

WORTHY GRAND MATION'S SPECIAL PROJECT
2021 - 2022

Patient Comfort Fund

BC Cancer's Provincial Patient Comfort Fund provides critical financial aid vital to the care and well-being of people affected by cancer, across our province.

Some people travel long distances for their care, and funding can be a significant factor in deciding to undertake treatment or not.

Although the direct costs of cancer treatment are usually covered by the Medical Services Plan, other expenses such as travel, accommodation, medications, dental care and rehabilitation services can amount to thousands of dollars for those who do not have other forms of coverage.

The Patient Comfort Fund covers the cost of a variety of items needed by patients during treatment, including prescriptions, medical costs, groceries, and nutritional supplements. The fund also covers travel expenses incurred by patients travelling to receive cancer treatment.

The fund helps to alleviate a wide spectrum of stressors for patients and families. Here are a few common challenges they often face as the result of a cancer diagnosis:

Many patients live on fixed pension incomes which have little to no allowance for medical travel costs for themselves and a spouse or support person;

For patients without cars, public transportation options to and from their community hospital and BC Cancer site are limited and often cost prohibitive. Over the past year, travel to and from appointments has become increasingly difficult and costly. Volunteer driver programs were curtailed during Covid-19 and many public transit routes reduced;

Once a family member starts treatment, some families are unable to pay essential household bills and afford even basic necessities; among these, groceries are particularly important to ensure patients maintain a healthy diet during treatment;

Support for the immediate family members of patients helps them to adjust to a new level of caregiving while ensuring their own mental and emotional health is a priority;

While BC Cancer's Patient & Family Counselling (PFC) teams across the province currently assist patients in accessing existing resources from the government and local organizations, applications to these programs can be lengthy and require confirmation of income, assets and banking information followed by a months-long waiting process. The programs do not offer practical solutions for alleviating the immediate crisis facing patients and often lack the capacity to assist with repeated requests for financial support.