*



*The PET-CT Scanner holding spot until construction is complete.*



## Inspirational Vibes: Spiritual Care Introduction

Submitted by Rob Henderson, Spiritual Care Clinician for Cancer Centre

***“Hi I’m Rob and I’m from Spiritual Care....”***

That is how I introduce myself at the chairs in the Chemo Suite at RVH.

Sometimes I am welcomed, sometimes people look puzzled, and sometimes people are closed off. Generally, however, I find there is an expectation that I am there to provide religious services.

Now please don’t get me wrong, I am an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in Canada and am more than willing to provide religious services such as prayer or Scripture to those who wish.

My training and experience as a **Spiritual Care Clinician**, however, enables me to engage on a far broader plane of spirituality – exploring issues of meaning and purpose in lives that have been disrupted by a cancer diagnosis and treatment. I know that cancer can lead to grief, traumatic stress, and family disruption. Often cancer patients feel they have to be strong for their families and have no one else to talk to. I am there for patients who have no one else to talk to – to walk with them through their grief and stress. I am also there for family members who are struggling with the diagnosis of a loved one. Finally I am there for staff who deal with tremendous emotional work loads and may not know who to turn to.

***“Hi I’m Rob and I’m from Spiritual Care to be here for you!”***



*Spiritual Care at RVH*

If you are looking for a quiet space to pray, reflect, or meditate, the **Spiritual Care Centre** is always open. **Located on the lower level of RVH off the Food Court.**

**Dial “0”** on any RVH phone to contact Locating and **ask for Spiritual Care.** (After hours **ask for On-Call Spiritual Care.**)

<https://www.rvh.on.ca/patients-visitors/while-you-are-at-rvh/spiritual-care/>

## Smudging at RVH

Submitted by Jodie Erb, Indigenous Project Coordinator

In 2021, RVH Senior Leadership Team approved the **Smudging Ceremony Policy**.

This policy allows Indigenous patients and families to use this traditional healing practice at RVH. The policy was written in alignment with the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report** that includes seven Calls to Action specific to the Health



sector in Canada. Action item #22 states “**We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system recognize the values of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients**”

*Some items used for Smudging*

Under the Indian Act, First Nation ceremonies were banned from 1885-1951 in Canada. Simultaneously, thousands of First Nation children as young as three years old were forcibly removed from their homes and placed into Indian Residential Schools.

The **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)** was first launched in 2008 as a part of the **Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA)**. The IRSSA was negotiated between former students, churches, government of Canada and other Indigenous organizations.

As a result, survivors could **share their experiences and stories** as a part to create a historical account of the schools, to help survivor's health and to encourage reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people living in Canada.

Today, we live in a time of **Truth and Reconciliation** – this means learning about our collective Canadian history and finding ways to reconcile our past for a more equitable future.

**RVH's Indigenous Patient Services and Spiritual Care** is happy to assist patients in accessing traditional Indigenous healing practices. For more information about smudging at RVH please email [IndigenousTeam@RVH.on.ca](mailto:IndigenousTeam@RVH.on.ca) or call 705-790-1196

## Patient's Corner

### Patient Question:

"Thank you so much for this newsletter. Can you give some tips of how to cope while taking chemo? Thank you!"

~ Cancer Patient at RVH Cancer Centre

Thank you for this important question.

All cancer journeys are different and so is how people "manage" their cancer treatments. **It is not one size fits all scenario.**

But not to worry, there are so many great resources available to help you find out what works for you. **Here are a few:**

On Level 2 (**main floor**) of the **RVH Cancer Centre** there is a library of information from the **Canadian Cancer Society** as well as other local resources available for you to take home.

You can also visit the *Preparing for Chemotherapy and Systemic Therapy* webpage (<https://www.rvh.on.ca/areas-of-care/cancer-program/preparing-for-chemotherapy-and-systemic-therapy/>) written by the Simcoe Muskoka Regional Cancer Program. Within this page there tips on what to bring and what to expect to help you prepare for your visit, as well as patient and family support services to help you cope with your cancer experience.

