

**November 27, 2012**

## **New Cancer Program Aims to Reduce Cancer Deaths in London's Newcomer Communities**

London, ON – Local partners in cancer care have joined forces to increase the early detection of cancer and reduce cancer mortality rates among newcomer and immigrant populations in London. The collaborative effort will help to improve the overall health for individual Canadians and reduce the cost burden of cancer care.

The South West Regional Cancer Program, in partnership with the [Canadian Cancer Society](#), [Cross Cultural Learner Centre](#), [London InterCommunity Health Centre](#), and [Middlesex-London Health Unit](#), has received funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) to develop and implement a cancer prevention and screening delivery model that targets hard-to-reach communities that have below average provincial screening rates for breast, cervical and colon cancer (newcomer and under/never screened populations). The new model will include screening tests that will help find cancer early, before there are symptoms. Screening tests also help to prevent cancer by finding changes in the body that would become cancer if left untreated.

The project team will work closely with representatives from the Nepalese and Iraqi populations – two emerging newcomer groups in London, as well as members of the Spanish and Arabic speaking populations, to identify and reduce barriers that limit their access to cancer information and screening.

According to Statistics Canada, immigrants' health is generally better than that of the Canadian-born. This phenomenon is often referred to as the "healthy immigrant effect". Studies show however, that the health of these immigrants tends to decline as their years in Canada increase.

"One in five people in London were immigrants in 2006 and 3.5% of the population immigrated to London within the previous five years," says Millie Litt, Manager, Regional Cancer Services at the [South West Regional Cancer Program](#). "The financial support from PHAC will allow us to create and implement programs designed to empower visible minority populations to participate in cancer screening programs in culturally safe environments."

Reaction from target audiences:

*“These are amazing news! I applaud and cherish the great efforts and team work from all these entities to target newcomers and immigrant populations in London regarding cancer prevention and screening. I am certain that these efforts will help identify any barriers each newcomer or immigrant community might endure and help overcome them by tailoring a program that fits their needs, being the end result a healthier, well screened and educated population. As a newcomer I can say that I am even looking forward to become part of this project as a volunteer, as this great and encouraging message through the local partners in cancer care from London tells us - ‘We really care about your health’, and I am very thankful for that. So now let us be proactive, let’s prevent and screen for cancer! Spread the word!”*

Claudia Chon Him (Spanish speaking community)

*“The new program will be crucial for our community because it is going to be focused on giving information about the various cancers. It is relevant also that it will take into account the language barrier and encourage people to have a healthy life by preventing and detecting cancer early.”*

Liliana Baca (Spanish speaking community)

*“Much like the women of any community, Muslim women are devoted to their families, work, and education, yet their health -and its maintenance- is second to all. Thankfully, this project will help make it easier for all women to maintain their health as their number one priority. This project will be reaching out to women within the Muslim community by providing them with important resources regarding screening and tests for cancer. This project really honours the diversity of the London community and their women by providing essential information in different formats and languages and training for health care professionals”.*

Atefeh Samani (Muslim community)

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