

Landmark cancer study opens special Assessment Centre in Fredericton

FREDERICTON, NOVEMBER 2, 2011| The largest cancer study in the history of Atlantic Canada has opened an Assessment Centre in Fredericton. The Centre, located in the Beaverbrook Court, will run from November 1 to December 2.

“The information obtained through this study, which will involve 30,000 Atlantic Canadians – including 10,000 New Brunswickers – and will provide an enormous bank of information researchers can draw upon to help identify the causes of cancer and other diseases. This, in turn, can lead to better detection, treatment and prevention methods,” says Dr. Louise Parker, principal investigator for the Atlantic PATH.

At the Fredericton Assessment Centre, participants will provide saliva, urine, blood, and toenail samples, and have physical measurements taken including height, weight, and blood pressure. This will take about 40 minutes. Before they come to the Centre participants complete a confidential questionnaire online that provides important information on family health history, lifestyle, and the environment. (Paper copies of the questionnaire are also available.) This takes about 30 minutes to complete.

At the end of their visit to the Assessment Centre, participants will receive a report summarizing the various measurements taken such as grip strength and body mass index. These are compared to standard ranges for age and body type. Although the assessment is not intended as a medical check, the information can be shared with a person’s doctor if they have any questions.

Janice Anderson is lending a helping hand to help Atlantic Path forge a new front in the fight against cancer. The Fredericton resident is a Community Champion, who has reached out to more than 20 friends and family to take part in the cancer study. “So many people I know – including my own family – are affected by cancer. It’s important to help by doing things like taking part in Atlantic PATH. You don’t know where the small clue to a cure will lie.”

The research being conducted by Atlantic PATH is particularly important in New Brunswick. In 2011, it is estimated that 1,990 people here will die of cancer, and 4,800 new cases will be diagnosed. The four most common cancers in the province are lung, colorectal, breast and prostate. These are also the cancers with the highest mortality rates.

“Atlantic PATH research will help us understand why the rates are so high in this province, so that we can find ways to deal with the causes and reduce those rates,” says Dr. Parker.

“Future generations – the children and grandchildren of our study participants – will benefit from this knowledge,” she adds.

“Data from Atlantic PATH will be a valuable resource to researchers who are working to better understand the causes of cancer and how to best prevent it,” said Anne McTiernan-Gamble, CEO for the Canadian Cancer Society New Brunswick. “This study is the first of its kind in Atlantic Canada, and there is no doubt it will contribute significantly to the remarkable progress made in the past 50 years in cancer research.”

Atlantic PATH is part of the Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow Project, which is part of a national study that has received \$42 million in funding from 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 and other diseases.

In New Brunswick, Atlantic PATH’s partners include the New Brunswick Department of Health and the Canadian Cancer Society.

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