



# The Digital Examiner

[www.ProstaidCalgary.org](http://www.ProstaidCalgary.org)

November 2017 Number 218

Greetings prostate cancer community, friends, and neighbours.



PROSTAID Calgary is proud to launch our rebranded Welcoming Group. The group's vision is to provide information, support and camaraderie to men and their families at every stage of the prostate cancer journey. The monthly orientation begins at 6:30pm in the Kerby Centre's Lecture Room – learn about PROSTAID Calgary and the many valuable services that are available to Calgary's prostate cancer community; share your skills with the community by joining a PROSTAID Calgary volunteer team; peruse our Knowledge Library - a treasure trove of research material, books and so much more... And then it's time to socialize. Our members are truly one of our core strengths, and the friendships made at a PROSTAID Calgary meeting often last a lifetime. Our Welcoming Group will help you find what you're looking for.

Work is underway on PROSTAID Calgary's Spring Symposium, **Cancer Voices: Giving Alberta's cancer community a voice in their care.** PROSTAID Calgary is actively recruiting Volunteers. The Symposium is a big project, but I'm making every effort to keep the organizing committees small and make the experience rewarding and enjoyable for our committee leaders and volunteers. Contact me if you'd like to be part of the volunteer team! 403-455-1916

**Reminder:** For those of you who receive monthly issues of The Digital Examiner via Canada Post delivery, your renewal is now due. PROSTAID Calgary requires a minimum donation of \$25 to cover the associated production/delivery costs. Please mail your cheque to PROSTAID Calgary, PO Box 72126, RPO Glenmore Landing, Calgary, AB T2V 5H9, and write "2018 DE delivery" in the memo line.

PROSTAID Calgary relies on the generosity of the community to keep our programs running and **donating is easy!** Just give us a call 403-455-1916 email [info@ProstaidCalgary.org](mailto:info@ProstaidCalgary.org) or visit [http://prostaidcalgary.org/c\\_donate.php](http://prostaidcalgary.org/c_donate.php)

Warm wishes,  
*Kelly Fedorowich*  
Executive Director, 403-455-1916

## Meeting Schedule Tuesday November 14, 2017

7:30-9:00PM	<b>General Meeting (GM)</b> Room 205 (Lecture Room) Kerby Centre
6:30-7:30PM	<b>Warriors (Advanced Disease)</b> Room 208 (Board Room) Kerby Centre
6:30-7:30PM	<b>Wives, Partners &amp; Caregivers</b> Room 313 (Third Floor) Kerby Centre Join us for a cuppa tea & great conversations.
6:30-7:30PM	<b>Welcoming Group</b> Room 205 (Lecture Room) Kerby Centre Providing information, support and camaraderie at every stage of the prostate cancer journey.

## November GM Guest Speaker



Cathy Ormon joins us to talk about how sugar, refined foods and insulin affect cancer. Millions of dollars are being poured into cancer research every year and there are

some surprising new findings. Recent research shows that sugar, refined foods and insulin have a surprising effect on cancer cells. Come and find out what current research from Harvard has shown. If you are diabetic or have insulin resistance – this is especially important for you!  
*Con't on page 2*

Kerby Centre is located at 1133 7th Ave SW. Parking is FREE in lots on both sides of 7th Ave. Remember to register your vehicle license plate number at reception to avoid ticketing. The WEST LRT conveniently stops at the front doors of the Kerby Centre. Our General Meetings are open to the public and free. A light snack and refreshments are served. Ladies, family members, and caregivers are always welcome!

### Contacts

President  
Dave Lunn  
[dlunn@shaw.ca](mailto:dlunn@shaw.ca)

Executive Director  
Kelly Fedorowich  
403 455 1916  
[info@prostaidcalgary.org](mailto:info@prostaidcalgary.org)

Chairman  
Ron Gorham  
[ron.gor45@gmail.com](mailto:ron.gor45@gmail.com)

Past President  
Steve Belway  
[belways@shaw.ca](mailto:belways@shaw.ca)

Support Group Facilitators  
**Warriors**  
Frank Altin  
[faltin@telusplanet.net](mailto:faltin@telusplanet.net)

Wives, Partners & Caregivers  
Kelly Fedorowich  
[info@prostaidcalgary.org](mailto:info@prostaidcalgary.org)

Welcoming Group  
Interim - Brad Sterling  
\*Facilitator Needed

**Mailing Address**  
PO Box 72126  
RPO Glenmore Landing  
Calgary, Alberta  
T2V 5H9  
403 455 1916

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Cathy Ormon is a Certified Health Coach and Author of The Sugar Switch™. She is on a mission to empower men and women (age 40 to 65) to eliminate sugar cravings permanently, increase their energy, control their weight and live healthy, happy lives free of pre-diabetes, diabetes and all the horrific illnesses that go with it.

