

# HEALTH



## *Canada's* **NURSING RETENTION crisis**

*By Jesse Cnockaert*

Post-pandemic  
**HEALTH AND SCIENCE:**  
*preparing for the next one*

*No health  
care without*  
**HEALTH-CARE  
WORKERS**

Long-term care:  
*no longer an*  
**AFTERTHOUGHT**

*Canada can't  
afford to tackle*  
**ONE DISEASE  
at a time**

How feds can address  
**MENTAL HEALTH**  
*epidemic*

*Timely access to mental*  
**HEALTH CARE**  
*must be top priority*

*Where is our*  
**'CAN-DO' SPIRIT?**

*A holding pattern  
for mental health:*  
**WHAT ARE WE  
WAITING FOR?**

Drop-in programs  
care for our  
**MOST VULNERABLE,**  
*but can they afford  
to continue?*

# Cancer Impacts Everyone



**Tracey Ramsay**  
Vice-President & General Manager,  
AbbVie Canada

When you are living with cancer, rapid access to medication is critical. Cancer remains the leading cause of death in Canada, accounting for 30% of all deaths in the country.<sup>3</sup> According to the Canadian Cancer Society's Advisory Committee on Cancer Statistics, nearly half of all Canadians will develop cancer during their lifetime, and about one quarter of Canadians are expected to die from the disease.<sup>4</sup> Developing innovative medicines for cancer is essential to improve the quality of life and health of Canadians. As a research-based biopharmaceutical company, our priority is to ensure Canadians can access our treatments. This includes all aspects of the innovation process including manufacturing, distribution, and ensuring healthcare professionals and patients across Canada have timely reimbursement for lifesaving and life-changing therapies.

Canadians wait an average of 22-months for access to new medicines once approved by Health Canada. This is two times longer than most OECD countries, contributing to Canada's rank of 19 out of 20 OECD countries with respect to treatment access time.<sup>5</sup>

Thinking about a person's journey with cancer puts everything into perspective. According to a recent study, a one-month delay in cancer treatment resulted in a 6%-13% higher risk of death across all common forms of cancer. This risk increases with further delays.<sup>6</sup> For a Canadian living with cancer, time is everything.

Mark Silverstein is a chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) survivor. Through his journey, Mark found a new purpose in life. He changed careers and returned to school to become a psychotherapist. He helps people throughout his community and shares his experience with cancer openly through written stories, speaking at leukemia and lymphoma conferences, co-facilitating patient survivor groups, and advocating for better access to the same kind of treatments that have allowed him to keep doing the things he loves. Like so many cancer survivors, he inspires and leads by example, but a growing and real need remains to ensure all Canadians have timely access to cancer care to live their best lives.

## COVID-19 Impact on Cancer Care

As a result of public health restrictions postponing crucial medical services, including cancer screenings, surgeries, and essential interventions, healthcare experts are expecting to see delayed cancer diagnoses and treatment plans.<sup>1</sup>

A survey from the Canadian Cancer Society in July 2020 found that almost half of cancer patients in Canada reported having their care appointments cancelled or postponed.<sup>2</sup> Cancer care requires early diagnosis and intervention – which are crucial to treatment success.

We must continue to develop innovative solutions to address this clinical backlog, as well as advocate for equitable access to cancer medications.

## Improving Outcomes

AbbVie Canada is committed to being a leader in oncology by advancing the science, research, development, and delivery of therapies to make a remarkable impact on Canadians living with cancer. A significant feature of this commitment involves working with payers and providers to ensure patients have access to the medicines they need to treat their conditions.

Access to innovative treatments is one of our top priorities, and we continuously work to leverage all available accelerated pathways to obtain expedited, fair, and equitable patient access.

## Opportunity for Innovation

At AbbVie, we are striving to meet the need for faster scientific discoveries in oncology and making advances in areas of greatest unmet medical need. We are confident that innovative science powers discovery and have seen incredible advances in science and access to treatments over the past two years from the scientific community's global response to COVID-19.

We have also witnessed the positive acceleration of approvals of innovative oncology medications through Health Canada with innovative regulatory pathways such as Project Orbis, which allows for the simultaneous filing and review of oncology medicines among international partners, reducing the review time by several months.

However, despite this accelerated approval pathway, access to these approved oncology products by Canadians continue to lag as compared to other OECD countries.

## The Power of Partnerships

We continue to foster meaningful, reciprocal partnerships with patient and physician associations, government policymakers, and payers to advocate on behalf of improved care and timely, equitable access to treatment for Canadians.

Together, with a focus on patient outcomes, innovation, and the strength of our partnerships, we will continue our efforts to ensure timely access to innovative oncology treatments to deliver on our commitment to make a remarkable impact on people living with cancer.

**Every Canadian should have timely access to the medicines they need.**

**For more information on understanding the value of breakthrough Cancer Treatments in Canada, visit the Conference Board of Canada – Tomorrow Can't Wait.**

## About AbbVie

AbbVie's mission is to discover and deliver innovative medicines that solve serious health issues today and address the medical challenges of tomorrow across several key therapeutic areas: immunology, oncology, neuroscience, eye care, virology, women's health and gastroenterology, in addition to products and services across its Allergan Aesthetics portfolio. [www.abbvie.ca](http://www.abbvie.ca), @abbviecanada on Twitter and Instagram.

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Cancer Society. COVID-19 response. Accessed April 7, 2022. Retrieved from <https://cancer.ca/en/get-involved/advocacy/what-we-are-doing/covid-19-response#:~:text=Collateral%20damage%20of%20COVID%2D19%20pandemic&text=According%20to%20the%20Canadian%20Institute,the%20same%20timeframe%20in%202019>

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Cancer Society. COVID-19 response. Accessed April 7, 2022. Retrieved from <https://cancer.ca/en/get-involved/advocacy/what-we-are-doing/covid-19-response#:~:text=Collateral%20damage%20of%20COVID%2D19%20pandemic&text=According%20to%20the%20Canadian%20Institute,the%20same%20timeframe%20in%202019>

<sup>3</sup> Canadian Cancer Society. Cancer statistics at a glance. Accessed April 7, 2022. Retrieved from <https://cancer.ca/en/research/cancer-statistics/cancer-statistics-at-a-glance>.

<sup>4</sup> Government of Canada. Fact Sheet on Cancer. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/fact-sheet-cancer-canada.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://innovativemedicines.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/20210707-pCPA-timeline-data-EN.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Thebmj. Mortality due to cancer treatment delay: systematic review and meta-analysis. November 4, 2020: <http://www.bmj.com/content/371/bmj.m4087>.