

Media Release



**DALHOUSIE
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Inspiring Minds

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Landmark cancer study gets underway in Nova Scotia

With the launch of its first assessment centre in Halifax on March 5, the Atlantic Partnership for Tomorrow's Health (PATH) will open a new front in the fight against cancer in Atlantic Canada.

The Atlantic PATH is part of the Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project, a \$42-million national study funded by the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. This study will follow the health of 300,000 Canadians between the ages of 35 and 69 for up to 30 years to determine what role lifestyle, the environment and genetics play in the development of cancer.

Atlantic PATH's assessment centre, located on the second floor of the Halifax Shopping Centre Annex (formerly the West End Mall) will collect lifestyle information, biological samples and physical measurements from men and women aged 35 to 69 who volunteer to take part in the landmark study. The Halifax centre is one of several planned in the four Atlantic provinces. The others will open in the coming months, as efforts to recruit 30,000 study participants move into high gear. People who want to learn more about the study can go to the Atlantic PATH website at www.atlanticpath.ca or call 1-877-285-7284.

“The information obtained through this study will provide an enormous bank of information which researchers will be able to draw upon to help identify the causes of cancer and, in turn, develop better detection, treatment and prevention methods,” says Dr. Louise Parker, principal investigator for the Atlantic PATH. “Future generations – the children and grandchildren of our study participants – will benefit from this knowledge.”

The research is particularly important in the Atlantic provinces, which have the highest rates of cancer in Canada. Each year, more than 13,400 Atlantic Canadians are diagnosed with cancer and 6300 die of it.

“The Atlantic PATH research will help us understand why the rates are so high in this region, so that we can find ways to deal with the causes and reduce those rates,” says Dr. Parker. “It will also help us develop better ways to detect and treat cancer earlier and may even help us find ways of preventing some cancers altogether.”

“The Atlantic PATH will change everything we know about cancer in this region - from how we treat it, to most importantly, how we prevent it,” adds Theresa Marie Underhill, Chief Operating Officer, Cancer Care Nova Scotia.

Participants in the Atlantic PATH will visit one of its assessment centres to answer questions about their health, diet and lifestyle; provide blood, urine, saliva and toenail samples; and have physical measurements taken, including height, weight and body fat composition. Participants will also allow researchers to follow their health through cancer registries, hospitalization records and other health-related databases for up to 30 years.

The Atlantic PATH and the national Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project will provide health planners and policy makers with vital knowledge, including:

- A better understanding of the environmental, genetic and lifestyle factors likely to lead to cancer and other life-threatening diseases.
- An assessment of how well prevention and public health programs across the country are working, which will aid in the development of more effective initiatives to reduce cancer rates.
- The opportunity to examine cancer outcomes over many years, expanding our understanding of the disease and leading to the development of better methods of detection.
- The ability to identify “biomarkers,” molecules in the bloodstream which can be used to diagnose cancer and its earliest, most treatable stages.

FOR BROADCAST

A new front in the fight against cancer opened in Halifax today. The Atlantic Partnership for Tomorrow’s Health – the Atlantic PATH – has launched its first assessment centre at the Halifax Shopping Centre Annex, formerly the West End Mall.

The largest cancer research study ever conducted in the region, the Atlantic PATH aims to recruit 30,000 volunteers from across Atlantic Canada. Volunteers will visit the assessment centre nearest them to provide lifestyle information, biological samples and physical measurements. The researchers will follow the volunteers’ health for up to 30 years, to see what role lifestyle, the environment and genetics play in the development of cancer. Findings will lead to better methods of early detection, treatment and prevention of cancer.

People who want to learn more about the study can go to the Atlantic PATH website at www.atlanticpath.ca or call 1-877-285-7284.

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