We also have **PFAC Peer Liaison** members who travel from time to time around the **Chemo Suite** and **Radiation Waiting Area** who are happy to answer your questions and/or provide you with what you need.

*Information Library located in the Level 2 (main level) waiting area of the RVH Cancer Centre.*



These resources are also available online at: [www.rvh.on.ca](http://www.rvh.on.ca) and <https://cancer.ca/en/>  
**Wishing you all the best on your cancer journey.**

## Parking at RVH

Submitted by Kelly Blakley, Cancer Program PFAC Patient Member/Co-Chair

As **Peer Liaisons** my Cancer PFAC colleague Jocelyn and I go around to visit patients in the chemo suites and radiation waiting rooms. During those visits we connect with patients and caregivers and share information about different services, support networks available at RVH and in the community.

***Parking pass information is our biggest discussion point.***

We wanted to take the opportunity to provide some clarity regarding these parking passes. You can find all updated information on parking in the parking pamphlet and on the RVH website: <https://www.rvh.on.ca/patients-visitors/parking-and-transportation/>

For anyone who will be receiving treatments over many months at RVH we recommend the **HPASS** as the best money-saving deal for you.

### **HPASS (unlimited in and out privileges)**

Valid for one year after purchase

**Purchased only at the Parking Office**

5-Day pass – \$47.00

10-Day pass – \$82.00

30-Day pass – \$103.00



The 5, 10, or 30 days **do not need to occur in a row** and **you have in and out privileges**.

*Let's look at an example of a parking situation using a 30-Day HPASS:*

- When you purchase a **30-day pass** this means you have **365 days** from the time of purchase to use those **30 days**.
- Let's say you have **25 days** left on your card and you have two appointments on a Tuesday, one at 9 am for bloodwork and one at 1 pm to see your Oncologist:
  - You would swipe your card on you way in for your morning appointment.
  - You then will have in and out privileges for the next 24hrs
  - So you can leave after your first appointment to do some errands and come back for your 1 pm appointment.
  - This will only count as 1 day use even though you used it twice in one day.
  - At the end of the day you will have **24 days** left on your card.

We hope this helps clear up your parking pass questions. Remember the RVH site is your best place to go for the most up-to-date information on your parking needs:

<https://www.rvh.on.ca/patients-visitors/parking-and-transportation/>

## Prepared Meals at RVH

Submitted by Willa Hart, Cancer Centre PFAC Caregiver Member

Do you know that **RVH food services** offers take out meals for patients, families, employees, and anyone interested called **Meals to Go**.

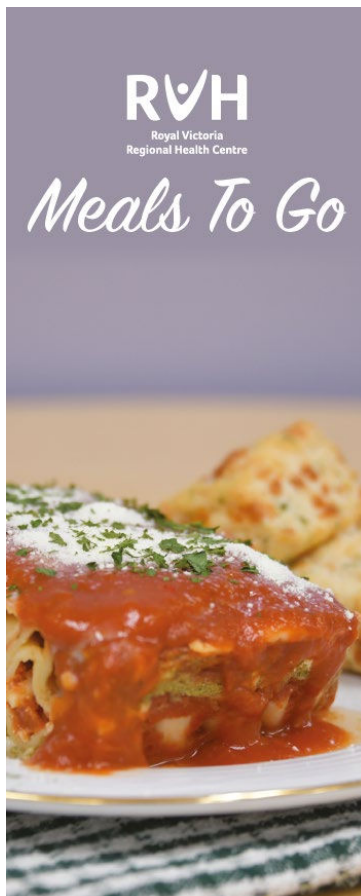
Their meals are healthy, affordable, and delicious. There are a wide variety of home style meals prepared daily in easy take-out containers that you can freeze until you're ready to heat in the microwave and enjoy.

