

**ONTARIO REGION ACTON PARTNERSHIPS (RAP)  
POST-SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES SURVEY**

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**PURPOSE:**

On behalf of the Canadian Task Force on Adolescent and Young Adults (AYA) with Cancer, Ontario Region Action Partnerships (RAP), Ontario campus health services' leaders and staff were asked to complete a survey regarding their current AYA cancer knowledge and awareness practices. The purpose of the survey was to identify and understand the AYA cancer awareness and practice needs of campus health services across Ontario so that they may be addressed in the upcoming 2013/2014 year. Healthcare professional intervention can have an important role in informing the student population on vital health information, helping to increase early detection, and improving outcomes for young adults diagnosed with cancer.

**METHOD:**

## **An anonymous online survey (**

**APPENDIX A** was developed in the spring of 2013. The survey included sample resource files for breast, testicular and skin cancer awareness print materials currently being used by campus health services in Ontario. Files were obtained from Team Shan Breast Cancer Awareness for Young Women (Team Shan), Testicular Cancer Canada (TCC) and the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS). Survey requests were sent out to 34 post-secondary schools in early summer to reach potential respondents during a quieter time during the school year. The survey recipients were asked to respond by the end of July. Twenty eight (28) respondents working at 15 different college or university campuses (41.1%) participated from across Ontario.

**KEY FINDINGS:**

The 15 Ontario post-secondary school campuses that participated in the survey were The University of Toronto (St. George, Scarborough and Mississauga campus), University of Ottawa, Fleming College, George Brown College, Sheridan College, University of Western Ontario, Trent University, Wilfred Laurier University, Durham College, Waterloo University, OCAD University, York University, and Ryerson University. Apart from 4 participants that did not list their occupation, almost half of the participants were nurses (45.8%), while health educators (29.2%) made up a majority of the remaining respondents. The remaining participants comprised of campus physicians (12.5%), managers (16.5%), Finance Officers (4%), Mental Health Workers (4%) and Health Promotion Coordinators (4%).

All participants were asked to rate their current knowledge and comfort level regarding 3 areas of adolescent and young adult cancers; prevention education (PE), early detection (ED), and AYA cancers incidence and risk factors (CIRF). Participants rated their responses as very, adequate, somewhat, not

very and not at all. The survey showed that approximately one quarter of all participants feel somewhat comfortable or knowledgeable with each of PE (28.6%), ED (21.4%) and CIRF (25%), and half of the participants feel they have adequate comfort and knowledge in PE (53.6%), ED (53.6%) and AYA CIRF (50%). All remaining participants feel very knowledgeable and comfortable with CIRF (10.7%), PE (17.9%) and ED (17.9%). A minority felt not very knowledgeable or comfortable with CIRF (10.7%) and ED (7.1%). All participants have at least somewhat knowledge of PE. The only category that participants responded as having no knowledge about was AYA CIRF (3.6%).

A large majority of participants (67.9%) use existing AYA cancer resource materials provided to support their practice on campus, specifically regarding breast, testicular and skin cancer resources being the most commonly used. Each campus has a different strategy to share these resources which includes using them in year round health promotion campaigns, displays at health fairs, on-campus residence education programs, in health center waiting and exam rooms, and during STI testing or physical examinations for men. Resources are also shared by posting links of relevant websites on social media and on the campus' Health Services website. Some other specific resources used by these participants include "Check your Package" (Toronto Public Health), "Breast Self-Exam" (Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation), "Questions and Answers about Testicular Cancer" and "The Ball's in Your Court – testicular self-exam" (Canadian Cancer Society), and HPV vaccination promotion.

All participating campuses report that they actively address cancer awareness in their AYA population using health promotion strategies. The most popular health promotion strategies used are resource distribution (82.1%), health fairs (76.9%), and one-to-one patient education (76.9%). None of the individuals report holding Lunch and Learns or forums with guest speakers, but a few of them hold health promotion events (19.2%). Every school has at least one participant that currently uses these cancer resources. However, they are not necessarily used by all staff even if they are of similar professions working at the same organizations. For instance, out of 3 nurses who participated from one of the colleges, only 2 use AYA cancer materials in their practice.

The survey also depicted that, with the exception of one university which currently does not have an outreach team, all other participants indicated interest in wanting further support or resources for their AYA cancer awareness efforts. This was specifically requested for electronic resource files (85.7%), fact sheets (78.6%), print materials (67.9%) and an AYA cancer website listing (64.3%). There is also interest in wanting support towards webinar training (53.6%) and guest speakers (35.7%) for AYA cancers.

