

2018 PAS Award of Merit Recipients

Recognizes pharmacists, individuals or organizations, who through their active participation have promoted the profession of pharmacy in Saskatchewan



Allan Blair Cancer Center Oral Chemotherapy Team

(L-R) Back row: Lindsay Cherniawsky, *Presenter Janet Bradshaw*, Lana Dean, Kristine Wilson

Front row: Natasha Zimmer and Yvonne Fong, *missing Azure English*
Allan Blair Cancer Center Oral Chemotherapy Team

The Oral Chemotherapy Program at the Allan Blair Cancer Center was initiated in March of 2015. Oral dosage forms of chemotherapy have become much more prevalent over the last ten years. In certain situations, oral treatments have been found to have improved clinical benefit over intravenous chemotherapy as well as reducing the time required in healthcare facilities and sometimes reducing costs compared to intravenous therapy. Patients also identify numerous benefits including less travel time, a preference for oral dosage forms, and a perception of fewer side effects versus intravenous therapy. However, oral chemotherapy can be complicated for patients, and the need for specialized follow up of these patients had been identified by a pharmacy, nursing and physician staff at the Allan Blair Cancer Centre. Natasha Zimmer took the lead on developing the oral chemotherapy follow up program at the Allan Blair Cancer Center. Over time more pharmacists were added to the team including Azure English, Kristine Wilson, Lana Dean, Yvonne Fong and Lindsay Cherniawsky.

Patients are scheduled by the oral chemo pharmacist for routine telephone follow up to review and manage side effects and monitor for toxicities, to review safe medication use and hazardous drug handling, to review the potential for drug interactions and identify the potential for medication errors. Improving adherence to therapy and reducing wastage of these often high-cost medications are also key elements of the program. Patients are followed up on a continuous basis and encouraged to contact the Oral Chemo Pharmacist with any questions or concerns they might have. The pharmacist is available to monitor and address compliance as well as ensuring appropriate lab follow up. Numerous patient education documents have been developed including a Continuous Oral Cancer Treatment handout, a Cyclical Oral Cancer Treatment handout, a Combined Oral and IV Cancer Treatment handout and a Handling Cytotoxic Medications at Home handout.

The Oral Chemotherapy Follow up Program is provided to patients across southern Saskatchewan, and the pharmacy team works very hard to ensure that medications are available to patients when required by coordinating timely medication delivery across the province. The combined efforts of this team of pharmacists are helping to ensure the safety and effectiveness of oral chemotherapy for the residents of Saskatchewan.