

# AWARENESS

The "PCCN-Toronto" and "Side by Side" Prostate Cancer Support Groups

**25 years means having many dedicated volunteers to help your efforts succeed!**

**T**wenty-five years ago this year, a few prostate cancer survivors approached Dr. John Trachtenberg with what they thought was a terrific idea.

They wanted to volunteer at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre's prostate cancer clinic to counsel newly-diagnosed men and their families. No one had been available to speak to these particular men when *they* were first diagnosed, so talking to/counselling other men seemed like a great idea.

Well, Dr. T - as he came to be called by these men - also thought the idea had merit. Soon after, the Toronto Man to Man Prostate Cancer Support Group was born, with very qualified volunteers in Dr. T's clinic every Thursday!

These men - Wally Hamilton (the original founder), Peter Gow, Patrick Vernon, and Ron Evason, gave way to many other instrumental Man to Man volunteers over the years, such as Moe Wagman (Chairman 2000-2002), Sol Dennis, Dick Sprenger, Bill Hofstetter, Leo Spindel, Bill Gow, Don Davis, Bob Miller, Richard Lorie, Earl Lagroix, Harry Lockwood, Norm Roth, Sid Traves, Ivan Samuels, Jim Moran, Dick Arai, Gord Johnston, Stan Sandler, Jerry Garshon, Steve London, Sidney Liburd, Leslie Howard, Rod Ilott, Pearse Murray, Ron Watterson, George Zadek, Bob Elliott, Philip Taylor, Ray St-Sauveur, David Lunt, Stan Mednick, Bob McLelland, Rudy Philipp, Winston Klass (Chairman 2013-2016), Ron Foreman, Jerry Stevens, Christopher Skinner, John Roth, Tino Cotaras, Ron Nicholson (Chairman 2002), Bernie Shoub, Ray Turner, Ron Benson (chairman 2010-

2013), Robert Abelson, Allan Lappin, Ted Berman, Lou Silver, Bill Sceviour, Fred Cohen, Phil Segal (Chairman 2017-2019), John Schofield, Denis Farbstein, Ray Kosan, Ken Hunter, Glen Tolhurst, Moshe Kaduri, Bill Deane, Michael Drummond, Bill Lifchus, Irwin Pressman and Gord Burchill.

We changed our name in 2010 to Prostate Cancer Canada Network-Toronto (PCCN-Toronto) but our "work" remained the same; providing information and support to newly-diagnosed men (and their families).

At the end of 2019, *Keith Braganza* and *John Roth* will take over as our first-ever co-chairmen from current chairman *Phil Segal*. They will lead our board consisting of *Bernie Shoub, Winston Klass, Aaron Bacher* (Chairman 2002-2010), *Ron Benson, Denis Farbstein, Jerry Garshon, Ari Katz, Allan Lappin and Darryl Radstake*.

We've also had great dedication from the ladies of our Side by Side support group for many years: *Aki Arai, Roz Wagman, Ruth Sprenger, Ronnie Bacher, Linda Garshon, and Barbara Mednick*.

Our support group wouldn't be as successful without the men (and women) who volunteered their time with us. We've been extremely fortunate and are forever grateful to have had so many people who willingly donated their time and supported our cause during these first 25 years!

*When you start naming individuals who have been of great help over the years, you're bound to miss someone. If a name or two is missing from our list above, please accept our sincere apologies!*

IT'S OUR 25th ANNIVERSARY!



**SEPTEMBER**

**PCCN-Toronto  
Prostate Cancer  
Support Group**

**541 Finch Avenue West  
Toronto, Ont. M2R 3Y3  
Phone: 416-932-8820  
Fax: 416-291-3025**

**Email:  
[info@pccntoronto.ca](mailto:info@pccntoronto.ca)**

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**"Raising prostate cancer awareness" - [pccntoronto.ca](http://pccntoronto.ca)**

## Parking situation solved at the Botanical Garden!

**W**e've been hosting our Awareness Night Meetings at the Toronto Botanical Garden for 25 years.

We're used to seeing some magnificent floral arrangements there, as well as some classic sculptures which are on display from time to time.

