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## Transitioning to Survivorship Cancer Care

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When cancer treatment ends, cancer survivors are transferred from specialty oncology care back to primary and community care. Cancer survivors have described this period after completing treatment as more challenging than their actual treatment in some cases, fraught with challenges and questions about what happens next. Although this transition could have critical implications for the long-term health of these individuals, relatively little attention has been paid to this pivotal process.

We are learning that many survivors experience unmet needs during the time following primary cancer treatment. They are speaking out and sharing important insights about gaps in survivorship care. Some of their needs are evident at the completion of active treatment, whereas others emerge later. Survivors have identified needs for improvement in access, availability and coordination of services; they see the system for delivering follow-up care as uncoordinated, fragmented and chaotic. In particular survivors find the transition period anxiety-filled and have described the need to be better prepared at the end of treatment for what they will face in the future and find.

The ever increasing number of cancer survivors has stimulated recent emphasis on finding new models of care and tools to assist with follow-up care. Survivorship care plans have emerged as one such tool. However uptake and implementation of evidenced-based models of survivorship care has been slow, hindered by a range of barriers.

This presentation will highlight recent findings concerning unmet needs from more than 13, 000 survivors, summarize challenges the survivors face in accessing care after active treatment is finished, and present selected solutions to meeting survivor needs. Data are from a national survey of Canadian cancer survivors 3 to 5 years post active treatment.

### Biography:

Dr. Fitch RN PhD is Professor (Adjunct) in the Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing and Professor in the School of Graduate Studies at the University of Toronto. Dr. Fitch is also the Editor-in-Chief for the Canadian Oncology Nursing Journal and served as Advisor on Cancer Survivorship to the Person-Centered Portfolio of the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. She provided leadership across Canada in implementing a person-centered approach for cancer patients. Dr. Fitch was the Founding President of the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology and served as a Board member and the President of the International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care.