

## *Saskatchewan to Launch New Medical Oncology Residency Program*

**Regina, SK** – Medical residents interested in cancer care will have the opportunity to train at home for the first time in Saskatchewan’s history. The USask College of Medicine is launching a new residency program in Medical Oncology, in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (SCA), and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health.

The two-year medical oncologist residency program will welcome its first resident in July 2023.

Residents will have the opportunity to work and train with medical oncologists and other specialists involved in cancer care and palliative care, as well as other health care professionals in the management of cancer care and treatment.

“Supporting this program is part of our priority to ensure Saskatchewan residents receive the highest quality care,” Health Minister Paul Merriman said. “This program means more of our undergraduate medical students can stay in Saskatchewan for post-graduate training, increasing the likelihood that they remain in Saskatchewan as licensed, practicing specialists.

Medical oncologists are involved in the diagnosis, assessment, management, and survivorship care of cancer in all stages. Unlike surgical and radiation oncologists who perform surgery or use radiation to treat cancer, medical oncologists use systemic therapy or medication involving chemotherapy, targeted therapy, immunotherapy, hormone therapy, and other treatments.

“Medical oncologists play an integral role in cancer care,” said Deb Bulych, Interim President and CEO, Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. “Extensive collaborative work has created this program in Saskatchewan. We are excited about the prospects and potential this program will offer qualified residents for the SCA and cancer patients across the province.”

As work continues to develop and meet the qualifications set out by the Royal College Physicians and Surgeons of Canada to launch the program, it is expected that internal medicine residents who successfully have completed three years of residency will be eligible and ready for the program training starting in July 2023.

“The recently approved oncology residency program is a much-needed and very welcome addition to the residency programs delivered by postgraduate medical education for the province of Saskatchewan,” said Dr. Anurag Saxena, associate dean of Postgraduate Medical Education at the USask College of Medicine. “We look forward to our continued collaboration with the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency as we begin to train oncology residents in our province for our province.”

The Government of Saskatchewan provided the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency with its largest budget ever at \$219.8 million this year, to improve treatments, services and resources for cancer patients.

The funding includes \$389,000 increase for a medical oncologist to support the establishment of a new medical oncology residency program in partnership with the College of Medicine.

The program will be open to all qualified internal medicine residents from across Canada.

### **About the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency**

The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency is a provincial healthcare organization with a legislated mandate to provide cancer control for the province of Saskatchewan. The Cancer Agency operates prevention and early detection programs, conducts innovative research and provides safe, patient and family-centred care at two cancer centres in Regina and Saskatoon (Allan Blair Cancer Centre and Saskatoon Cancer Centre) and in rural communities in partnership with hospitals through the Community Oncology Program. The Cancer Agency operates two patient lodges in Regina and Saskatoon to provide a home away from home for rural patients who need to travel for treatment. Our more than 900 employees are passionate about their work in the fight against cancer.

### **About the USask College of Medicine**

The College of Medicine is a leader in improving the health and well-being of the people of Saskatchewan and the world.

As a socially accountable organization, we improve health through innovative and interdisciplinary research and education, leadership, community engagement, and the development of culturally competent, skilled clinicians and scientists. Collaborative and mutually beneficial partnerships with Indigenous peoples and communities are central to our mission.

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For more information, contact:

Cory Kolt  
Saskatchewan Cancer Agency  
Regina  
Phone: 306-450.6302  
[Cory.Kolt@saskcancer.ca](mailto:Cory.Kolt@saskcancer.ca)

Kate Blau  
USask College of Medicine  
Saskatoon  
306-370-2383  
[kate.blau@usask.ca](mailto:kate.blau@usask.ca)