



## **A letter from Terry Hawrysh Chair of OICR's Patient and Family Advisory Council**

Patients have always been intimately involved in cancer research.

Whether we were donating our tissue to a study, or participating in a clinical trial, we have helped drive the most important discoveries in detecting, diagnosing and treating cancer.

Yet it's not until recently that we, as cancer patients, have had the opportunity to shape the direction of that research – to provide our knowledge and experience to make sure research aligns with our priorities, as the end users of all new cancer innovations.

And as I near the mid-point of my first year as Chair of OICR's Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC), I'm happy to say that patient partnership is entering a new era where patients are accepted as true partners in the research process.

Looking back at the past year of patient partnership at OICR, I see many examples of this new era of meaningful partnership.

Patients took a lead role in the OICR Translational Research Conference in March, participating in all sessions and even hosting the event. We took on a larger role in OICR's strategic direction over the past year, engaging with members of Executive to help shape the Institute's next strategic plan. We presented at conferences and in webinars, and made critical contributions to research projects, including reviewing applications, shaping research protocols and co-authoring scientific manuscripts.

We also helped OICR communicate its research beyond a scientific audience. We helped revamp web pages for research programs in OICR's Adaptive Oncology and Clinical Translation streams to make sure the language was accessible to patients and members of the public. We also took part in the 'Ask a Cancer Researcher' video campaign, which answers questions from the public around some of the biggest topics in cancer research.

Our achievements are a testament to the tremendous people on OICR's PFAC. I was happy and humbled to take on the role of PFAC Chair in February, and I want to thank outgoing Chair Beth Ciavaglia for her leadership. Another PFAC member, Koko Agborsangaya, also stepped down this year. Like me, Beth and Koko were founding members of PFAC when it launched in 2021, and we thank them both for their many contributions to OICR over the years, and we wish them well for the future.

PFAC was lucky to welcome two new members to the group this year: It has been a pleasure getting to know Ambuj Srivastava and Mona Sabharwal over the past few months, and I'm excited for the unique perspectives they bring, and for what we will achieve together.

Of course, PFAC is only the tip of the iceberg of patient partnership at OICR. We are extremely proud of our broader Patient Community, which grew to 78 members this year. This group of cancer patients and family members provides a diverse range of expertise that is driving patient-centred research at OICR. We are also bolstered by OICR's dedicated community of researchers and other staff members.

Looking ahead, I'm excited for another fantastic year of patient partnership at OICR. With this outstanding community working together as one, I know we can continue to evolve the role of patient partners, leading to more meaningful and impactful collaborations that deliver innovative solutions against this deadly disease.

**Terry Hawrysh**

Chair of OICR's Patient and Family Advisory Council