



update

## CAREpath Cancer Assistance Program — Questions & Answers

In March of 2014 the Nova Scotia Teachers Union Group Insurance Trustees introduced the CAREpath Cancer Assistance Program for all active and retired NSTU members and their families. The Trustees continue to communicate and remind members of this excellent program. Outlined below is a Q & A session with Anita McGowan, Director of Nursing Services at CAREpath on the services of CAREpath and how they are delivered:

### **What does CAREpath offer you and your family that regular hospitals and clinics don't?**

CAREpath is a service designed to complement what regular hospitals and clinics offer. CAREpath nurses provide answers to NSTU members and their immediate family members' questions, suggestions on what to ask the treating physicians, and emotional support.

### **How is CAREpath different from other places?**

The CAREpath service is delivered through scheduled telephone calls with a personal oncology nurse assigned to you. It is available from time of diagnosis through the end of active treatment.

### **When should I turn to CAREpath and why?**

The best time for you to contact CAREpath is right after a diagnosis. At that time, CAREpath can provide input on tests, results and guidance with next steps, help in determining best treatment for the individual. At that time, CAREpath can provide input on tests, results and guidance with next steps, and help determine best treatment for the individual.

### **What resources are available for NSTU families caring for someone with cancer?**

The CAREpath nurse will help/encourage the cancer patient to involve the family. With the patient's permission, the nurse can speak with family members to provide answers, guidance and support.

### **Does CAREpath specialize in any specific types of cancer?**

CAREpath covers all types and stages of cancer.

### **How do CAREpath nurses help those diagnosed with cancer?**

CAREpath nurses have the knowledge and experience to be able to advocate for you and your family, as well as to help explain the next steps and offer exact details of what you should be doing moving forward. Many of our nurses have worked in the oncology care system for more than 20 years.

### **What exactly happens when a client makes that first call to CAREpath?**

Following an initial call to the CAREpath, the CAREpath coordinator will respond, usually the same day. She will gather your contact information and send out forms. Once the forms are returned, a nurse will be assigned and will contact you. This usually occurs in one to two business days.

### **SUCCESS STORY**

Mrs. S is a 49 year old busy mother of two teenagers who was diagnosed with Breast Cancer. This busy mom gave 100% to her family and her work, making sure everyone was happy and healthy. After her initial diagnosis and shock, she began moving forward with her prescribed treatment plan. At this time, she contacted CAREpath for more information and guidance. She was put in touch with a Certified Oncology Nurse and her journey to recovery began.

Throughout her surgery, chemotherapy and radiation treatment, with the help of her CAREpath nurse, she came to the realization that she should think of herself more and not be afraid to ask for help from her family and friends. She defines it as "taking my power back." She began to focus on her health with exercising, healthier eating and journaling. Mrs. S has since finished all her treatments and is planning to return to work soon. She now lives a full life, making sure to take care of her needs and feels that her family is better for it as she is a happier and more relaxed.

In the words of Mrs. S: "I'm thankful to CAREpath for helping me through what was a really difficult time. You guided me and supported me and did everything you could do to address my cancer from every possible direction. It has been an amazing journey. It's helped me to prioritize what is important in my life and gave me peace of mind. I fully understand now that life is fragile and you have to look at things differently, savor the moments and learn from it. I feel like I am getting stronger every day. I have my life back and I feel that I am healthier physically, emotionally and spiritually."

The NSTU Trustees hope that this information helps clarify the services CAREpath can offer members and their families.

### **Contacting CAREpath**

There are three ways to contact CAREpath and learn more about their services. They can be contacted by telephone at 1-866-883-5956, on line at [www.carepath.ca](http://www.carepath.ca) and through e-mail at [info@carepath.ca](mailto:info@carepath.ca).

**If you have any questions please contact:** Joan Ling at [jling@staff.nstu.ca](mailto:jling@staff.nstu.ca), 902-477-5621 (local), 1-800-565-6788 (toll-free), or Allan MacLean at [amaclean@staff.nstu.ca](mailto:amaclean@staff.nstu.ca), 902-477-5621 (local), 1-800-565-6788 (toll-free).

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