



## The Ottawa Hospital Cancer Program Patient & Family Advisory Council

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

### Why does the Cancer Program have a Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC)?

The Ottawa Hospital Cancer Program knows that patients and their families have an key role in improving the patient experience with cancer care. The Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) provides a way for the staff of the Cancer Program to connect with patients and family members and get their advice on how we deliver care. The main goal of the PFAC is to help support a patient and family centred care approach across the program.

### What is Patient and Family Centred Care?

At the heart of patient and family centred care is the belief that the patient, their family and the health care team are partners, working together to improve the patient experience with the health care system. It is based on the following key principles:

- **Respect and Dignity:** Listening and respecting patient and family points of view and choices
- **Information Sharing:** Ensuring patients and families have the information they need to make decisions about their care
- **Participation:** Supporting patients and family members being involved in their care and making decisions (at the level they choose)
- **Collaboration:** Bringing the voice of patients and families into all areas of the Cancer Program so that improvements can be made

### What do PFAC members do?

PFAC members provide advice to the Cancer Program so improvements can be made to help other cancer patients and their families. This is done by taking part in regular meetings of the PFAC, as well as by helping out on committees and working groups. Sometimes, members are asked to speak to groups of health care providers or at conferences to share the work of the PFAC and how it helps to support patient and family centered care.

### What does the PFAC discuss?

The PFAC gets involved with matters that have the potential to improve the patient experience. Examples include advising on how patient areas are set up and reviewing patient educational material. Many times, topics to discuss are brought to the PFAC by Cancer Program staff who would like input from patients and family members.

### What does the PFAC not do?

The PFAC does not take on the cause of a specific patient or family member, or a special interest group. It also does not fundraise to support its activities or interests. It is important to remember that the PFAC provides *advice* only to the Cancer Program and does not have the final say about how services are delivered.

## Who is on the PFAC?

The PFAC is made up of patients and family members from across the Champlain Region who have had used the services of The Ottawa Hospital Cancer Program and its regional satellite partners. Meetings are supported by staff who serve as the main link between the PFAC and the Cancer Program. The Canadian Cancer Society also has a representative on the PFAC.

## What is the time commitment of a PFAC member?

The PFAC meets 5 times per year. Meetings are usually held late in the afternoon so members who work are able to attend. Members will also be asked to help out on committees, workgroups or special projects as needed. Often, members are asked for advice and input by email or phone between meetings as well.

## How do you become a PFAC member?

The first step to becoming a PFAC member is to read this FAQ sheet and become familiar with the role of the PFAC and its members. A nomination form will then need to be filled out by someone who recommends that you become a member— this can be anyone in the community. Interviews are then set up with the Chair or Vice Chair and at least one other member of the PFAC. Interviews can be done in person or over the phone.

## How do I know if this is the right commitment for me?

Before sending in your nomination form, here are some things to think about to be sure that this is the committee for you. You must:

- Be able to share your point of view, but be able to listen to and appreciate the views of others
- Be positive and supportive of The Ottawa Hospital's vision which is *to provide each patient with the world class care, exceptional service and compassion that we would want for our loved ones*
- Have the time to attend meetings of the PFAC and at least one committee or working group (as time and interest allow)

## What kind of training and support is offered to PFAC members?

PFAC members will be oriented to the hospital and the Cancer Program. The Chair, Vice Chair and other members will provide ongoing support. Orientation to a specific committee or project will take place as needed. Some funds are available to cover travel costs to attend meetings for members coming from outside of the City of Ottawa, however, we also encourage the use of videoconferencing and telephone to connect into meetings.

## How do I find out more about the PFAC?

If you are interested in becoming a member of the PFAC or have additional questions, please connect with:

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