Canadian Cancer Trials Group

Groupe canadien des essais sur le cancer

Solving Cancer Together

2022-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Who is CCTG?

The Canadian Cancer Trials Group (CCTG) is an academic cooperative oncology group that designs and conducts clinical trials testing cancer therapy, supportive care and prevention interventions across Canada. The Group is a collaborative network of researchers, physicians, scientists, statisticians and patients internationally recognized for finding the treatments that give people with cancer longer, better quality lives.

2,100

Investigators in national network

4,400

National trial staff

85+

Hospitals & cancer centres

20,000+

Members in global network

600+

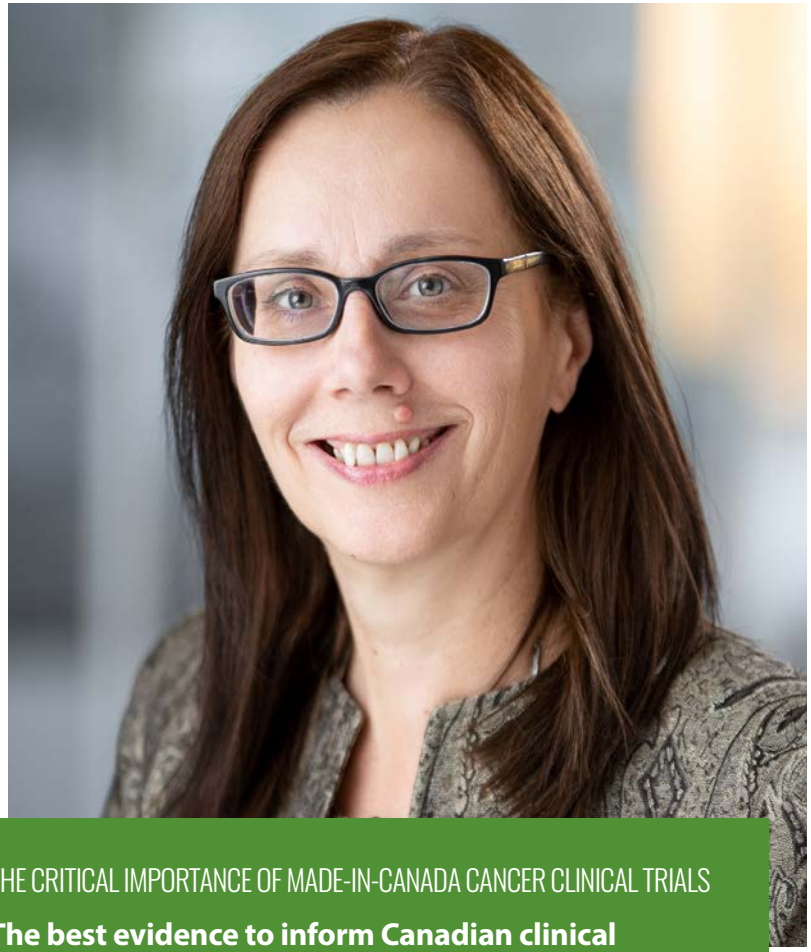
Phase I-III trials

100,000

Patients enrolled

40

Countries



THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF MADE-IN-CANADA CANCER CLINICAL TRIALS

The best evidence to inform Canadian clinical practice and policy comes from clinical trials organized around questions raised by the Canadian research community and answered through trials designed and executed in Canada. Engaging the international community ensures rapid completion and broad application of results but internationally led trials do not take into account the specifics of the Canadian healthcare system.

A Message from the Director

Everyone has been touched by cancer either through their own journey or supporting a loved one. Despite better treatments and outcomes, the physical, emotional, and economic burden on patients, their families, and caregivers is likely to increase due to an aging population.

The environment in which trials are conducted become more complex. Our new Strategic Plan: Solving Cancer Together was developed during a formal and inclusive strategic planning process to develop the scientific priorities and required supporting activities that would lead the Group through to 2027.

We captured feedback from our research leaders, investigators, patients, research staff and stakeholders and used it to ensure we address the opportunities ahead.

Our Group's new scientific priorities: Understand Cancer Biology, Reduce the Cancer Burden, and Improve Cancer Care with their associated objectives and activities will lead to new advances in innovative therapies, understanding resistance, reduce the burdens of cancer, and show the value of these innovations.

Equity, diversity, and inclusivity are core values of the Plan which articulates a vision for a future where a cancer diagnosis is no longer a burden on Canadians, and where the results of CCTG trials will identify cancer treatments that are effective, accessible, and affordable for all.

