



# THANK YOU

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PANCREATIC CANCER RESEARCH IMPACT REPORT

November 2024

Capilano Volkswagen Cypress Challenge presented by  
Glotman • Simpson Cycling

**BC  
CAN  
CER** FOUNDATION

## **YOUR IMPACT**

Thank you for your generous commitment towards the Capilano Volkswagen Cypress Challenge presented by Glotman • Simpson Cycling.

Your support of this beloved event helps raise awareness and fuels innovative research. Led by Executive Medical Director and Medical Oncologist Dr. Dan Renouf, BC Cancer is accelerating discovery and bringing hope to patients and families facing pancreatic cancer in B.C.

We are pleased to report back on the milestones they've achieved this year.





## THE 2024 CAPILANO VOLKSWAGEN CYPRESS CHALLENGE CYCLED TO GROUNDBREAKING NEW HEIGHTS.

The **Capilano Volkswagen Cypress Challenge** began in 2008, organized by Glotman • Simpson Cycling Club and a group of cyclists looking for a way to give back to the community.

The dedication to find a cure for pancreatic cancer began with Geoff and Myriam Glotman, who were looking for a way to give back to the community. Myriam's mother had passed away of the disease, giving their family a personal connection to the cause.

With so few survivors to advocate for research and funding, the Capilano Volkswagen Cypress Challenge was established to raise awareness and support with the hope that more funds for research will lead to improved outcomes for pancreatic cancer patients.

It grew to become the **largest privately funded fundraising event for pancreatic cancer in Canada and the largest community-based event for the BC Cancer Foundation.** Since its inception in 2008, the Capilano Volkswagen Cypress Challenge has raised more than \$5.2 million toward BC Cancer's cutting-edge pancreatic cancer research, led by Dr. Renouf.

In 2024, over **600 participants rode and raised a record-breaking \$800,000** – thank you for your dedication and generosity towards improving pancreatic cancer outcomes in B.C. and beyond.



CHRIS, LONE AND THEIR DAUGHTERS MARIA AND KATE

## CHRIS' STORY

In his third Capilano Volkswagen Cypress Challenge this past July — but his first since losing his wife, Lone, to pancreatic cancer — Chris Armstrong personally raised an incredible \$300,000 towards pancreatic cancer research. “More than 60 people — including our dentist — rode up that hill for Lone and pancreatic cancer research,” Chris says of his team named the Lone Rangers.

Chris's efforts honoured Lone's wish to continue supporting pancreatic cancer research and care in B.C., specifically the work of her oncologist Dr. Renouf. “She would have done anything for that man,” says Chris of Dr. Renouf, who has been at the forefront of many significant breakthroughs in pancreatic cancer and whom he and Lone got to know after she was diagnosed in 2022.

Chris adds, “We will continue to make the climb every year so that others won't have to lose people they love to the disease.”





DR. RENOUF AND JUDY HAGER

Along with the Glotman family, the Hagers are also catalysts to transforming pancreatic cancer research and care. In 2011, Bob Hager faced an untreatable pancreatic cancer diagnosis. In response, he united a group of experts from BC Cancer and Vancouver Coastal Health to form **Pancreas Centre BC (PCBC)**. Shortly after Bob and his partners at Phillips, Hager & North Investment Services made their initial investment, he passed away.

In 2022, Bob's wife Judy Hager and their daughters, Leslie Carter and Shelley Ferris, continued Bob's legacy with a \$5 million donation to PCBC (the largest gift to pancreatic cancer in B.C.) All proceeds from the Capilano Volkswagen Cypress Challenge support the work highlighted in this report and fuel Bob's vision of creating better outcomes for people facing pancreatic cancer for years to come.

## BC CANCER IS IMPROVING THE STANDARD OF GENETIC TESTING FOR HEREDITARY PANCREATIC CANCER.

### Familial Pancreatic Cancer Program

From 2016-2023, the **Familial Pancreatic Cancer Program (FPCP)** supported 1,227 people with pancreatic cancer, with 87.5% having completed genetic testing and 9.5% showing an inherited pancreatic cancer susceptibility gene. For example, people with a mutation in a gene called **BRCA** are at an increased risk of pancreatic cancer. The FPCP is helping British Columbians rapidly access testing for this mutation. If present, it can:

- **guide the use of specific types of chemotherapy** that are more effective in people with BRCA mutations. Certain people respond remarkably to tailored chemotherapy, living for years with minimal cancer-related symptoms, even with metastatic disease at diagnosis; and
- **increase the chance of early detection**, as family members of people with BRCA-related pancreatic cancer can undergo screening and genetic testing to identify if they also carry the BRCA gene.