What we were not used to seeing there were machines dispensing tickets which made everyone now have to pay for parking their cars there! But that's exactly what we saw on Wednesday July 31st when we arrived to host our July meeting that night.

And then the questions started: "Do we really have to pay for parking now?" "Is it free after 6 o'clock?" "Will I get a ticket if I don't pay?" "I have never paid for parking here, and I've been coming to these meetings for many years!" And on and on it went. And we didn't have answers!

*If you were among the handful of attendees who paid the \$5 that night to park, in lieu of possibly getting a parking ticket at the end of the evening, we sincerely apologize!*

***The Garden has now agreed NOT TO CHARGE US for parking at our September 25th Awareness Night Meeting, between 6:30-10:30 p.m.***

***This will allow everyone attending our meetings to continue enjoying complimentary parking at the Garden!***

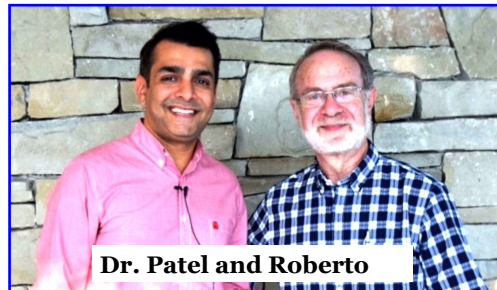
And so, we can still advertise the following to you:

**PARKING IS FREE!  
ENJOY!**



## DR. CHIRAG PATEL TALKS ABOUT IMAGING

**R**oberto Stopnicki was the host at our July Awareness Night Meeting. He welcomed all our attendees and then introduced them to our guest speaker for the evening, Dr. Chirag Patel, supervisor of Abdominal Imaging at the Sunnybrook Health Science Centre.



Dr. Patel and Roberto

His topic was a very involved one, as he covered medical imaging of all kinds: CT (CAT)

scans, Bone scans, and PET scans.

He gave examples of how and why they are used and showed x-ray images related to them. It may have been a very technical subject to cover, but he was able to explain it very well to everyone in attendance.

We thank Dr. Patel for coming and delivering such a detailed presentation to our interested audience.

His entire lecture can be seen by simply going to [pccntoronto.ca/videos](http://pccntoronto.ca/videos).

***The parking agreement we now have with the Toronto Botanical Garden will also be in effect at our November 26th meeting, featuring Dr. Danny Vesprini.***

***You will not be charged to park your car if you are there between 6:30 and 10:30 p.m. We hope to have the same arrangement in place for all our meetings there next year!***

***We thank everyone at the Garden for their cooperation!***

**PCCN-TORONTO IS SUPPORTED BY:**

**Astellas Pharma Canada, Inc. \* Janssen Pharmaceuticals \* Macgregors Meat & Seafood Ltd. \* Prostate Cancer Canada \* Valleyview Residence**

## ***PCCN-Toronto & Side by Side***

*invite you to attend our*

### **Awareness Night Meeting**

*at the*  
**Toronto Botanical Garden  
In The Floral Hall**

*777 Lawrence Ave. East at Leslie Street*

*on Wednesday*

**September 25, 2019**

*at 7:30 p.m.*

*featuring*  
**(for the first time since 2004)**

***Dr. Neil Fleshner***

***Princess Margaret Cancer Centre***

*topic:*

***"Prostate cancer and the  
genes you were born with."***

*A question period will follow.  
All family members, partners & friends  
are most welcome!*

***FREE parking!***

*If you have any questions, please call us at*  
**416-932-8820**

***Doors open at 7 p.m.***

## **2019 Meetings Benefit North York Harvest Food Bank**

**P**lease bring some non-perishable food with you to our Awareness Night Meetings, which PCCN-Toronto donates to the *North York Harvest Food Bank*.

Here is a list of their much-needed items. Please note that all expiration dates must be valid and canned goods cannot be damaged (dented). Thank you very much.

