

Aboriginal Data Indicators Pilot Project

How does Self-Identification improve cancer care?

Effective July 1, 2009, all new patients at the Juravinski Cancer Centre at Hamilton Health Sciences will receive in their initial package, a question asking whether or not they would like to self-identify as Aboriginal (First Nation, Métis, or Inuit).

The Importance of this Information

Overall cancer incidence in First Nations (FN) people, while still below the rate of the general population, is rising more quickly and survival for major cancers is worse compared to the general population. Currently, limited information is available as to why these differences exist. Better data is needed to assist in improving the health of Aboriginal peoples and the quality of cancer care they receive.

Ontario Cancer Registry

Cancer Care Ontario maintains the Ontario Cancer Registry, which contains data on all cancer patients in Ontario and can tell us information about cancer rates, types of treatment, the stage of cancer at diagnosis, and survival. However, the Registry does not contain any information which identifies groups of people, either by culture or ethnicity.

Why Self-identify?

If we can identify who in the registry is Aboriginal, it will assist in improving the health status and the quality of care that Aboriginal peoples receive in Ontario.

Specific information that tells us:

- if you are First Nation, Métis or Inuk; or
- if you live on a First Nation/reserve community or in an urban setting

will allow us to:

- ensure services are provided where they are needed most;
- gain a better understanding of the cancer care needs of the Aboriginal populations served by the cancer centre; and
- help the centre to determine which groups are under-served, for example if cancers are found at later stages in different groups of people.

Information about cancer rates, types of treatment, wait times, and survival will also be provided to your communities. All personal information collected will be kept securely and confidential by Cancer Care Ontario.