

# ONC-INSIDER

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## SPOTLIGHT



### Cancer Care receives \$20M donation

London Regional Cancer Centre received its largest donation to date. The Verspeeten Family of Oxford County donated \$20 million in November to support cancer care for patients, cancer and genomic research. This amount brings the family's total LHSC donations to \$27 million. The London Regional Cancer Centre is soon to be renamed the Verspeeten Family Cancer Centre.



### Vice President, Research and Scientific Director Named

St. Joseph's Health Care London has announced **Dr. Lisa Porter** as Vice President, Research and Scientific Director. Dr. Porter is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences, Windsor University and a founding Executive Director of WE-SPARK Health Institute. Dr. Porter is also a member of London's Centre for Translational Cancer Research and has held one or multiple CIHR grants over the last 19 years. She currently sits on the CIHR UD Advisory Committee, and is a recent addition on the Board of Directors for Research Canada.



### Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100

**Sondos Zayed MD**, Radiation Oncology resident alumna featured in Canada's 100 Most Powerful Women listing. She is being recognized for her leadership, vision, and mentorship of others. Dr. Zayed is currently a clinical and research fellow at Sunnybrook Hospital Odette Cancer Centre pursuing a further subspecialty training in brain, spine, and gastrointestinal malignancies.

## CONGRATULATIONS

### Faculty News

**Alison Allan PhD** invited to speak at Brandon University's Science Seminar Series. The talk was entitled "Role of the lung microenvironment in mediating breast cancer metastasis: a balance between the "seed" and the "soil".

**Seth Climans MD** successfully completed his neuro-oncology exam and is now a Diplomate in the subspecialty of Neuro-oncology through the United Council for Neurological Subspecialties.

### Awards and Recognitions

**Uday Deotare MD** received 2023 LHSC's Patient Safety Champion Physician Award for his "Choosing Wisely: Reducing Bloodwork" project.

**Paula Foster PhD** named a Fellow of the World Molecular Imaging Society (WMIS) at the annual meeting in Prague.

**David Hill PhD** recognized for his 8 years of service as a (now past) board member of Research Canada.

**Kevin Jordan PhD** recognized for his thirty years of dedicated service as a medical physicist in the Radiation Program at the LRCP. Jordan retired December 2023.

**David Palma MD PhD** received the Dr. Joseph Gilbert Research Contribution of the Year Award for his [research](#) on "Stereotactic radiotherapy versus standard of care palliative treatment in patients with oligometastatic cancers (SABR-COMET): a randomised, phase 2, open-label trial".

**Lina Dagnino PhD, Robert Bartha PhD, Ting Lee PhD, and Brian Shilton PhD** received 25 year Western Service Awards.

## WELLNESS CORNER

### Oncology Resident Wellness



In November, the Medical Oncology Residents attended a candlelight concert entitled The Best of Hans Zimmer at the Metropolitan United Church in London. In December, the residents took part in axe-throwing. Special thanks to the MO Program Administrator Shazia Donachie for organizing.



#### Title 1

The Radiation Oncology Residents attend the The Best of Hans Zimmer candlelight concert, and also travelled to Brampton for an active day at Activate indoor gaming facility. Special thanks to the RO Program Administrator Margaret Dow for organizing.

The position of Physician Lead for the LRCP Physician Wellness & Resiliency Task Force remains vacant. For more information, please contact **Veera Panuganty MD** or Kimberly Scott.

Schulich's Peers for Peers Program featured in the latest edition of the [CPSO Newsletter](#).

## NEWS AND STORIES

### 20th Annual Oncology Research & Education Day

Mark **Thursday June 13** as the date for the 20th Annual Oncology Research & Education Day. Charles Gawad, MD Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics Hematology, Stanford Medical Children's Health will be the plenary speaker. More details to follow as they become available.

## In the News

[David Breadner MD and Stewart Gaede PhD](#) - Baker Centre for Pancreatic Cancer helps integrate innovative research with patient care at LHSC.

