
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

SURVEY SHOWS HIGH SCORES FOR OUTPATIENT CANCER CARE

VICTORIA – British Columbian cancer patients gave high ratings to outpatient cancer care services in a provincial survey, Health Minister George Abbott announced today.

This first ever provincial ambulatory oncology survey shows 97.1 per cent of respondents rate the quality of their overall care as good, very good or excellent. Survey respondents were people who had received chemotherapy and/or radiation outpatient therapy in a B.C. facility in 2006.

“This survey shows we are providing quality outpatient cancer care and reflects our government’s commitment to world-class cancer care and outcomes,” Abbott said. “When the vast majority of patients are satisfied with their care, we can be assured that we are providing a high level of accessible patient care. Front line health-care professionals should be commended for their efforts to deliver timely, dignified and supportive care.”

Patients rated physical comfort highest and stated one of the areas for improvement is the level of emotional support provided.

Among individual questions receiving the highest ratings were:

- The wait from scheduled appointment to outpatient radiation – 95.3 per cent;
- Treated with dignity and respect by outpatient providers – 92.3 per cent;
- Family and friends involved in outpatient care/ treatment – 92.1 per cent;
- Wait from scheduled appointment to outpatient chemotherapy – 90.0 per cent;
- Could trust outpatient providers with confidential info – 87.8 per cent.

The Ministry of Health and health authorities commissioned the National Research Corporation Canada to conduct the survey, which included patients who received care between Nov. 15, 2005 and May 15, 2006. Surveys went to 12,215 patients from 50 facilities in British Columbia, and examined their experiences across six care dimensions. A total of 6,974 cancer care outpatients responded to the survey, for a response rate of 60.1 per cent.

The results suggest that areas for improvement include: co-ordination and continuity of care; information, education and communication received; and emotional support provided. Some patients said they would have appreciated more support to alleviate their fears and anxieties.

“Within a provincial cancer control program, British Columbians would like assurance that the access process, conduct, and outcomes of care are as good as anywhere in Canada and without substantial disparity across the province,” said Dr. Simon Sutcliffe, president of the BC Cancer Agency. “This survey provides that assurance and indicates a generally high degree of satisfaction with the many aspects of cancer control, while drawing attention to some areas, such as emotional support, where further work is necessary.”

“We applaud the B.C. Ministry of Health for their leadership role in undertaking a provincewide survey with outpatient cancer care services,” said Susie Wai, executive director of the Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control, BC/Yukon. “Many stakeholders consistently identify the need to measure the satisfaction of the patient’s and family’s journey along the cancer care continuum. This is useful in planning for the future and identifying areas where we can improve the quality of life for those with cancer, along with other clinical and service data.”

The BC Cancer Agency (BCCA), a provincial government funded agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, provides a comprehensive cancer control program for British Columbians. The BC Cancer Agency network partners with communities to deliver a range of cancer services, including prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment, research, education, supportive care, rehabilitation and palliative care. It operates four regional cancer centres in Kelowna, Surrey, Vancouver and Vancouver Island. In addition to the regional cancer centres, 46 facilities in the B.C. Communities Oncology Network, providing chemotherapy services closer to patients’ homes, participated in the project.

The BCCA has had several major accomplishments over the past two years, including:

- The BC Cancer Agency Research Centre opened in Vancouver, enhancing collaboration between researchers and clinicians leading to improved outcomes for cancer patients in every part of B.C.
- Construction continues on the fifth provincial cancer care centre in the Fraser Valley in conjunction with the construction of the Abbotsford Regional Hospital
- B.C. was the first province to approve and cover the cost of Herceptin for all eligible breast cancer patients
- B.C.’s first publicly funded PET/CT Scanner was opened in Vancouver

Since 2001, the life-saving drug budget for the BC Cancer Agency has nearly tripled from \$37.5 million to \$100 million in support of B.C.’s role as a nationally recognized leader in providing timely access to new and more effective cancer drugs.

Through its health authorities, the Province spends \$1 million annually to monitor patient experiences and support quality improvement on a recurring basis in key areas. The findings are used to measure patient satisfaction in order to enhance public accountability and gain a clear understanding of how the system is working for patients.

