

PANCREATIC CANCER CANADA

A New Era

**Our Impact
2024**

Pancreatic cancer is the world's toughest cancer.

It is currently the third deadliest cancer, on target to become the second by 2030. Alarming, worldwide incidence projections indicate a 95.4% increase in new cases by 2050 and emerging trends show that one of the highest rates of increasing incidence is in people under the age of 55.

The shifting demographic of this disease is just one of the many catalysts that signal the urgent need for a new approach, a new perspective and a new era of change.

The stories that you will read in our 2024 Impact Report are not just reflections, they are rallying cries.

From **Angie Lachocki**, who stepped into a clinical trial to blaze a trail for future treatments, to **Connor Page**, who turned a devastating diagnosis into powerful purpose. Each story shared is a step towards real impact against a disease that takes far too many lives, far too quickly.

Pancreatic cancer is stealing lives at an unforgivable pace. And while 2024 showed what is possible when we come together, it also made one thing clear: **the time for incremental change is over.**

In 2025 and beyond, we're unleashing a bold, disruptive transformation of our mission by widening our reach, deepening our impact, and accelerating breakthroughs. We look forward to sharing more of our plans in the coming weeks and months.

In the meantime, we are grateful to our donors, researchers, volunteers, staff, Board of Directors, and the patients and families we serve, who supported us in 2024 and who will **join us in this new era of change to demand survival, not sympathy.**

With thanks,

Michelle Capobianco
Chief Executive Officer

Jonathan Paul
Chair of the Board of Directors



Angie's story: Survival, Not Sympathy

In March 2023, Angie Lachocki was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and told she likely had just 18 months to live. In that moment, Angie made the decision to defy expectations.

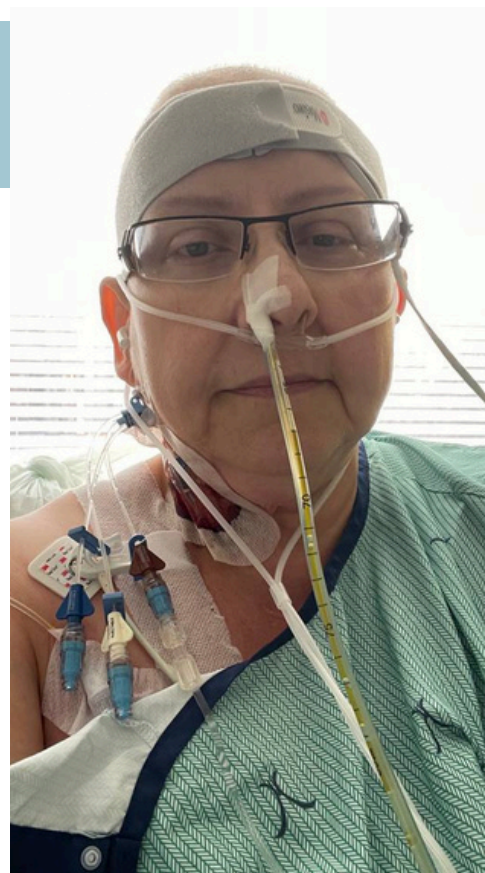
"I'm not ignorant to the fact that pancreatic cancer is the worst, but people do beat this," says Angie.

Angie's positive attitude and determination set the tone from day one. After numerous tests, Angie was identified as a strong candidate for the **NeoPancONE phase II clinical trial**, funded by Pancreatic Cancer Canada.

This trailblazing clinical trial took a new approach to treatment by giving chemotherapy to patients before and after surgery. NeoPancONE was the first to use this treatment plan, with the goal of learning more about how patients with a specific biomarker responded, helping them get the right treatment at the right time.

Angie's treatment protocol included six rounds of chemotherapy, followed by surgery, and then another six rounds of chemotherapy.

In February 2024, Angie completed the grueling treatment protocol. While she continues to monitor her health closely, she feels an overwhelming sense of gratitude to be alive and able to share her experience with others.



"This is my pay it forward," explains Angie. **"You might have the worst cancer on the planet, but you can give somebody hope. I don't know what my legacy is going to be, but from a research perspective, if my participation in this trial can help just one person, it was worth it."**

The results are in: [read more](#) about the outcomes of the NeoPancONE study.