The result of this planning process is an ambitious scientific agenda — #SolvingCancerTogether.

Janet Dancey, MD, FRCPC
Director, Canadian Cancer Trials Group

Mission

To develop and conduct clinical trials of interventions that improve cancer outcomes.

Vision

Cancer diagnosis is no longer a burden on Canadians, and cancer treatments are effective, accessible, and affordable for all of us.

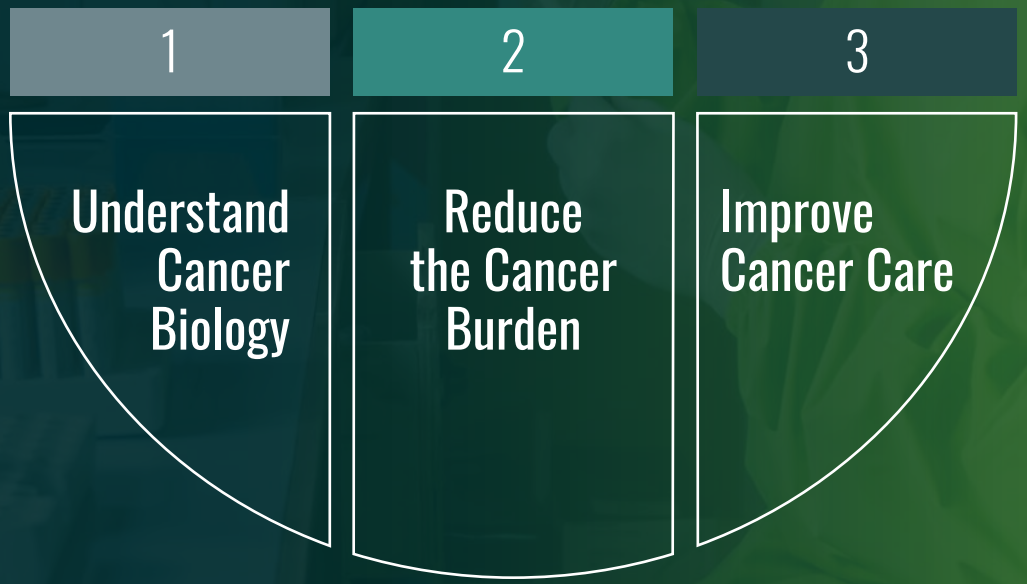
Values

- Excellence
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Inclusivity

01

Solving Cancer Together

Strategic Priorities



PRIORITY 1

Understand Cancer Biology

USE THIS KNOWLEDGE TO IMPROVE CANCER THERAPIES & OUTCOMES

Expanding our understanding of the biology of cancer will improve therapies and outcomes for patients. The Group will increase participation in precision medicine and rare cancer trials, developing innovative trial designs to test new strategies for patients.

This strategic priority will centre on trials of novel agents, cell therapy and preoperative treatments while increasing sample collection, characterization, and cross-trial analyses. Also, activities will focus on expanding the utilization of specimens and data from our trials to inform new studies by researchers.

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES
Identify and overcome therapeutic resistance	Trials of novel agents, cell therapy and preoperative treatment
Perform broad and deep characterization of patient samples	Increased sample collection, characterization, and cross-trial analyses
Use efficient trial designs for precision medicine and rare cancers	Increased number and participation in precision medicine and rare cancer trials
Expand awareness and utilization of specimens and data	Increased use of data and biospecimens by researchers

"The molecular language of tumours contains critical information about how they formed, how they are changing and how they are responding to therapy. Advances in technology make it possible to unlock this information by measuring changes in DNA, RNA and proteins and relating those changes to the behaviour of the tumour. Recognizing that tumour cells are not static and tracking how they evolve underlies today's precision medicine approaches. As we learn to "listen" to the tumour and respond to the molecular cues it can help determine the best treatment for every patient."

— Dr. Harriet Feilotter, PhD, FCCMG
CCTG Senior Scientist, Director, Ontario Molecular Pathology Research Network
Queen's University Professor, Pathology & Molecular Medicine

THE CHALLENGE OF PRECISION MEDICINE

Precision medicine approaches have led to the development and adoption of better tests to tailor treatments for patients. This includes precisely delivered surgery, radiotherapy as well as targeted tumour and immune system drug therapies.

Clinical trials answering questions about the utility and the added clinical value of these tests and treatments will ensure appropriate adoption and access for patients.