There are many choices to cater to everyone's tastes from lasagna, mac and cheese, roast chicken, soups, and delicious deserts to many more. The chefs will accommodate a full range of modified meals from renal, vegetarian and gluten free to pureed and minced. **Prices range from \$1.50 for soups and deserts to \$5.95 for entrees.**

You can lower costs by ordering 5 or more meals. You can pick up the frozen meals at the Food Services Office at RVH.

**To order call 705.728.9090 ext. 44428 email [mealstogo@rvh.on.ca](mailto:mealstogo@rvh.on.ca).** For the latest menu, go to [www.rvh.on.ca](http://www.rvh.on.ca) and type "Meals to Go" on the search bar.

Bon Appetit!

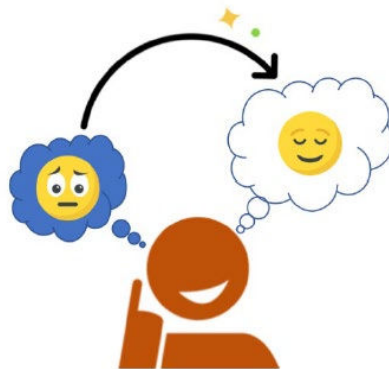




# Cancer Journey Opportunity

## FORT (Fear of Recurrence Therapy Group Support)

Fear of recurrence, the worry that cancer will come back after treatment, is one of the most common concerns among patients and survivors. Although some concerns about recurrence is natural, too much worrying can affect their quality of life. The social workers at SMRCP is offering a new group program called **FORT (Fear of Recurrence Therapy)**.



We invite you to join a **6-week group program** that offers unique interventions combining cognitive behavioral therapy and existential therapy to help patients to understand their triggers, learn strategies to better cope with fear of reoccurrence and to overall improve their quality of life.

**WHO:** Currently offered to patients who have a cancer diagnosis of breast (chest) and gynae cancer (cancer of the internal reproductive system and external genital area which includes the ovary, uterus/endometrium, cervix, vagina and vulva) and have completed their active treatment. We strive to provide an inclusive, supportive, and safe space for everyone.

**WHERE:** Online virtually, through Microsoft Teams.

### SESSION DATES:

**Tuesday, September 12th:** A one-time private meeting (online virtually) with a social worker. A specific time will be confirmed after you have been registered.

**Tuesday, September 19th – October 24th:** Group sessions run virtually on Microsoft Teams from 1:00pm – 3:00pm.

**HOW TO REGISTER\*:** Call Patient and Family Support Desk at 705-728-9090 x 43520

**\*If the session is filled you will be put on a waiting list for the next session.**

## Yummy Recipes



### Potato Salad Recipe

Submitted by **Brenda McAuley, Cancer Program PFAC Patient Member**

Nothing says summer like a classic potato salad. Brenda has put together her take on the Potato Salad for you to enjoy this summer!

### **Ingredients:**

#### Salad:

- 1 ½lbs small red or yellow potatoes cut in 1-inch pieces
- 1-2 hard boiled eggs chopped
- 2 strips crispy bacon crumbled (optional)
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 2 tablespoons chives

#### Dressing:

- 3 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 tablespoon white balsamic vinegar
- ½ teaspoon Dijon Mustard
- ½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- Salt and pepper to taste

### **Directions:**

1. Boil potatoes until just cooked (about 6-7 minutes) Drain and cool.
2. Combine potatoes, hard boiled eggs, parsley, and chives in a bowl.
3. Combine all dressing ingredients and shake or whip until well combined.
4. Add ½ of the dressing to the potatoes and toss. Add more dressing to taste as required.
5. Sprinkle crumbled bacon and extra chopped parsley on top just before serving.

If you are looking for back issues of the **Simcoe Muskoka Regional Cancer Program Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC)** Newsletter visit us here:

<https://www.rvh.on.ca/?s=pfac+newsletter>