



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Local Champions Recognized for Enriching Patient Experience** *Cancer Care Ontario and the Ontario Renal Network present Eighth Annual Human Touch Awards*

**London** (April 24, 2014) – A diagnosis of cancer or chronic kidney disease is life-changing, with both physical and emotional implications, and the journey that lies ahead is often difficult. To assist patients during this time, healthcare professionals not only treat the physical symptoms of the disease but also the emotional ones. The emotional support provided by professionals and volunteers plays a significant role in a patient's experience.

Today, Cancer Care Ontario and the Ontario Renal Network (ORN) recognized eleven deserving Ontarians, who go above and beyond, with a Human Touch Award. The Human Touch Awards honour front-line renal and cancer healthcare professionals, providers and volunteers who provide exemplary and compassionate care in Ontario.

- **Volunteer Award, cancer: Elisa Agnelli and Mim O'Dowda, London Regional Cancer Program, London Health Sciences Centre:** Elisa and Mim understand that commitment, compassion and leadership are all necessary components to truly improving the patient experience. Volunteers with the London Regional Cancer Program, Agnelli and O'Dowda have led the hospital's Patient and Family Advisory Program over the past 18-plus months, recently leading the development of improved recruitment and orientation programs and expanding the program's membership by 200 per cent. Through engaging and encouraging members to be active partners in the design and delivery of care, the program has made key contributions to a variety of quality improvement initiatives. Agnelli and O'Dowda also played a key leadership role in helping the hospital's Renal Program start its first Patient and Family Advisory Council. Not only have Agnelli and O'Dowda impacted the patient experience at the local level, but they were also invited to present their successes and share lessons learned at an international conference for Patient and Family-Centred Care.
- **Lesley Pringle, Coordinator Radiation Therapy, London Regional Cancer Program, London Health Sciences Centre:** Lesley Pringle doesn't just believe in patient and family-centred care, she is an advocate for it. A coordinator in Radiation Therapy at London Health Sciences Centre, Pringle recognizes that patients and their families are equal partners within the healthcare team, informing on their cancer journey in a way that can make it more positive and effective. Through her innate ability to connect with people, Pringle makes patients feel comforted even at difficult times and ensures that a safe environment is created for them and their families to voice concerns, thoughts and feelings. Recently, Pringle, along with the radiation leadership team, has been tasked with establishing Standards of Care for the Radiation Therapy department and it is a job she has embraced with great enthusiasm. Her drive to learn as much as possible about best practices for patient and family-centred care has made her instrumental in this task.

"I believe that Lesley, Mim and Elisa are a reflection of the high quality of patient and family centred care offered in our cancer and renal programs across many organizations in the South West region," says Neil

Johnson, Regional Vice President for the South West Regional Cancer Program. "I am equally proud of the eight individuals from six different organizations who were nominated and, who, each day, do a fantastic job of serving our patients."

- **Rizwana Ramzanali, Fund Development Coordinator, The Kidney Foundation of Canada, Southwestern Ontario Chapter:** Rizwana emanates a spark of energy that is both gentle and impactful. A Fund Development Coordinator of The Kidney Foundation of Canada, Southwestern Ontario Chapter, Rizwana is a genuinely kind and caring person. Her leadership and dedication to increasing recognition of The Kidney Foundation's activities and funding for patients' needs and research programs has resulted in a major increase in fundraising for the Southwestern Ontario Chapter. She actively extends herself beyond fund development initiatives to participate in peer support, patient panels, and one-on-one patient support as well as hospital and The Kidney Foundation of Canada initiatives. Rizwana is known for her care and compassion, which drive her to increase the quality of life for those living with and affected by kidney disease. Using her own story of being diagnosed with renal failure, and her experiences starting hemodialysis, trying home therapies and going through a successful kidney/pancreas transplantation, she imparts hope on patients.

"Dedicated Kidney Foundation volunteers and employees throughout the province come together in formidable partnerships to make a positive difference in the lives of those affected by kidney disease," said Terry Young, Ontario President of The Kidney Foundation of Canada. "We are proud to celebrate the accomplishments of Rizwana as she is passionate about her engagement with the kidney community."

"Compassion is a critical component in providing patients with an elevated level of care," says Michael Sherar, President and CEO, Cancer Care Ontario. "Today's award recipients are an inspiration; they play a significant role in improving the patient and family experience through their remarkable commitment, unwavering dedication and caring emotional support."

Cancer Care Ontario and the Ontario Renal Network acknowledge the generous support of the [Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario Division](#) and the [RBC Foundation](#), co-sponsors of the eighth annual Human Touch Awards. For more information about our winners visit the [webpage](#) and join the conversation on Twitter with [#HumanTouchAwards](#).

**Watch a live webcast of the awards:** <http://hosting.epresence.tv/livemedia/64.aspx>

The South West Regional Cancer Program oversees the delivery and quality of cancer services for the counties of Grey, Bruce, Huron, Perth, Middlesex, Oxford, Elgin, and part of Norfolk. It is one of 13 Regional Cancer Programs created by Cancer Care Ontario in 2005 to ensure cancer care is delivered according to province-wide quality standards.

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is the national volunteer organization committed to kidney health, and improved lives for all Canadians affected by kidney disease. Celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, The Kidney Foundation of Canada has committed more than \$110 million to research since its creation in 1964.

Cancer Care Ontario (CCO), an Ontario government agency, drives quality and continuous improvement in disease prevention and screening, the delivery of care and the patient experience, for cancer, chronic kidney disease and access to care for key health services. Known for its innovation and result-driven approaches, CCO leads multi-year system planning, contracts for services with hospitals and providers, develops and deploys information systems, establishes guidelines and standards and tracks performance targets to ensure system-wide improvements in cancer, chronic kidney disease and access to care.

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