PRIORITY 2

Reduce the Burden of Cancer

AND ITS TREATMENT FOR PATIENTS & CAREGIVERS

Recognizing that the patient is at the centre of research is important for clinical trials. The cancer experience presents many physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges that should be assessed and potentially improved. CCTG has prioritized the inclusion of patient perspectives when addressing the impact of cancer treatments and are focused on developing trials that investigate a range of patient outcomes.

Through this strategic priority, CCTG will develop a portfolio of trials and trial-related activities that will emphasize the assessment and reduction of the burden of treatment on patients and incorporate the patient perspective.

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES
Evaluate interventions that reduce treatment toxicity	Trials of treatment de-escalation and supportive care strategies
Reduce barriers to participation and address patient expectations	Broad eligibility, decentralized trial activities, participant communication
Use innovation to capture patient experience	E-consent, ePROs, patient apps evaluated and used in trials
Ensure broad patient engagement through outreach	Engagement of historically under-represented groups in trials

"The patient voice helps ensure patient oriented endpoints and questions accompany the scientific questions in our cancer clinical trials. Thus, patient engagement in research helps to enable patient centred care and better trial participation through ensuring endpoints that matter to patients are included."

— Judy Needham
Chair CCTG Patient Representative Committee

Engaging patients in all aspects of clinical trial development and conduct ensures that the most important questions are addressed in the most effective way. CCTG Patient Representatives incorporate patient perspectives on priorities, objectives, activities and outcomes ensuring that CCTG trials and research has the greatest impact on people with cancer in Canada and around the world.

PRIORITY 3
Improve Cancer Care

BY DEMONSTRATING VALUE

CCTG has an established record of incorporating economic evaluations into clinical trials. The Committee on Economic Analysis continues to be the only formal economic committee nested within a cooperative clinical trials group worldwide.

Through this strategic priority the Group will demonstrate the value of cancer treatments by assessing utility of new technologies and existing treatments as well as engaging policy communities to define health technology assessment (HTA) criteria for cancer precision medicine diagnostics.

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES
Assess value of new health technologies	Trial design based on value criteria and cost analyses
Improve the value of existing therapies	Trials evaluate best value among standards of care
Contribute methods to assess value	Improve and use new methods of cost analysis
Engage health policy communities to improve HTAs	Refine and use new HTA criteria in trials

The increasing burden of costs associated with cancer interventions, borne by patients and society, is becoming untenable. The CCTG Committee on Economic Analysis strives to establish the value of new cancer technologies in parallel with traditional results of clinical benefit and toxicity. The aim of value-based research is to improve health outcomes and the patient experience for all Canadians with cancer."

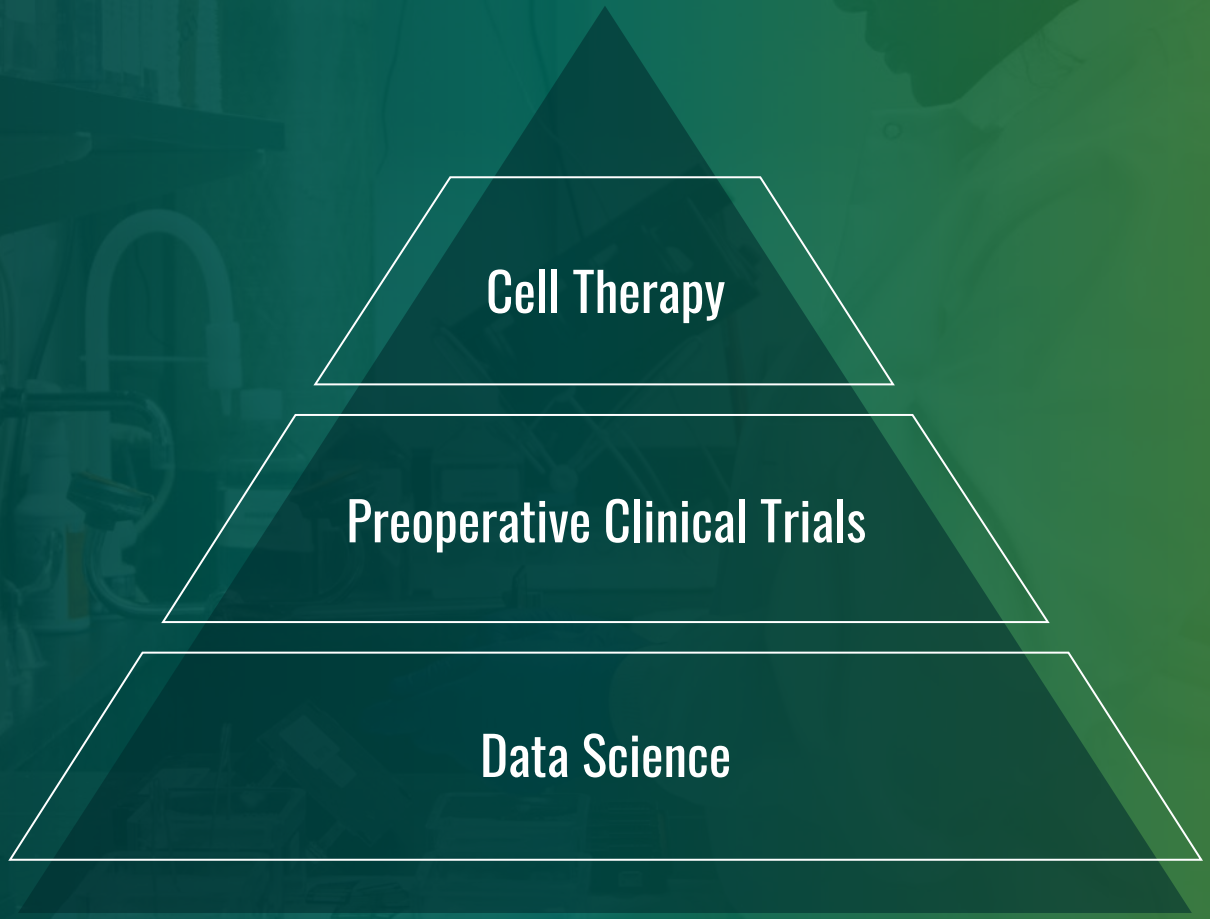
— Dr. Matthew Cheung, MD, FRCPC
Co-Chair of the Committee on Economic Analysis
Hematologist, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