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| ✓ <b>Canned fish &amp; meat</b>                  | ✓ <b>Flour</b>                      |
| ✓ <b>Canned vegetables</b>                       | ✓ <b>Brown pasta</b>                |
| ✓ <b>Canned fruit</b>                            | ✓ <b>Powdered milk</b>              |
| ✓ <b>Cooking oil - canola or olive oil</b>       | ✓ <b>Canned or dried beans</b>      |
| ✓ <b>Cereals - high fiber</b>                    | ✓ <b>Rice - white &amp; brown</b>   |
| ✓ <b>Peanut/almond butter</b>                    | ✓ <b>Baby formula &amp; diapers</b> |
| ✓ <b>Cookies (arrowroot, digestive, oatmeal)</b> | ✓ <b>Baby food &amp; cereals</b>    |
|  | ✓ <b>Fruit juice - 100%</b>         |



[www.northyorkharvestfoodbank.com](http://www.northyorkharvestfoodbank.com)

**A**ll our *PCCN-Toronto Man to Man Peer Support Group* meetings at Valleyview Residence are being supported by a grant from Janssen Pharmaceuticals.

**We thank Stacey Silverberg and all the people at Janssen.**

**Our Awareness Night meetings at Edwards Gardens are sponsored by Astellas Pharma Canada, and we thank Karen Frantzke and everyone at Astellas.**



**The Board of PCCN-Toronto.**



# The Mandarin hosts 54 PCCN-Toronto (hungry) members for buffet



EGG ROLLS



CAKES



SPRING ROLLS

CHOW  
MEINP  
I  
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SFRIED  
RICE

**MANDARIN**  
*A Celebration of Taste*

SPARERIBS



WONTON SOUP

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If you would rather receive this newsletter electronically, please email [info@pccntoronto.ca](mailto:info@pccntoronto.ca) and we'll remove you from our regular mailing list and add your name to our email list. Thank you.



## HALIFAX'S DR. ROB RUTLEDGE PRESENTS SPECIAL PRESENTATION ON PROSTATE CANCER - OCT. 17, 2019.

### Complete Prostate Cancer Care: the Science and Practice of Empowerment.

Oncologist Rob Rutledge provides a dynamic overview of science of the healthy lifestyle habits, mind-body connection, proven healing skills and much more. The presentation offers a complete guide of what you should be doing to maximize your health and happiness after a prostate cancer diagnosis.

Dr. Rob Rutledge is a Radiation Oncologist in Halifax, Nova Scotia, specializing in breast, prostate and pediatric cancers. He is also an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University.



In 1999, Rob co-created the 'Skills for Healing' Cancer Weekend Retreats. These weekend support groups teach a powerful and integrated approach to the cancer diagnosis and ways to heal at levels of body, mind and spirit. To date, 1,900 people have attended 50+ retreats in 25+ cities across Canada and abroad. Rob is the CEO and Chair of the Healing and Cancer Foundation, a Registered Charity that freely offers educational videos, documentaries, and webcasting seminars.

He is co-author of the book *The Healing Circle*, which captures the teachings and inspirational stories from the weekend retreats. Rob has received a Cancer Care Nova Scotia Award for Excellence in Patient Care, and Doctors Nova Scotia presented him with a Health Promotion Award in recognition of his contribution to physician health and health promotion in cancer patients.

*We hope you add to your schedule Thursday October 17th at 7:30 p.m. at The Toronto Botanical Gardens, to hear a very important discussion on what you can do following your prostate cancer diagnosis.*

**P**lease join us at our September 25th Awareness Night meeting and help us celebrate Prostate Cancer Awareness Month and our 25th anniversary at the same time! Our guest speaker that night is **Dr. Neil Fleshner**, a senior member of the urology team at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, and who for years has been a good friend of Man to Man and, since 2010, PCCN-Toronto. This will be his first visit with us in fifteen years (2004), and we are very happy to welcome him back!

His topic is **"Prostate cancer and the genes you were born with."**

Our refreshment break will be a little more elaborate than normal, as we all celebrate together, not only our first 25 years of helping men and their families deal with their diagnoses, but having Dr. Fleshner with us as well.

Plan on coming to The Toronto Botanical Gardens for what promises to be a very interesting and enjoyable evening! We look forward to seeing you all there!