[Michael Ott MD](#) - Oncology patients see significant surgical wait time improvements in 2023.

[David Palma MD PhD and Melissa O'Neil MSc. MRT\(T\)](#) - Improving palliative cancer treatment with existing diagnostic scans: Study reveals promising results.

[Bekim Sadikovic PhD](#) - Over \$7 million in funding guarantees research towards diagnosis of rare diseases.

[Lawson Health Sciences Institute](#) released its Top 12 News stories of 2023. Research projects by 6 members of The Centre for Translational Cancer Research were featured in the compilation. Principal Investigators included **Saman Asfaha MD PhD, Derek Cool MD PhD, Ting-Yim Lee PhD, John Lenehan MD, Saman Maleki PhD**, and **Bekim Sadikovic PhD**.

## Trainee Corner

Laurice Arayan MD will start a one year medical oncology breast cancer fellowship in Windsor on September 1. Arayan will be supervised by **Caroline Hamm, MD**.

Jaryd Christie PhD(c), and Megan Hong PhD(c) both received a 2023 Doctoral Research Award Competition grant of \$70,000 for 2 years for their respective projects. Christie is supervised by **Sarah Mattonen PhD** while Hong is supervised by **Saman Maleki PhD**.

Alireza Ghahramani PhD(c) awarded Lawson IRP \$20,000 for "Investigating epigenetic effects of CTCF deficiency in a model of neurodevelopmental disorder". Ghahramani is supervised by **Nathalie Bérubé PhD**.

Stephanie Gulstene RO PGY5 successfully completed her Royal College medical exams.

Seung June (Joon) Kim PhD awarded the William Zaharia Award, and recently defended his thesis. Kim was supervised by **Fred Dick PhD**.

Petra Samardzija, MSc Candidate awarded Lawson IRF \$20,000 for "Defining calcium signalling pathways involved in pancreatic function and disease". Samardzija is supervised by **Chris Pin, PhD**.

Raman-Deep Sambhi (University of Manitoba), Megan Smith-Uffen (University of Sydney), and Faisal Hussain (King Khalid University College of Medicine) will be joining the medical oncology division as PGY4 residents on July 1.

Vivian Tan RO PGY3 presented and received a travel award at the 2023 ASCO/ASTRO Multidisciplinary Thoracic Cancers Symposium in New Orleans, US.

Edward Wang MD/PhD(c) received a Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship. Wang is co-supervised by **Pencilla Lang MD** and **Sarah Mattonen PhD**.

Timothy Yau, PhD(c) is the recipient of the Betty Rice Award for best Basic Science abstract at the Canadian Lung Cancer Conference (Vancouver). Yau is supervised by **Stewart Gaede, PhD**.

## Welcome

**John Di Guglielmo PhD** and **Brant Inman MD** to the Centre for Translational Cancer Research.

## FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Arthritis Society Canada - 2023 Ignite Research Grant

**Pingzhao Hu PhD**, \$100,000 for "Developing an artificial intelligence-based online tool for automatic joint detection and scoring of radiographic joint damage among patients with Rheumatoid arthritis using continual learning".

## Brain Cancer Canada

**Maria Macdonald MD**, \$50,000 for her project to support research on more effective diagnosis and treatment for adult brain cancer patients. Collaborators are Drs. Julie Bennett and Cynthia Hawkins, Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto.

## CIHR Catalyst Grant: SPOR Innovative Clinical Trials (iCT)

Caroline Hamm MD, \$198,825 for "Enhancing The Patient Journey to Clinical Trial Enrolment with Navigation to Optimize Accrual: A Pilot Study for a pragmatic multi-centre, stepped wedge, cluster randomized controlled trial (The CTN Pilot Trial)".

## Canada Research Society (2023 Spring Competition)

**Samuel Asfaha MD PhD**, \$125,000 for 2 years for "Role of the antiviral immune response in colitis-associated cancer."

**Vanessa Dumeau PhD**, \$125,000 for 2 years for "High resolution mapping of cancer immunity to predict response to therapy in HER-2 positive breast cancer patients".