For a copy of the full report, written by the Centre for Health Services and Policy Research, go to: www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/socsec/publications.html. A summary of the report is available at the same site. For Health Authority information, visit: www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/socsec/surveys.html

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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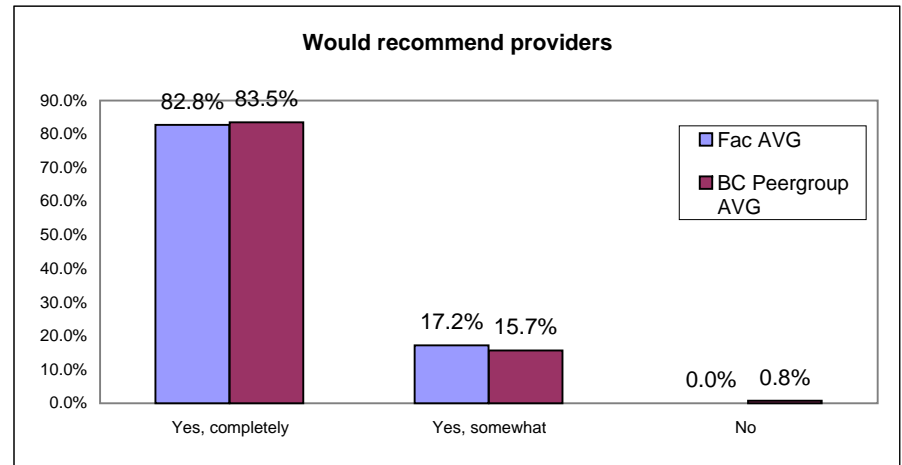
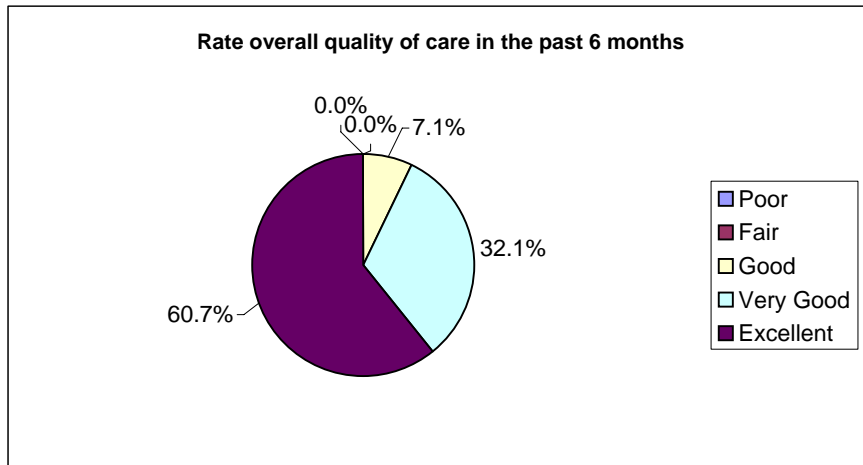
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**Providence Health Care -- St. Paul's Hospital
Outpatient Cancer Care Experience of Care Patient Survey Results**

Report Date: December 15th, 2006 **Patient Visit Dates:** November 2005 – May 2006. n=40, Response Rate= 59.7%

| Summary Results (% positive score)** | | Strengths (Highest % positive scores)** | | Opportunities for Improvement (Lowest % positive scores)** | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|--------|---|-------|
| Rate overall quality of care in past 6 months ⁽¹⁾ | 100.0% SPH 95.9% BC Peergroup | Results of surgery explained understandably | 100.0% | Never waited longer than expected for chemo treatment | 14.3% |
| Respect for Patient Preferences | 82.5% | Family/friends involved in care/treatment | 96.6% | Enough info on possible sexual activity changes | 21.4% |
| Emotional Support | 53.2% | Could trust care providers with confidential info | 93.1% | Put in touch with providers to help with anxiety/fear | 21.4% |
| Surgery Specific | 90.0% | Staff did everything to help manage chemo side effects | 90.5% | Enough info on possible relationship changes | 23.5% |
| Coordination and Continuity of Care | 69.4% | Care provider explained why tests needed understandably | 90.3% | Enough info on possible emotional changes | 25.0% |
| Access to Care | 70.0% | Someone explained test results understandably | 90.0% | Put in touch w/providers to help w/diagnosis anxiety/fear | 29.2% |
| Information, Communication & Education | 67.2% | Treated with dignity and respect by care providers | 89.7% | Enough info on changes in work/usual activities | 42.1% |
| Physical Comfort | 78.6% | Involved in care decisions as much as wanted to be | 87.5% | Enough info on nutritional needs | 44.0% |
| | | Did NOT wait too long for first appointment for treatment | 87.5% | Enough info on possible energy level changes | 51.9% |
| Would recommend providers (OP) ⁽²⁾ | 82.8% | Did NOT get confusing/contradictory info about health or treatment | 86.7% | Enough info on possible physical changes | 52.4% |



(1) Question: Overall, how would you rate the quality of all of your care in the past 6 months?
Response scale = Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good, Excellent **Percent Positive Score** = Good+Very Good+ Excellent
 (2) Question: Would you recommend your health care providers to your family and friends?
Response scale = Yes, completely, Yes, somewhat, No **Percent Positive Score** = Yes, completely
 ** Items highlighted in **RED** have the highest correlation with "Rate overall quality of care in the past 6 months".