# ASK THE HEALTH CARE TEAM

*At this time, we are pleased to welcome Dr. Nathan Perlis who is joining Drs. Danny Vesprini and Sharon Sharir as a member of the lead team. We look forward to his participation and ongoing contributions and we thank him for his enthusiastic and positive response to the invitation.*

Ron Benson



MD, MSc, FRCSC

Staff Urologist in the Department of Surgical Oncology at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Surgery at the University of Toronto.

**I**t's a basic question, but for my inaugural "Ask the Medical Team" submission, I thought we should start with the basics. So, let's focus on the prostate's basic functions, location, and why treating cancer in this location can cause significant complications for men.

The prostate gland (often mispronounced "prostrate") is a male organ that secretes fluid and proteins that are part of the semen. In fact, patients are surprised to learn that the prostate is only a minor contributor (~30%) to seminal contents and volume. The fluid produced by the prostate is alkaline and is thought to help neutralize vaginal acidity and improve sperm motility. Although we generally speak about prostate specific antigen (PSA) in the context of prostate cancer screening and monitoring, it is actually one of the proteins produced by the prostate to promote successful sperm function. PSA is an enzyme (type of protein) produced in the prostate that is part of the ejaculate and helps liquify semen to assist sperm migration.

As you can see, the prostate plays an important role for couples trying to get pregnant. But because prostate cancer mostly affects men after they have already had kids (if any...), it's more the *location* of the prostate that becomes the problem when considering treatment. The prostate is in the deepest recesses of the male pelvis and several very important structures surround it. For example, the muscles of the pelvic floor, which are key for keeping urine from leaking out of the

bladder, surround about half of the prostate. If these muscles are injured from surgery or radiation you can lose control of urination and leak unintentionally. Another example are the nerves that run from the spinal cord to the erectile bodies of the penis. Although they are not part of the prostate gland, they sit immediately lateral and posterior to the prostate.

In a perfect world, when a man has prostate cancer that needs treatment, we could carve out the gland, removing the cancer without causing side effects. However, because of the proximity of the gland to the pelvic floor and nerves, they are often damaged when attempting to treat the gland itself. I use an orange analogy with patients in clinic. Consider the prostate the pulp and the nerves the peel of an orange and it's not always possible to cleanly separate the peel from the pulp. When we are doing surgery, we do our best to gently separate the pelvic floor and the nerves from the prostate gland, but sometime the tension from handling the tissue or the heat from cautery is enough to reduce urinary or erectile function after treatment.

In summary, "location, location, location"! The prostate is a gland with vital functions for male reproductive function. It also plays a minor role in urine control. But side effects from removing a prostate are not necessarily related to losing the prostate itself, but rather from the challenges of operating in the deep pelvis where other vital structures are so close to it.

I hope this was a useful primer on prostate anatomy and function. Until next time...

*Dr. Nathan Perlis*

Words from the late Rodney Dangerfield:

**"What a childhood I had. Once, on my birthday, my ol' man gave me a bat. The first day I played with it, it flew away!"**



## **"The boys can still eat!"**

**P**lan an evening at a buffet restaurant and the "boys" from PCCN-Toronto will definitely be there! Some may even bring their partners with them, as many did that night, pushing the total number of hungry people there from our support group to 54!

These men are all survivors who either had their prostate glands surgically removed or radiated to get rid of the cancer that was detected there by a urologist or radiation oncologist fairly recently or more than 20 years ago!

So, they all have that in common. Another thing that they have in common is their big appetites, and those were on full display on Tuesday night, September 10th at the Mandarin Restaurant on Woodbine Avenue.

We were supposed to be "mingling" with each other from 6:15 to 6:45, but some thought mingling meant meeting around the buffet table while "nibbling" on something good!

Their plates, if they were empty, didn't stay that way for very long, before another trip to the buffet table corrected that minor "problem". Whenever I revisited the buffet, I found several members from our group there as well, so we were very well represented there the entire evening!

Phil Segal and his wife Tanny once again organized this evening for us, and they did another masterful job arranging everything! Phil also made sure that each of us paid him for all of those dinner plates and dessert plates we went through that night, which was substantial!

He also welcomed everyone there, thanked us all for coming, and invited everyone to attend our next Awareness Night Meeting featuring Dr. Neil Fleshner. (Please see article on page 5)

This was another terrific social evening for our group to get to meet under different circumstances, and try hard NOT to mention the word "prostate". We might have succeeded!