Lastly, participants were asked to state at the end of the survey on how AYA cancer awareness or education could be enhanced on their respective campuses. One individual suggested having outreach material that was relatable and tailored for the specific demographic (i.e. students) while another expressed interest in hosting and coordinating an event on campus for a team to come in and do outreach activities. Lastly, one campus noted that since they do not have a health center to provide direct healthcare, their focus is instead on several individually run service areas.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Many participants are comfortable in their current knowledge of AYA cancers. Many participants also use relevant resources, but there is room for improvement and also openness from participants towards accepting help to achieve this.

The survey clearly shows that while 32.1% of participants do not currently use AYA cancer resources, all but one out of the 28 participants expressed interest in getting support towards their AYA awareness efforts. While about 30% of all participants reported to have less than adequate knowledge in each of the areas of prevention education, early detection and AYA cancers, incidence and risk factors, everyone seemed to think additional support would be beneficial.

Providing resources or professional development opportunities across all professions in these universities may help to increase consistency in practices and increase awareness of AYA cancers within campus and across different organizations. Also, providing some measured additional supports or materials will help to bolster existing activities to ensure students are better informed. This will be instrumental in increasing the rate of early detection, and finding improvement in the outcomes for young adults diagnosed with cancer.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

Thank you to Brock University staff for facilitating the distribution of the survey to post-secondary schools across Ontario and the Canadian Cancer Society for collecting the data and summarizing the results. The sample AYA cancer awareness resource files received from Team Shan, CCS, Testicular Cancer Canada and were also appreciated.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **POST SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES SURVEY**

#### **Welcome**

On behalf of the Canadian Task Force on Adolescent and Young Adults (AYA) with Cancer and the Ontario Region Action Partnerships (RAP), we appreciate you completing this brief online survey. The survey will help us understand your current knowledge of AYA cancers and awareness of existing AYA cancer resource materials available to student health services staff and your practice needs regarding AYA cancer awareness for students on campuses across Ontario.

Campus health services' leaders and staff have been asked to complete this survey because there is an opportunity to impact the student population with vital health information and help to increase early detection and improve outcomes for young adults diagnosed with cancer. This can be done through general awareness activities, but also through healthcare professional intervention.

To help us understand your, your colleagues and/or staff's awareness and practice needs, please take a few minutes of your time to complete this brief survey. Please also share this invitation with the other staff in your department.

This survey is anonymous and findings will be compiled and shared over the summer and shared with participants in the hope of being able to address the identified needs in the fall or winter of 2013/14. Thank you for your time in informing this important work. If you have any questions about the survey or would like more information, please contact Lorna Larsen at teamshan@gmail.com or 519-421-3666.

#### **1. Please specify which University or College Student Health Services you work for.**

#### **2. My role within campus health services is:**

- My role within campus health services is: Manager
- Health Educator
- Physician
- Nurse
- Counsellor

Other (please specify)

#### **3. Please rate your current knowledge and comfort level regarding adolescent and young adult cancers (AYA) across the following areas:**

	Very	Adequate	Somewhat	Not Very	Not At All
AYA cancers, incidence and risk factors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prevention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

education

Early detection

**4. Do you currently use any specific AYA cancer resource materials (e.g., breast, skin and testicular cancer example files attached) currently available to support your practice on campus?**

Do you currently use any specific AYA cancer resource materials (e.g., breast, skin and testicular cancer example files attached) currently available to support your practice on campus? Yes

No

If yes, please specify which materials you have used and how you use them.

**5. What health promotion strategies do you or your organization currently use to address cancer awareness in the AYA population on your campus? Please check all that apply.**

What health promotion strategies do you or your organization currently use to address cancer awareness in the AYA population on your campus? Please check all that apply. One-to-one Patient Education

Health Fairs

Resource Distribution

Lunch and Learns

Guest Speakers

Events

Other (please specify)

**6. Would further support or resources would you be interested in to support your AYA cancer awareness efforts on campus? Please check as many as you would like.**

Would further support or resources would you be interested in to support your AYA cancer awareness efforts on campus? Please check as many as you would like. AYA Webinar Training

Guest Speaker

Fact Sheets

Print Materials on AYA Cancers

Electronic Resource Files on AYA Cancers

AYA Cancers Website Listing

Not interested

Other (please specify)

**7. Please provide any further comments on how AYA cancer awareness or education could be enhanced on your campus.**