Why Early Detection Matters

Pancreatic cancer is notoriously difficult to detect early and that is why most patients are diagnosed at stage 4, when the disease is already advanced and treatment options are limited.

While detection and treatments have improved for many cancers, pancreatic cancer has been left behind. We are changing that. We now know that pancreatic cancer can take up to 20 years to develop from initiation to terminal progression. That knowledge gives us a rare window for intervention, a chance to catch the cancer far earlier to change the diagnosis from a death sentence to a survivable disease.

Prosper-PANC: Unlocking clues from the genome



"Every patient engaged with this revolutionary trial brings hope — not only for that individual and their loved ones, but for future generations of patients facing a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer."

Dr. Faiyaz Notta

Principal Investigator
Princess Margaret Cancer
Centre

In 2024, we proudly concluded our three-year commitment to the Prosper-PANC study at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, a major step forward in the pursuit of early detection.

This ambitious, multi-centre research project uses Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) to analyze blood plasma samples from earlier PCC-funded clinical trials. WGS allows researchers to examine DNA at an unprecedented level of detail, revealing new patterns that may unlock earlier diagnosis and more personalized treatment strategies.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors including the **TD Foundation, The Lang Family Foundation, The Four Oaks Foundation, and The Rose McQuarrie Legacy Fund**, we invested **\$300,000** over three years to bring this revolutionary research to life.

AI Meets Biomarkers: A global- first early detection study

In 2024, Pancreatic Cancer Canada became the sole funding partner of a groundbreaking study led by Dr. Eugene Koay at MD Anderson Cancer Center, one of the world's top cancer institutions. We chose MD Anderson Cancer Center as our strategic partner because of its leadership in the study and treatment of pancreatic cancer and for its deep network with health systems and institutions. Our partnership will facilitate access to Canadian institutions making this a truly North American collaboration.

Why Artificial Intelligence? Because to save lives, we must diagnose earlier. And to do that, we must fund and scale bold, disruptive technologies that can outpace this aggressive disease.

This innovative study is designed to do just that: to develop more sensitive, more precise screening methods that aim to detect pancreatic cancer at its most treatable stage, and even more exciting **to predict risk before pancreatic cancer even develops**. Giving patients a chance for what simply doesn't exist today: **survival**.

This research will combine pre-diagnostic CT scans with AI-based imaging algorithms and blood biomarkers to catch pancreatic cancer earlier than ever before. It is the first study of its kind to bring together these technologies. Thank you to the **Warren Y. Soper Charitable Trust** for their visionary investment which has provided the seed funding toward our \$5 million fundraising goal.



"At the Warren Y. Soper Charitable Trust, we believe that truly innovative research is the key to changing the future of diseases like pancreatic cancer. We are proud to provide Pancreatic Cancer Canada with the seed funding to launch this exciting project and we encourage others to join us. With the potential to transform early detection, this research brings together some of the brightest minds on the continent to drive real change for this devastating cancer."

Fraser Elliott

Trustee, Warren Y. Soper Charitable Trust

Turning grief into action: Leah's Legacy for early detection

At just 52 years old, Leah Crescenzo was the picture of health – active, vibrant, and full of life. But in January 2023, she began experiencing persistent discomfort. By May, her pain had intensified to the point that she visited the emergency room, where she received a devastating diagnosis: pancreatic cancer.



Just four months later, on September 20, 2023, Leah passed away, her journey heartbreakingly brief.

Leah's story reflects a growing crisis. Research shows that an increasing number of women under 55 are being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. With no reliable early screening tests, **advancing research into early detection** is one of our highest priorities.

Determined to turn their grief into purpose, Leah's family established the **Leah's Legacy Memorial Walk** to honour her life and help drive change. Now in its third year, the event has raised \$35,000 to date, in support of earlier diagnosis and better outcomes.

"Through this event, we hope to raise awareness and funds for early detection and screening initiatives," says Leah's twin sister, Laura Fogliato. "No family should have to go through what ours did."



Changing the reality, not just the outcome

While we are relentlessly pursuing breakthroughs to increase survival, we cannot ignore the devastating truth: **90% of people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer will die within five years. And 70% won't survive the first.**

That is why our commitment must go beyond the lab. We are working to fundamentally transform the experience of living with pancreatic cancer, to ensure that every patient, at every stage, has improved quality of life and receives the dignity, care, and the support they deserve.

