



Presented by  
**Starlight**

# THANK YOU FOR CARRYING THE FIRE FOR A WORLD FREE FROM THE FEAR OF CANCER.

2025 Journey Impact Report







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# "You have cancer."

These are three of the scariest words you, or someone you love, can hear. Unfortunately, two in five Canadians will hear them in their lifetime.

That is why your support of Princess Margaret Cancer Centre – a global leader in cancer research and treatment – matters more than ever.

Because when we all Carry The Fire, we can create a world free from the fear of cancer.

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADER

### Here's how your support ignites hope.

Your support of The Princess Margaret Journey to Conquer Cancer presented by Starlight Investment helped The Princess Margaret's most pressing funding needs across cancer research, care, and education:

- You ignited discoveries in early detection with the goal of preventing cancer from taking hold.
- You accelerated the development of innovative, tailored therapies that are paving the way for bold, new horizons in precision medicine.
- You understood that caring for someone with cancer is not just about looking after their physical health – addressing their emotional and mental wellbeing, as well as that of their loved ones, is also vitally important.

You did this by empowering the team at The Princess Margaret to find new and better ways to care for people.

By enabling our researchers to accelerate discovery and launch more clinical trials.

By instilling our patients and their loved ones with hope when it mattered most.

You became part of a community of philanthropic champions who Carry The Fire for all cancer patients, so they not only survive but thrive.

Decades of research progress and clinical innovation, bolstered by philanthropic funding, have deepened our understanding of cancer and uncovered effective ways to tackle it.

This is the pivotal moment.

Thanks to your support, we can now imagine a world free from the fear of cancer.

With great gratitude,



**Dr. Miyo Yamashita**  
President & CEO  
The Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation





# JOURNEY'S IMPACT: \$1.75 MILLION RAISED IN 2025

In 2025, almost 2,500 participants, over 300 teams, over 150 volunteers, plus donors and sponsors rallied together to contribute \$1.75 million towards life-saving cancer research, bringing the Journey to Conquer Cancer's grand fundraising total to \$17 million since its inception. Together, we Carry The Fire for a world free from the fear of cancer.

The funds raised were directed to the Cancer Centre's highest priority needs across a variety of areas of cancer research and care. By focusing on the highest priorities, we can make the largest impact exactly where it is needed most. With the generous support of our donors, we're advancing early detection methods, innovative treatments, and comprehensive support to improve outcomes for cancer patients here in Canada and around the world.

## Early Detection

The Princess Margaret is at the forefront of developing new diagnostic approaches so cancer can be detected as early as possible. This results in better outcomes for cancer patients and may eliminate the need for invasive treatments altogether.

## Innovative Treatments

The Princess Margaret leads the way in pioneering new cancer treatments. Our world-renowned research has translated into new, kinder and more effective treatments. With an emphasis on the unique needs of the individual cancer patient, we are developing treatments with the potential to replace traditional chemotherapy, easing the physical, as well as the mental and emotional, challenges associated with cancer care.

## Comprehensive Support

The Princess Margaret is committed to improving the cancer experience for patients by developing new compassionate models of care in one of the most research-intensive ecosystems anywhere, benefiting cancer patients, survivors, their families, and caregivers everywhere.





# HERE'S HOW YOUR PHILANTHROPY IGNITED HOPE LAST YEAR.



## EARLY CANCER DETECTION AND INTERCEPTION

In patients with metastatic cancer, individual tumours can have different sensitivities to cancer therapies. **To better predict how they will respond, Caryn Geady and Drs. Benjamin Haibe-Kains and David Shultz have introduced a new computational method that analyzes tumour biomarkers from medical images. The model showed a 4.5-fold increase in predictive capability,** highlighting its potential to guide selective targeting of treatment-resistant cells alongside systemic therapy.

[READ MORE: Using AI to Predict Tumour Response](#)

Dr. Gelareh Zadeh and her team have validated a computational tool that analyzes changes in DNA methylation, a modification in DNA commonly used for diagnosing the onset of other cancers, to predict a patient’s risk of their lung cancer spreading to the brain. **The discovery offers a new approach to intervening early to prevent brain metastases, which account for the majority of brain tumours.**

[READ MORE: UHN Study Validates New Tool to Predict Risk of Lung Cancer Spread to the Brain](#)

**In another breakthrough, Drs. Kathy Han and Scott Bratman have validated human papillomavirus circulating tumour DNA as a marker to identify patients with a high chance that their cervical cancer will relapse.**

“The ability to identify those at high risk of relapse at such early stages opens the door for more personalized treatment plans with more aggressive interventions when necessary. This could significantly improve the outcomes for individuals with virus-related cancers,” says Dr. Han.

