

# Noteworthy

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## **PATIENT-CENTERED CARE AND PERSONALIZED PATIENT TREATMENT**

Over the last decade the buzz words used by many medical institutions has been “Patient-Centered Care”, but what does this mean? The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada has debated the meaning of professionalism and their conclusions include altruism as the hallmark of professionalism and appear to coincide with Francis Peabody’s statement in 1927 that “The secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient”.

Today’s medical institutions are using this term when in effect the care of hospitalized patients is based more on process and funding than on caring for the particular needs of the individual patient with their ethnic, cultural, religious and gender differences. We need to change our approach to patients based on caring rather than process.

For many years we treated all cancer patients based on clinical trials that included at best three per cent of the target population and applied it to all. Many of our guidelines are still based on this concept. However, clinicians and patients knew that not all breast cancers behaved the same and with increased research into the differences and our understanding of DNA mutations and intracellular pathways we are now more able to tailor treatments that are targeted to the patient’s cancer. Our knowledge of the cellular changes of all cancers continues to expand and with new tumour markers that truly reflect individual tumours, future treatments will be truly reflective of the needs of individual patients with their individual cancers. Only then will we be delivering personalized patient treatments.

**CACC believes in advocacy** and is committed to speaking openly about cancer issues, to highlight the concerns of patients and families, and to press governments for a more effective response to the enormity of the cancer problem in Canada. We forego charitable status to retain this freedom. Through the generosity of sponsors and donors, we use unrestricted grants to collect information, consult with cancer experts and families, and lobby governments for improvements. Sponsorship guidelines can be found on our web site.

If you are one of the millions of Canadians concerned about the state of cancer care, tell your federal MP and your provincial MPP/MLA. Make sure the people you elected to govern know that cancer is a priority to you and should be for them.

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