This year, we funded the **Palliative Care Knowledge Translation Project**, a national survey of oncology clinicians across Canada. It revealed a critical gap: although most clinicians recognize the value of palliative care, stigma and misperceptions continue to delay referrals and supports often resulting in unnecessary pain and trauma for those living with the disease and the family and caregivers who are left behind.

Armed with this insight, we are building a three-year plan to expand supports and programs to make sure that patients get compassionate, timely care when they need it most.

Thank you to the **J & W Murphy Foundation** and the **R. Howard Webster Foundation** for their generous support of this study.

"Earlier access to palliative care has been shown to improve quality of life for patients and caregivers, to improve mental health outcomes, and in some cases to improve survival. It is essential that people affected by pancreatic cancer receive access to palliative care."

Dr. Justin Sanders

Director

Palliative Care McGill University



Support programs that connect and empower

After being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2023 and undergoing Whipple surgery, Sandra Mahne understood that she was lucky compared to most people who face this disease. But she was struggling to manage the practical and emotional impacts of her diagnosis and treatment.



“My family was my greatest source for strength, determination and resolve,” says Sandra. “But I was in a dark place, and I couldn’t always talk to them about how I was really feeling.”

Sandra contacted PCC and learned about our Patient and Community Support programs. With our help, Sandra was set up with a counsellor who helped her better understand her diagnosis and how to talk about her feelings.

In 2024, we delivered 600 Peer Support and short-term counselling sessions to pancreatic cancer patients and caregivers.

Sandra was also connected with John, a survivor and Peer Support volunteer. Given the unique nature of pancreatic cancer, their shared experience meant John was able to truly understand what Sandra was going through, offering her meaningful support and empathy.

Facing the realities of a pancreatic cancer diagnosis and treatment can cause feelings of increased anxiety, stress and isolation, but having access to support and resources can provide essential tools to cope.

Our programs are transforming the mental health experience: 80% of participants reported reduced anxiety, 98% felt less alone, and 100% felt heard and understood.

For Sandra, speaking to someone who had survived was inspirational and gave her a sense of optimism and empowerment about her own path ahead.

Bridging borders with trusted guidance

Despite their geographic distance, Mike Whitfield and James Wilkes have been best friends for over 40 years. Mike lives in Calgary, Alberta and James lives in Pretoria, South Africa. After James was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, Mike was determined to do everything he could to support his friend, even from the other side of the world.

When James asked Mike to help him find clinical trials in North America, Mike reached out to PCC's **Ask An Expert**.

Through the Ask An Expert program, Mike was connected with specialists ready to answer questions and provide information to help James feel empowered to make informed decisions about his care and treatment options.



In 2024, we experienced a 35% increase in inquiries to Ask An Expert. Over 87% of these inquiries resulted in a referral to further programs or services, which connected individuals directly with resources that could support their treatment and cancer experience.

Our specialists provided trusted and personalized answers about topics ranging from diagnosis and treatment to genetic testing, clinical trials, and nutrition, giving patients and families clarity and compassionate support when it was needed most.

"The Ask An Expert program was so helpful and proactive," says Mike. "They guided us to better understand what trials might be available to James and helped us navigate the North American healthcare systems."

Honouring a legacy of strength and determination



In 2024, we had the great privilege of meeting Connor Page.

Connor was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in April 2022 at the age of 38. At the time, his sons were just two and four years old. Connor and his wife, Jen, took a proactive approach to his treatment, focusing on an integrative approach to care and seeking out clinical trials in both Canada and the US.

Connor and Jen generously offered to share their journey with our community to help provide inspiration and guidance for others facing a similar diagnosis. Over the span of nine months, we shared several **blog stories about their experience** and numerous posts across social media.

“With every bit of hope we gained, we also know there are still patients out there who don’t get the opportunity to try some of the cutting-edge treatments,” explained Connor. **“We hope to be able to take what we’ve learned and do our part to help support others.”**

Connor died on October 10, 2024. In his final months, Connor was determined to create a legacy to help others after his death. As a result, we are proud to be working with Jen and his loved ones to create the **“Connor Page Fund for Improved Access to Clinical Trials”** which will help other families navigate and access clinical trials.