## Supported direct contact of family members

FPCP Lead Genetic Counsellor Carol Cremin recently published a study (co-authored by Dr. Renouf and Medical Geneticist Dr. Intan Schrader) in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology: Precision Oncology* – **it found that people who accessed genetic testing through their oncology team were almost four times more likely to complete testing and received results in half the time compared with patients referred to a provincial hereditary cancer clinic.**

This approach was also found to reach a more ethnically diverse population. Dr. Renouf emphasizes, “By initiating genetic testing at the time of diagnosis, it increases the potential for a patient to receive precision-based treatment and cancer risk reduction in their relatives.”

BC Cancer’s Hereditary Cancer Program is currently testing a new approach that involves **directly contacting the relatives of a person when they are diagnosed with a hereditary cancer.** The team also plans to collaborate with the provincial cancer registry to create a real-time prompt for clinicians to encourage testing as soon as the cancer is confirmed.



## EXPERTS ARE UNCOVERING MORE PATHWAYS FOR INDIVIDUALIZED PANCREATIC CANCER CARE.

With your support, BC Cancer research teams are investigating emerging questions about pancreatic cancer to develop new treatments. Here are some examples of clinical research currently underway:

- Distinguished Scientist Dr. Shoukat Dedhar and his team discovered that when **neutrophils** (blood cells that fight infections) encounter pancreatic cancer cells or tumours, they produce a substance that promotes the cancer to spread. The team has identified potential biomarkers and therapeutic targets to **block this type of metastasis**;
- Dr. Renouf’s team is assessing what **molecular features make a person more likely to benefit from immunotherapy** and exploring new ways to target pancreatic cancers; and
- Distinguished Scientist Dr. Andrew Minchinton is studying an MRI-based technique that better measures the oxygen levels within pancreatic tumours in mice. As pancreatic tumours tend to have low oxygen levels (hypoxia), there may be an opportunity to **explore hypoxia-targeting therapeutic agents.**



THE PANCREAS CENTRE BC TEAM

Research lays the foundation for clinical trials, which prove the safety, effectiveness and benefits of new treatments. Clinical trials are a critical step in bringing lifesaving therapies into the standard of care. Recently launched clinical trials for pancreatic cancer include:

- The **ACCELERATE** trial, which is investigating the genetic and clinical characteristics of earlier stages of pancreatic cancer (cancers that have not spread or tumours that can be surgically removed); and
- The **PEGASUS** trial, which is assessing whether intensive glucose management can impact responses to treatment and outcomes.

**“It’s extremely rewarding for the team to see people with pancreatic cancer that beat the odds and are living for years with an excellent quality of life. It motivates us every day to find other targetable pathways and new therapies so that more people with cancer will be able to live longer.”**  
-Dr. Renouf



DR. DAN RENOUF



# RADIONUCLIDE THERAPY IS NOW STANDARD OF CARE FOR A DISTINCT SUBGROUP OF PANCREATIC CANCERS.

In 2021, BC Cancer treated its first patient with **peptide receptor radionuclide therapy (PRRT)**, a type of internal radiotherapy for neuroendocrine tumours (NETs) that cannot be removed or have spread to other



DR. JON LOREE

parts of the body. Between 2021 and 2024, this highly personalized treatment was covered for people in B.C. with a NET starting in the small intestine. However, people with pancreatic NETs (neuroendocrine tumours that start in the pancreas) had to either travel to Alberta or Quebec or use private insurance.

**As of May 2024, PRRT is now available and covered for B.C. patients with pancreatic NETs.** BC Cancer Medical Oncologist Dr. Jon Loree says, "Our team was thrilled to see PRRT become standard of care for pancreatic NETs. It eliminates significant financial and logistical burdens for people facing this disease."

# THE PANCREATIC CANCER RAPID ACCESS CLINIC (RAC) WILL THRIVE IN A NEW COLLABORATIVE SPACE.

The Pancreatic Cancer RAC was designed to reduce the time between diagnosis and treatment for people with pancreatic cancer. In late 2024, the clinic will move into a new, larger space at the Fairmont Medical Building, just a few blocks from BC Cancer - Vancouver and Vancouver General Hospital. This transition will facilitate strong multidisciplinary collaboration and connection between teams.



ANA FISIC

The RAC also bridges research with the delivery of care - Translational Research Nurse Ana Fistic guides patients through their appointments and ensures that more people with pancreatic cancer have **access to genetic testing and are reviewed for participation in clinical and research studies.**

**"I'm grateful to work in a role that has a direct impact on people diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Moving into the new space will allow me to work even closer with the multidisciplinary team, including surgeons and radiologists, to learn more and share with patients and families."**

**-Ana Fistic**





## THANK YOU FOR YOUR OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT TO CANCER RESEARCH AND CARE.

Once again, thank you for helping BC Cancer achieve greater heights of excellence for people facing pancreatic cancer in our province.

Together, we are finding solutions to keep families together and give them hope for the future.

### CONTACT US

Please refer to our [FAQ](#) section with answers to common Capilano Volkswagen Cypress Challenge inquiries.

If you still require assistance, please email [cypresschallenge@bccancer.bc.ca](mailto:cypresschallenge@bccancer.bc.ca) or call 604-675-8241.

