



# KELOWNA PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT & AWARENESS GROUP

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**I**would like to wish all the readers of my Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness Group newsletter a *Very Happy New Year* and the *best in 2026*.

At the December meeting of our Kelowna prostate cancer support group a couple of our group told those present about their experiences with prostate cancer treatments, including a missed diagnosis and a fellow who recently underwent robotic Surgery in Kelowna.

We are very fortunate in Kelowna to have recently received our DaVinci Xi robot that has been nick named ‘Vinni’. Our local urologists are very familiar with the robot have already performed several robotic assisted surgeries for prostate cancer.

If any of our readers have ideas for this Newsletter please let me know and I will look into them for a possible future issue.

If you wish to have your name removed from this contact list, please let me know and I will remove your contact information.

### **Meet Kelowna's cancer trailblazers who are using radiation and AI**

The following is a brief excerpt of information that was published on October 27 in Castanet.

Drs. Nathan Becker and Hamid Raziee are driving advancements in precision radiation and AI to improve patient outcomes across B.C.

A BC Cancer-Kelowna, innovation is more than a goal – it's a daily reality shaping patient care. Leading the charge are Dr. Becker, regional lead medical physicist and expert in AI-assisted radiation therapy and Dr. Raziee, a radiation oncologist whose expertise in brachytherapy is helping to redefine precision cancer treatment.

Together, they represent the leadership that's turning the Interior into an internationally recognized hub of cancer and care – a transformation made possible through the strong support of the BC Cancer Foundation.

### **Big-city breakthroughs, local impact**

Trained in Calgary and Toronto, Dr. Becker was drawn to the opportunity to bring cutting edge care to the Interior. "My goal in coming here was really to bring a lot of the technology and capability I saw in big city centres to BC Cancer-Kelowna," he says.

He achieved that when patients in Kelowna were the first in Canada to be treated with Ethos – a technology that uses AI to adapt radiation therapy daily to the changing position and shape of tumours to allow for more targeted treatment while sparing healthy tissue.

"Five years ago, I would have said it was impossible to make a brand-new radiation plan every day," Dr. Becker says. "Now we're doing it."

### **Fuelled by community support**

Breakthroughs like these are being supercharged by donor support, including a \$2.76 million gift from the Krysko Family Foundation that established the new BC Cancer Care-Kelowna Research and Development Hub.

"The space brings critical AI infrastructure, programming and data support in-house, enabling faster, more impactful clinical research," Dr. Becker says. "It's going to change the way we do research here in the Interior."

### **Using AI to advance care**

Dr. Raziee has expanded on his expertise in brachytherapy since joining BC Cancer-Kelowna in 2021, initially focused on gynecological cancers, his work now includes advanced treatments for prostate cancer.

With over half of cancer patients requiring radiation, he sees tremendous opportunity in integrating AI to create more personalized, targeted therapies.

"We're just in the infancy of how technology will transform radiotherapy," he says.

"Cancer care is not just a medical journey; it's a deeply human experience that requires a strong community," he says. "We have that in the Interior, where donors play a vital role – not just by funding our work, but by championing the values that drive our mission forward."

### **WITT'S WIT (ON THE LIGHTER SIDE) -**



## Prostate Cancer Symptoms and Treatment: What to Check For

### What is Prostate Cancer?

The prostate is a gland that is about the size of a walnut which sits just below the bladder within the pelvis.

It surrounds the urethra – the tube that takes urine out of the body through the penis. Prostate Cancer – abnormal and uncontrolled cell growth – often develops slowly. There may be no signs or symptoms for years and some people never develop any problems from it.

But in others, the cancer can be aggressive and deadly.

Prostate cancer that's detected early has the best chance for successful treatment.

### How common is Prostate Cancer?

Prostate Cancer UK says one in eight men will get prostate cancer at some point in their lives.

Around 52,300 men are diagnosed each year in the UK and there are around 12,200 prostate cancer deaths every year, according to Cancer Research UK.

**Editor's Note** – In 2024 the Canadian Cancer Society estimated that 27,900 men would be newly diagnosed with prostate cancer nationally with 4,100 men from B.C. It was also estimated that there were 5,000 deaths nationally.

Your risk for prostate cancer is higher if you have a close relative – father, brother, grandfather or uncle – who has had prostate cancer.

### What symptoms should people check for?

The common ones are:

- Needing to urinate more frequently – particularly at night.
- Difficulty starting to urinate, weak flow and it is taking a long time.
- Blood in urine or semen

These symptoms can be caused by other conditions too – but it is important to have any changes checked by a doctor.

### Is there a test for Prostate Cancer?

There is no single diagnostic test. Doctors make a diagnosis based on various measures. This can include a digital rectal examination (DRE), a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test, possibly a CT or MRI scan. Some time a Nuclear Medicine Bone Scan is used to determine if there is the possibility of metastases to the bone. Of course, a biopsy of the prostate gland that removes 10-12 very small tissue samples that approximately the thickness of a piece of sewing thread and 2cm long from 6 areas of the prostate gland. These tissue samples are examined by a pathologist who views the tissue under the lens of a microscope and determines if cancer is present. The pathologist will then determine how aggressive the cancer may be.

In B.C. in many cases, you have to ask for a PSA, as it is not covered as a screening test. In the Kelowna area this test costs around \$25.00.

A high PSA does not always mean cancer. For example, the PSA may go up if there is an enlargement or infection in the gland.

Some men with an elevated PSA may have prostate cancer that may not cause problems or will need treatment.

If you decide on getting a PSA test, you should refrain from sexual activity and vigorous exercise such as cycling, in the two days prior to the PSA as this may affect the results. It is also not advised to go for a PSA blood test right after a DRE.

### **Would a prostate screening program help?**

I would like to see the B.C. government cover the cost of the PSA as a screening test. We are only one of two provinces in Canada that don't cover the PSA as a screening test, the other being Ontario.

The latest report from *Prostate Cancer Research* in the UK indicates that the benefits of introducing targeted screening for those at the highest risk would outweigh the financial and logistical costs.

### **How is Prostate Cancer treated?**

Different options are available to treat prostate cancer. In our area of B.C., we are very fortunate to have great urologists and Radiation and Medical Oncologists at BC Cancer Kelowna. These treatments may include surgery or radiation treatment to treat your cancer. Androgen Deprivation (hormone) therapy may be used to slow cancer growth.

If the cancer has a very low Gleason Grade and Score your Urologist may suggest Active Surveillance. Where you are kept under close observation.

The Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness group does not recommend treatment modalities or physicians: However, all information is fully shared and is confidential. The information contained in this newsletter is not intended to replace the services of your health professionals regarding matters of your personal health.

The Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness Group would like to thank Janssen - and TerSera for their support and educational grants that go towards our newsletters and our support group.



### **UP COMING MEETING DATES FOR - 2025 – 2026**

**February 14, March 14, April 11, May 9**

#### **Meeting Location:**

Our meetings take place in the Harvest Room at Trinity Church located at the corner of Springfield Road and Spall Road. Please enter through the South Entrance off the main parking lot and follow the signs upstairs to the Harvest Room. Our meetings begin at 9:00 A.M. and the doors open at 8:30 A.M. There is elevator access if needed.

**NOTE:** Many of our past newsletters are available for viewing and printing through our website. – [www.kelownaprostate.com](http://www.kelownaprostate.com)

- A big *Thank You to Doris at Affordable Web Design for all her work on our website*