**Jim Petrik PhD**, \$125,000 for 2 years for "Novel strategy to optimize the success of immunotherapy in pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma".

## LRCP Catalyst Research Grant Competition (Fall 2023)

**Samuel Asfaha MD PhD**, \$25,000 for "Role of ALOX5+ immune cells in colitis associated cancer".

**Richard Kim MD**, \$25,000 for "Organic Anion Transporter SLC22A7 in a Major Determinant of 5-Flourouracil Disposition".

**Paula Foster PhD**, \$24,900 for "Development of MPI Lymphography".

**Matthew Hebb MD PhD**, \$25,000 for "Preclinical in vivo evaluation of a novel low energy electrotherapy for glioblastoma".

**Mansour Haeryfar PhD**, \$25,000 for "MR1-restricted T cells in ovarian cancer".

**Linda Dagnino PhD**, \$25,000 for "Mechanical signalling in cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma".

**John Di Guglielmo PhD**, \$25,000 for "Assessing TGF $\beta$  pathway specificity in PDAC organoid EMT".

**Fred Dick PhD**, \$25,000 for "Targeting epithelial to mesenchymal transition in ovarian cancer".

**Eugene Wong PhD**, \$25,000 for "The role of Cancer Associated Fibroblasts in Pancreatic Cancer Radiation Resistance".

**Donna Murrell PhD**, \$19,655 for "Design, development, and evaluation of a training simulator for gynecological brachytherapy".

**Saman Maleki PhD**, \$25,000 for "The effect of mismatch repair deficiency in tumours on dendritic cell activation and function".

## Lawson Internal Research Fund (IRF Fall 2023)

**Anton Skaro MD**, \$20,000 for "Implementation of a preoperative ketogenic diet for reduction of liver fat prior to liver surgery".

## Myeloma Canada

**Lisa Porter PhD**, "Establishing a Multiple Myeloma Drug Screening Platform to Predict Patient Response to Therapy".

## Western Strategic Support for CIHR Success Grant (Fall 2023)

Accelerator Program

**Fred Dick PhD**, \$50,000 for "Targeting survival signals in ovarian cancer cell dormancy".

**Paula Foster PhD**, \$49,000 for "Imaging the effects of microgravity on immunity and cancer progression".

**Eva Turley PhD**, \$49,886 for "Microenvironment factors supporting cancer heterogeneity and mutant clonal expression".

Seed Program

**Weiping Min PhD**, \$25,000 for "Induction of T cell exhaustion and immune tolerance in heart transplantation by iRsL-associated miRNA".

## RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

Dumeaux, V. et al. *Candida albicans* exhibits heterogeneous and adaptive cytoprotective responses to antifungal compounds. [eLife](#). October 2023.

Gulstene, S. et al. What is the predictive value of RECIST criteria following stereotactic lung radiation? [Radiother Oncol](#). October 2023.

Case, Nicola T. et al. Respiration supports intraphagosomal filamentation and escape of *Candida albicans* from macrophages. [mBio](#). December 2023.

Chinnery, T. A. et al. Predicting the need for a replan in oropharyngeal cancer: A radiomic, clinical, and dosimetric model. [MedPhys](#). December 2023.

Dunn, H. et al. Importance of incorporating the perspectives of people with cancer into oncology education: a scoping review. [J Med Educ Curric Dev](#). December 2023.

Verma, S. et al. Detection of Circulating Tumor DNA After Stereotactic Ablative Radiotherapy in Patients With Unbiopsied Lung Tumors (SABR-DETECT). [Clin Lung Cancer](#). December 2023.

Yau, T. et al. A four-dimensional dynamic conformal arc approach for real-time tumor tracking: A retrospective treatment planning study. [J Appl Clin Med Phys](#). December 2023.

Verma, S. et al. Immunotherapy and Radiation Therapy Sequencing in Breast Cancer: A Systematic Review. [Red Journal](#). January 2024.



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