Raising funds and awareness to help save lives

“Early detection can mean the difference between life and death,” says Nancy Hollyoak, who lost her husband, Anthony, on March 31, 2022, just 14 months after diagnosis. “Anthony was healthy and active and got regular check-ups with his doctor. If there was a screening test like there is for colon cancer, maybe he would still be with us.”

In his memory, Nancy and her sister-in-law established the **Anthony Joseph Hollyoak Memorial Golf Tournament**. In June 2024, they hosted their third annual tournament, which brought their fundraising total to over \$175,000 in support of pancreatic cancer research into **early detection and screening**.

Nancy also generously shared their family’s story with our community to help raise awareness about the importance of knowing the early **signs and symptoms** of pancreatic cancer.



Our Community in Action

55

cyclists drove a combined
35,400 kilometres during 7 Days



2750

axes thrown during
Axe Pancreatic Cancer

45

landmarks lit purple on
World Pancreatic Cancer Day



13,612

people engaged with our
community on social media

Making a meaningful impact through the Beauty of Giving

As a valued partner since 2018, Modern Beauty has raised funds and awareness to help improve survival rates for pancreatic cancer. Based in Calgary, Alberta, Modern Beauty is one of Canada's largest beauty suppliers. Through their **"Beauty of Giving"** campaign, Modern Beauty's goal is to make a difference and positively impact lives.

In 2024, Modern Beauty's Spring campaign honoured the life of Susanne Jensen, a veteran business partner and mentor who passed away in January. Raising over \$31,000, this campaign brought their lifetime total of giving to \$128,000 raised.

"Susanne will be truly missed as she touched so many peoples' hearts," says Amer Jomaa, CEO. **"We will carry the torch that she left for us and continue to honour her. Susanne's memory inspires us to be the best that we can be, to be kind to others, and always see life through a positive lens."**

Run For Survival achieves major milestone



On October 19, 2024, hundreds of people in Edmonton, Alberta laced up their sneakers to **Run For Survival**. Originally known as Kathy's Run, Run For Survival was created in honour of Kathy McCollum, who was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in early 2011 and passed away that same year. Kathy's passion for running inspired her friends, family, and colleagues to create this event to **raise funds for pancreatic cancer research**.

This year, we introduced a new name for the event and a fresh rebrand that reflects our unwavering commitment to the cause and the demand for survival that drives us forward. We also achieved a huge milestone: passing the \$1 million mark in total funds raised.

Run For Survival is the largest run in Canada that specifically supports pancreatic cancer research, with over 400 individuals participating in-person and virtually.

The event continues to grow and resonate with people, not just in Edmonton, but across Canada and the world. In 2024, we had a virtual team join from Mississauga, Ontario and saw participants join from British Columbia and the United States.



Thank you to our donors

As we enter a new era of progress against pancreatic cancer, we are driven by those who demand survival, not sympathy alongside us.

Following is a list of individual donors, foundations and corporate partners that contributed \$5,000 or more in 2024.

Individuals

Annie Tam
Barbara MacCallum
Brian Oleary
Carole Gruson
D. Glen Naylor
Dave Green
Denise Lampron
Dorit Mevorach
Elizabeth Casson
Estate of Diana Burgess
Downing
Estate of Rhonda Lazarus
Estate of Susan Barrett
Fernanda Bianconi
Heather Churchill
Jeanette L. MacNaughtan
Jeffrey J. Cullen
Lindsay Scott
Lori L. Kiser
Mary-Jean Page
Pamela Kosolofski
Payton Mannix
Robert Gillelan
Wayne Gray

Foundations

CIBC Foundation
Connor Page Legacy Fund
Hollyoak Family Foundation
Petro-Canada CareMakers
Foundation
R. Howard Webster Foundation
Smit-Vander Zaag Giving Fund
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Trust
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Service
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Tamarac Consulting Ltd.
Telus Corporation
The Real Deal Sports Bar and
Billiards Inc.

We make every effort to ensure the accuracy of our donor acknowledgement list. If we have missed or incorrectly recognized you, please accept our apologies and contact us at info@pancreaticcancercanada.ca so we can update the list accordingly.

*If you would like to learn more about our work, please read our **2024 Audited Financial Statement**.*