Cathy developed The Sugar Switch™ System, a straightforward, simple, no-nonsense system designed to make small sustainable lifestyle changes that will stop the incredibly damaging effects of sugar and refined foods. By learning to use The Sugar Switch™, whole foods and healthy lifestyle habits, you are able to live an amazingly energetic life, free of chronic illnesses. Health issues such as obesity, pre-diabetes and diabetes, inflammation, joint pain, high blood pressure, fatty liver, and more, can be completely avoided or totally reversed.

### **Marijuana Legalization: What you need to know for 2018**

When it comes to treatment, scientists have yet to determine whether marijuana's unproven anti-tumour properties outweighs the potential harms of consuming high-potency cannabis oils and extracts. To make sense of the evolving science, The Globe and Mail combed through the evidence and spoke to authorities in medical marijuana research. Here's their take on the burning questions about cannabis in cancer care.

#### **What are cannabinoids? How can they help cancer patients?**

Cannabinoids are the compounds in marijuana that have drug-like effects. THC, short for tetrahydrocannabinol, can dull pain and make people "high," while cannabidiol (CBD) may lower pain without psychoactive effects. These and other compounds in marijuana bind to receptors on cells throughout the body, including the brain, immune system and central nervous system, instructing cells to perform specific functions. In cancer patients, some of these instructions may help relieve chemotherapy side effects such as nausea, vomiting and appetite loss.



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#### **Do cancer patients have to smoke marijuana to get the benefits?**

No. In fact, inhaled cannabis has shown mixed results in studies of chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting. Instead, a doctor may prescribe an edible oil containing THC and CBD from a licensed medical cannabis producer, or a synthetic cannabinoid such as nabilone, an anti-nausea drug that mimics THC.

#### **What are the upsides of medical cannabis for cancer symptoms?**

Certain pharmaceutical drugs may be more effective in treating individual symptoms, such as chemotherapy-related nausea. But when doctors prescribe a different drug for each side effect, the pill count adds up, said Vincent Maida, a palliative medicine specialist at the University of Toronto and co-author of a 2016 guide to cannabinoid therapies in oncology published in the Canadian journal, Current Oncology. Since medical cannabis can relieve multiple symptoms, "we're able to help the pain, the nausea and the anorexia [appetite loss]."

Cannabinoids may also reduce dependence on opioid painkillers, said Maida, whose research is not funded by the medical cannabis industry. Maida cites data showing that cancer patients on high-dose opioids are at greater risk for metastases (cancer spread), infections (opioids suppress the immune system) and opioid addiction.

#### **What about a cure? Doesn't cannabis kill cancer cells?**

Certain chemicals derived from cannabis may kill tumour cells in a Petri dish, but so does bleach. That doesn't make bleach a cancer treatment. Testing compounds in Petri dishes, known as in vitro research, helps researchers gauge whether a substance shows enough effects to justify animal testing. But both in vitro and animal studies represent the earliest stages of medical research. So far, the only published human trial of cannabinoids for tumours involved nine patients with terminal brain cancer. In this 2006 study, Spanish researchers injected medical-grade THC through a catheter in patients' brains, "which is different from people smoking a joint," Nuttall said. (Robert Nuttall is the assistant director of health policy at the Canadian Cancer Society)

The researchers found signs of reduced tumour growth in cells taken from two patients, but all nine patients died from their tumours within months.

The authors emphasized they could draw no conclusions about THC's cancer-fighting potential based on the pilot study.

There's a chance, in fact, that cannabis may have the opposite effect. In one in vitro study, published in 2010, researchers found that cannabinoids, under certain conditions, could interfere with the immune system's tumour-suppressing role. In a 2004 study and a 2005 study, cannabinoids appeared to stimulate cancer-cell growth.

#### **What about cancer patients who have gone into remission after using cannabis?**

These are anecdotes, not evidence. In California, a cannabis company called Aunt Zelda's is building a database of reports from patients who say cannabis therapies helped them recover from cancer. But without rigorous medical documentation, no one knows whether the patient got better because of the cannabis, previous radiation and chemotherapy, or some other factor in the patient's life.

#### **I have late-stage cancer. What have I got to lose?**

For patients in end-of-life care, medical cannabis may reduce pain, help with sleep and improve mood. But as a "Hail Mary" treatment for terminal cancer, unregulated cannabis products can backfire. The biggest risk, particularly for patients with vulnerable immune systems, may be infection from bacterial or fungal contamination, or exposure to carcinogenic pesticides, Van Dross-Anderson said. Using a regulated product is the only way to ensure contaminants are removed. (Rukiyah Van Dross-Anderson is an associate professor of pharmacology and toxicology at East Carolina University)

#### **So what's the good news?**

As marijuana loses its reefer-madness stigma, researchers are having an easier time securing funding and regulatory approval for research on cannabinoids, said Van Dross-Anderson, whose lab is studying the effects of a cannabinoid derivative on melanoma skin-cancer cells. At the University of Canberra in Australia, researchers have gathered funding to conduct a human trial of cannabis therapy on patients with melanoma skin cancer, providing they produce safety data from animal trials and obtain ethical and regulatory approval. In Britain, GW Pharmaceuticals has completed a phase-two trial of synthetic cannabis compounds, combined with chemotherapy, in patients with glioma, an aggressive type of brain tumour. The company released initial findings in February, but the results have not been peer-reviewed or published in a medical journal.

