

### DISEASE PATHWAY MAPS

#### Healthcare Provider Q&As

#### 1. What is Disease Pathway Management?

Disease Pathway Management (DPM) is an innovative approach to quality improvement within Ontario's cancer system. This approach brings together experts from across the cancer continuum to improve the quality of care, processes and patient experience for a given type of cancer (e.g., lung cancer). An important step in the DPM approach to quality improvement is the development of Disease Pathway Maps.

#### 2. What are Disease Pathway Maps?

Disease Pathway Maps (also referred to as pathways) are essentially flowcharts that provide a high-level overview of the care that a cancer patient in Ontario should receive. The pathways are organized by cancer type (e.g., lung cancer) and phase of the [cancer journey](#) (e.g., screening, diagnosis, treatment).

The pathways depict evidence-based best practice for a typical Ontario patient with a given type of cancer. The information within pathways may include specific diagnostic procedures, referrals to specialists, types of treatment, etc.

The pathways are informational resources and are not intended to constitute medical advice or replace clinical judgment.

#### 3. Who are Disease Pathway Maps intended for?

Disease Pathway Maps are intended for cancer system and medical community stakeholders, including healthcare providers and administrators. The pathways may also serve as a resource for individuals who are new to the cancer system, such as medical students.

The Disease Pathway Maps are not intended to be educational resources for patients. The Disease Pathway Maps contain detailed medical information that may be difficult for some patients to understand.

#### 4. Why do Disease Pathway Maps exist?

Disease Pathway Maps are intended to set care expectations for cancer patients in Ontario, based on best scientific evidence. They exist as a quality improvement tool for Ontario's cancer system.

By describing what care should be provided to Ontario patients, the pathways may help identify areas for improvement along the cancer journey.

### 5. How are Disease Pathway Maps developed?

Disease Pathway Maps are developed using an iterative and multidisciplinary process that emphasizes evidence-based medicine and incorporates input from leading Ontario experts.

Initial drafts of the pathways are developed based on evidence from local, national and international clinical practice guidelines. In instances where scientific evidence is insufficient, the consensus of leading Ontario experts is used to inform the development of the pathways.

Throughout their development, the pathways are subjected to several extensive internal and external review processes by experts from across the cancer continuum.

### 6. Who is involved in the development of Disease Pathway Maps?

The development of Disease Pathway Maps for a given type of cancer is led by one or two clinical co-chairs who are physicians with expertise in the disease. The development is supported by an administrative team at Cancer Care Ontario and a team of clinical experts called an Expert Panel. An Expert Panel typically includes representatives from specialties across the cancer journey such as primary care providers, surgeons, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, pathologists, radiologists, palliative care physicians and nurses.

### 7. How am I supposed to use Disease Pathway Maps?

Disease Pathway Maps are intended to set care expectations for cancer patients in Ontario, based on best scientific evidence. They provide information about what type of care should be offered to Ontario cancer patients and where applicable, they link to Ontario clinical guidelines.

The pathways can be used by clinicians as informational resources. Wherever possible, care should be delivered in concordance with these pathways, as they depict evidence-based best practice.

The pathways may also be used by clinicians and administrators as a tool to promote discussion and collaboration between specialties.

### 8. Am I expected to deliver care in concordance with the Disease Pathway Maps?

The Disease Pathway Maps are informational resources and are not intended to constitute medical advice or replace clinical judgment. The Disease Pathway Maps represent evidence-based best practice for a given type of cancer and phase of the cancer journey.

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While every effort should be made to deliver patient care in concordance with these pathways, the circumstances of individual patients may vary. It is understood that factors including comorbidities, contraindications and patient choice may result in deviation from the pathways.

### 9. How often will the Disease Pathway Maps be updated?

The Disease Pathway Maps will be reviewed and updated annually, as applicable.

### 10. Where can I find Disease Pathway Maps?

The Disease Pathway Maps can be found on the Cancer Care Ontario website:  
[www.cancercare.on.ca](http://www.cancercare.on.ca).

### 11. Can I provide feedback on the Disease Pathway Maps?

Feedback on the Disease Pathway Maps is welcome. Please send comments to the following email address: [pathway.feedback@cancercare.on.ca](mailto:pathway.feedback@cancercare.on.ca)

*For general information about the Disease Pathway Maps, please contact [disease.pathway.management@cancercare.on.ca](mailto:disease.pathway.management@cancercare.on.ca)*