Cancer is an expensive illness and unsustainable at the rate healthcare costs are rising. The finacial burden of cancer care in Canada will continue to increase due to our aging population. As affordability is scrutinized, there is a growing recognition that high cost care does not necessarily translate into high quality care or improved outcomes. Clinical trials should acess the value of new treatments to provide data for health policy planning.

02

Solving Cancer Together

Research Platforms



Cell Therapy

CCTG will continue advancing the evaluation of cellular and biological therapies in clinical trials. A key component of Group's strategy to advance cell and biological therapies is its leadership and support of ExCELLirate Canada. The new national platform aims to develop, manufacture and test innovative cell therapy products not currently available to Canadians. CCTG will lead and contribute to the clinical testing of these products and leverage ExCELLirate partners' expertise to expand the adoption of CAR-T therapies.

ExCELLirate Canada is establishing regional hubs of expertise for the development and testing of cell therapies. The hubs will decentralize and de-commercialize the manufacture and testing of CAR-T therapies to improve access for Canadians with cancer.

CCTG will:

- Support the innovations in manufacturing of cell therapies and processes to improve efficiency and standards across institutions through ExCELLirate Canada
- Test innovative cell and biological therapies of next generation multicentre clinical trials
- Lead and contribute to an economic framework that will inform health policy decisions and enable broad collaboration to accelerate adoption of these therapies

"ExCELLirate Canada brings together the best of Canada's cell therapy research community, from discovery to manufacturing to testing to policy implementation. The Canadian Cancer Trials Group's leadership in multi-centre clinical trials, infrastructure to support strong correlative studies, and expertise in health economics, complements that of partner organizations in this comprehensive translational research platform."

— Dr. Annette Hay
Project Lead, CCTG Senior Investigator & Associate Professor, Queen's University

Preoperative Clinical Trials

CCTG will create a platform to facilitate clinical trials focusing on preoperative therapies. Offering patients treatment options prior to surgery may lead to understanding cancer treatment resistance, tailoring of treatment and better outcomes for patients.

The platform will have multidisciplinary expertise, support collection and analysis of specimens to understand treatment sensitivity and resistance. It will also encourage and enable supportive management to improve clinical outcomes and quality of life of patients.

CCTG will:

- Focus on trials that are within CCTG expertise (multicentre, multi-drug trials)
- Engage surgeons and surgical leadership in trial designs
- Develop guidelines on pre-op trial design
- Engage patient advocates, as well as pathology and radiology champions
- Establish a biomarker platform to assess pathological response and relevant molecular markers

Data Science

Data Science is an emerging interdisciplinary field focused on extracting knowledge from large complex data sets. The acquisition and analysis of clinical trial data is expanding to include biological data derived from sample analysis, electronic health records or mobile technologies.