*Written by Adriana Barton, Globe and Mail*

*Article has been abridged. [Click here to read in its entirety](#)*

## **Thank you for your service, Rocco Rossi!**



### **Rocco Rossi to wrap up successful 5-year tenure as Prostate Cancer Canada (PCC) CEO**

Rocco Rossi recently announced that his time leading Prostate Cancer Canada will officially come to a close as of December 31, 2017. Upon joining PCC in February of 2013, Rossi quickly implemented a consolidated approach to leadership in order to guide PCC's evolution into an increasingly professional and responsible charitable foundation. In particular, Rossi helped conceive and grow a number of innovative fundraising initiatives to advance PCC's mission to improve outcomes for men with prostate cancer and their families through research, advocacy, education, support and awareness. Notable among these are the Rock the Road Raffle, the Step Up Challenge, and a growing Father's Day tradition among Canadians, Plaid for Dad.

In January of 2018 Rossi will assume the role of CEO with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. Congratulations!

**Thank you Rocco! PROSTAIID Calgary wishes you all the best in your future endeavours!**

### **Prostate Cancer and Health Literacy Questionnaire Presented by Dr. John Oliffe and UBC**

This survey is being led by Dr. John Oliffe (email – [john.oliffe@ubc.ca](mailto:john.oliffe@ubc.ca); phone – 604 822 7638), along with his team at the UBC. The group is conducting research into health literacy among men with prostate cancer in the hopes of building better prostate cancer support resources. The research study runs until the end of December. And everyone who enters can choose to enter a draw for \$500. [Click here to go to Survey Website](#), or visit: <https://survey.ubc.ca/s/prostate-cancer-hlq/>



**Congratulations Dr. Dean Ruether**  
**Recipient of PROSTAIID’s 2017 Pathfinder’s Award**

**PROSTAIID Calgary is very proud to announce that Dr. Dean Ruether is the recipient of this year’s Pathfinder’s Award.**



*Established in 2014, the Pathfinder’s Award recognizes individuals who have contributed significant service to helping men and their families deal with prostate cancer.*

Dr. Ruether is a Medical Oncologist at the TBCC who has worked in the GU program for over 20 years. His undergraduate training was done at the University of Calgary and medical school completed at the University of Alberta. Post graduate training in internal medicine, hematology and medical oncology was completed at the University of Calgary with focus on Clinical Trials in GU, Endocrine and Neuroendocrine malignancies and Patient Education. He is an active member of the Medical Oncology training program, serves on a number of administrative capacities, as the Lead for local tumour group teams and is responsible for bringing clinical trials for the Endocrine and NET and Prostate patient population in Alberta. Dr. Ruether is also the current Medical Director, Community Oncology, CancerCare Alberta for 4 regional and 11 community sites whose directive is to bring cancer care closer to home for Albertans.

In previous leadership roles for the local and provincial GU and Endocrine & Neuroendocrine programs in Alberta, Dr Ruether played a pivotal role in bringing clinical trials for patients affected by GU and Endocrine malignancies to Alberta. Results of some of these trials have changed practice in both of these subspecialty areas of oncology. Dr Ruether has also been involved in a series of clinical trials looking at the benefits of providing consultation recordings to patients affected by GU, Breast, CNS and Neuroendocrine tumors. Results of these trials have been instrumental in establishing a consultation recording service in Cancer Care Manitoba and work to establish a similar service as part of standard operations is underway here in Alberta. As the Medical Director for Community Oncology, Dr. Ruether has been successful in obtaining funding from the ACF to support the development of the

necessary clinical infrastructure needed to provide access to clinical trials in 3 of our 4 regional cancer centers. Dr. Ruether has been involved as the local principal investigator in multiple phase 2 and 3 trials in the GU, Endocrine, Breast, and malignant hematology as well as a phase 1 trial in bladder cancer over a career spanning 22 years and is coauthor on more than 50 peer reviewed publications that have come out of participation in clinical research trials.

Join us on Tuesday, December 12 as we celebrate Dr. Dean Ruether and his many achievements and contributions to the prostate cancer community.

**PROSTAIID Calgary Pathfinder’s Award Celebration**

**Date:** Tuesday, December 12, 2017  
**Location:** Kerby Centre, 1133 7th Ave SW. Lecture Room, Room 205

**Agenda**

- 6:30pm - 7:30pm Meet & Greet
  - 7:30pm - 7:45pm Opening/Welcoming remarks by Dave Lunn
  - 7:45pm - 8:15pm Award Ceremony
  - 8:15pm - 8:20pm Closing remarks by Dave Lunn
  - 8:20pm - 9pm Wine and appetisers
- The Pathfinder’s Award Celebration is open to the public and there is no cost to attend.

**\*[Donations graciously accepted via Visa, MasterCard, Debit, Cheque](#) & Cash**

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