## **Check out our Newly-revised website!**

**T**his spring we updated our website to a new WordPress theme. It has a completely new look, with much of the busy text moved to lower level pages and more photos and graphics.

The menus have been slightly changed, but all the old content is still there. The most popular things should be easy to find, such as:

- \* Our Awareness Night videos
- \* Newsletter archives
- \* Links – available on most "Recently Diagnosed" and "Support" pages

New features include:

- \* Calendar of events, giving information on all our support meetings and other events.
- \* Recent News/Blog page has an easy search box on the right in addition to a search option near the top of all pages. All the old categories are there.

New articles are constantly being added, so visit often for new information and alerts, if we need to change something.

You can contribute. If you find something worth sharing, please send an email with links, etc. to [info@pccntoronto.ca](mailto:info@pccntoronto.ca) or phone our Support Line at (416) 932-8820.

You can also follow us on social media. Join our Facebook group at [facebook.com/groups/pccntoronto](https://facebook.com/groups/pccntoronto) and follow us on twitter @pccntoronto.

John Roth  
Board Director

*Are you interested in becoming a PCCN-Toronto volunteer?*

*Please call our support line - 416-932-8820  
or email us at [info@pccntoronto.ca](mailto:info@pccntoronto.ca)*

# Our on-going projects for 2019

## AWARENESS NIGHT MEETINGS

These meetings are held at the **Toronto Botanical Garden (in the *Floral* or *Garden Hall*)**, at the corner of Lawrence Avenue East and Leslie Street, from 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Leading medical professionals speak on a range of topics related to prostate cancer and then, following a refreshment break, answer your questions. Family members and friends are welcome to attend. If you are on our mailing list, a notice of each meeting will be sent to you. **PARKING IS FREE.**

*Please bring some non-perishable food with you for the North York Harvest Food Bank. (See page 3)*

<u>DATE</u>	<u>RM</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
Mar 27	G	Justin Lorentz, MSc <i>Sunnybrook Health Science Centre</i>	Cancer genetics and its impact on prostate cancer and potential treatments.
May 29	G	Claudia Aronowitz MPH, CPCC, ACC	"Change starts from within: Live a life that matters!"
Jul 31	G	Dr. Chirag Patel <i>Sunnybrook Health Science Centre</i>	PET scans, MRIs, CT and Bone Scans and imaging in general.
Sep 25	F	<b>Dr. Neil Fleshner</b> <b><i>Princess Margaret Cancer Centre</i></b>	<b>Prostate cancer and the genes you were born with.</b>
** Nov 26	G	Dr. Danny Vesprini <i>Sunnybrook Health Science Centre</i>	Active Surveillance: the decision of <b>when</b> to treat.

**\*\* Please note this meeting will take place on TUESDAY November 26th.**

### Man to Man Peer Support Meetings - 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

These meetings take place on the **FIRST** and **THIRD** Tuesday evenings of each month at the **Valleyview Residence**, 541 Finch Avenue West (just west of Bathurst Street on the Branson Hospital site) in the All-Purpose Room. They provide an opportunity for men to talk in a safe and comfortable setting about dealing with their diagnosis of prostate cancer.

### Side by Side Peer Support Meetings

*This program has undergone some recent changes. Our ladies' support group, although still active, now provides advice by appointment only. Please visit our website for more information.*

### Personal Support

Trained volunteers, all prostate cancer survivors, will talk to you/your family in your home, by telephone or in the hospital. Each week our volunteers visit surgical patients at **Toronto General Hospital** (Thursday & Saturday) and **Sunnybrook Hospital** (Thursday), bringing them messages of hope and support.

### Counseling

Our volunteers counsel men (and their families) in prostate cancer clinics at the **Princess Margaret Cancer Centre** (Monday through Friday), the **Odette Cancer Centre** (on Thursday), and **The Gale & Graham Wright Prostate Centre at North York General's Branson site** (on Tuesday afternoon).

### **PCCN - Toronto Board of Directors**

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**Have a question?**  
**Need some information?**  
**Call our support line: 416-932-8820**