The Platform will expand capacity in the following three areas: data science (infrastructure and analysis), digital technologies, and real-world evidence. It will improve data collection, aggregation and analysis to inform trial outcomes and provide data to the broader research community.

CCTG will focus on:

- Accelerating correlative science to understand why certain therapies work
- Automating RECIST/iRECIST segmentation
- Enabling seamless data sharing (including correlative data) and efficient cross-trial analysis
- Enhancing CCTG visibility, collaboration, research, publications and grants
- Providing robust and realistic economic evaluation through real-world evidence
- Accelerating patient enrollment and representation, alleviating administrative burdens for sites and patients, and increasing patient engagement
- Improving the management and execution of trials

03

Solving Cancer Together

Enabling Strategies

- Network Engagement
- Trial Capabilities & Platforms
- Communication & Knowledge Transfer
- Sustainable Funding

Network Engagement

The CCTG network of investigators, trial staff, and patient participants at cancer centres, hospitals and research institutions across Canada are vital to the Group's success.

OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS

Network engagement activities will strengthen leadership, governance, research collaborations, and patient engagement. Emphasis will be placed on increased access to career development and educational opportunities for members.

CCTG will focus on:

- Network oversight
- Educated and trained leaders and members
- Research collaborations
- Patients as partners

Trial Capabilities & Platforms

CCTG trial capabilities and platforms will be enhanced to meet the needs of the network to ensure scientifically sound, ethical, compliant conduct of trials.

OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS

Focus on trial capabilities and platforms will ensure timely, effective development and conduct of trials. Through optimizing data management, specimen collection, tracking, and processing with the development of systems, technologies and processes we will meet the needs of the network.

CCTG will:

- Optimize the clinical trial delivery platform
- Expand correlative science capacity
- Enhance IT security & platform development

Communication & Knowledge Transfer

Engagement, communication, and knowledge translation are essential to the success of the network and to demonstrating the impact of CCTG trials. The Group will work with members and stakeholders to improve communications across the network, incorporate the patient voice in trial promotion and address barriers to accrual.

OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS

CCTG will develop an integrated approach to communications marketing, education, and knowledge translation that will meet the needs of CCTG's leaders and network members while promoting the knowledge of CCTG activities and its impact to the broader community. CCTG will:

- Improve communication across & within committees
- Improve knowledge of CCTG activities & impact
- Establish an education/training program for new CCTG leaders, investigators, leaders and members

Sustainable Funding

The funding for CCTG trials and infrastructure comes from three sources: program grants, project grants, and support from pharmaceutical companies. CCTG's financial sustainability is strengthened through strategic, scientific, operational and finance planning.

OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS

The continuation and expansion of suitable funding is necessary to enable long-term scientific planning and the continuation of CCTG's research initiatives. CCTG will:

- Renew and maintain current funding while identifying new grant opportunities
- Support current initiatives while seeking opportunities with cancer charities and participate in public philanthropy
- Increase development of grant applications and annual reporting

In 1979, a CCS strategic review led to the creation of a national clinical trials cooperative group that is now CCTG. For over forty years CCS's core funding has enabled CCTG's significant growth and global impact. Grant funds provide critical stable infrastructure supporting the network's capabilities to conduct important trials that have changed clinical practice and improved patient outcomes in Canada and around the world.

"The Canadian Cancer Society is proud to be a founder and key supporter of the Canadian Cancer Trials Group. Since 1980, CCTG has enrolled more than 100,000 patients in more than 600 clinical trials that have led to new drugs and diagnostic tests, and have improved upon models and standards of care. These life-saving new approaches are the result of ongoing investments in clinical trials. We have our donors to thank for helping bring more personalized and effective care to people facing cancer."

— Stuart Edmonds, DPhil
Executive Vice-President, Mission, Research & Advocacy
Canadian Cancer Society

The Canadian Cancer Trials Group is proud to be a national program of the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS). CCTG is the only non-American partner of the US National Clinical Trials Network and collaborates with research cooperative groups around the world. The CCTG Operations and Statistical Centre, based at Queen's University, is recognized as a Canada Foundation for Innovation Major Sciences Initiative facility.

@CDNCancerTrials @CanadianCancerTrialsGroup

www.ctg.queensu.ca

Queen's University

NCI National Clinical Trials Network
a National Cancer Institute program

Canadian Cancer Society / Société canadienne du cancer