[READ MORE: It’s in Your Blood | UHN Research](#)

**A new blood test can catch head and neck cancer relapse up to 15 months earlier than traditional scans and exams.** The test, which works by looking for tiny traces of cancer DNA in the blood shed by cancer cells, was developed by Adela, a biotech company founded on a cell-free DNA technology invented at UHN, based on a breakthrough by The Princess Margaret’s Drs. Daniel De Carvalho and Scott Bratman.

[READ MORE: Early Detection of Cancer Relapse | UHN Research](#)

**Dr. Trevor Pugh has made significant strides in detecting minimal residual disease in multiple myeloma** using whole-genome sequencing to measure cell-free DNA in the blood via liquid biopsy.

## INNOVATIVE THERAPIES

### How advancements in theranostics saved a young mother’s life.

“I have an incurable, neuroendocrine cancer resulting from a genetic mutation I inherited from my father. It’s called pheochromocytoma. After it metastasized, I was referred to Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. Because there were no longer any standard treatment options available to me, my endocrinologist, Dr. Shereen Ezzat, introduced me to Dr. Rebecca Wong, who immediately enrolled me in a clinical trial for Peptide Receptor Radionuclide Therapy. PRRT is a molecular targeted therapy, also known as theranostics. It delivers high-dose radiation directly to the tumour, while minimizing harm to surrounding tissue.

It worked.

In the process, we discovered that my sisters and my daughter also carry the gene and now they are rigorously monitored.

I know the cancer will come back. But I also know that when it does, there is a treatment option that works – and I’ll be there for my family. By being part of this clinical trial, I not only saved myself, I am saving others.”

Her experience with cancer inspired D’Arcy to become a psychotherapist for people with chronic illnesses. And thanks to the care she received at Princess Margaret, and the participants and their donors who helped fund the clinical trial, she also just became a mother for the third time.

### Theranostics = Therapy + Diagnostics

The PRRT clinical trial was supported by participants and is part of a bold effort to push the boundaries of cancer treatment, which is being bolstered by the creation of the Silber Family Theranostics Centre. The theranostics team uses a single molecular probe with radioisotopes to first identify and image a tumour before delivering cancer-killing radiation therapy directly to it.

**Recently, The Princess Margaret played a key role in making PLUVICTO, a new theranostic medicine for advanced metastatic prostate cancer, accessible to all Canadians.**

Theranostics offers personalized and effective treatment options, and hope, to patients with advanced prostate and neuroendocrine cancers.



**In blood cancer advances, Dr. Tak Mak has narrowed the search for promising T cell receptors capable of targeting and killing multiple myeloma cells.** Dr. Rodger Tiedemann is using the knowledge he's gaining about the role of multiple myeloma B cells and progenitor cells in clinical myeloma to develop and test therapies to target those cells more precisely. Meanwhile, Dr. Keith Stewart is making steady progress on developing a first-in-human oral therapy that shows promise in blocking multiple myeloma.

**Thanks to an early trial led by Dr. Karen Yee, a new drug is showing promise in treating a challenging form of leukemia.** Treatment-resistant acute myeloid leukemia (AML) is an aggressive cancer where immature white blood cells, called myeloblasts, multiply uncontrollably and disrupt the production of healthy blood cells. Currently, there is no standard treatment. The new drug is part of a drug development pipeline at Treadwell Therapeutics, which was launched in 2019 based on research at The Princess Margaret.

[READ MORE: Testing a Treatment for Leukemia | UHN Research](#)

**In a world first, Drs. Layla Pires and Brian Wilson, working with Brazilian collaborators at Universidade de São Paulo, are using short pulses of laser light to treat pigmented melanoma, the most prevalent eye malignancy in adults.** Thanks to its highly localized effect, the novel treatment prevented damage to the surrounding eye tissue while eradicating tumours in preclinical models.

[READ MORE: Treating Eye Tumours with Light | UHN Research](#)

Drs. Joseph Walton and Laurie Ailles have discovered that a protein called PMRT1 is a potential target for treating clear cell renal carcinoma. **Because this cancer is highly resistant to radiation and chemotherapy, their finding may pave the way for treatments for the most common and most fatal type of kidney cancer.**

[READ MORE: Identifying Targets in Kidney Cancer | UHN Research](#)

Using a gene-editing tool called CRISPR, Dr. Linda Pen and her team identified a potential new target: a protein called Topoisomerase 1. This could help treat cancers driven by MYC, a protein that is dysregulated in most cancers. **They discovered that inhibiting this protein reduced tumour growth in MYC-driven breast cancer.**

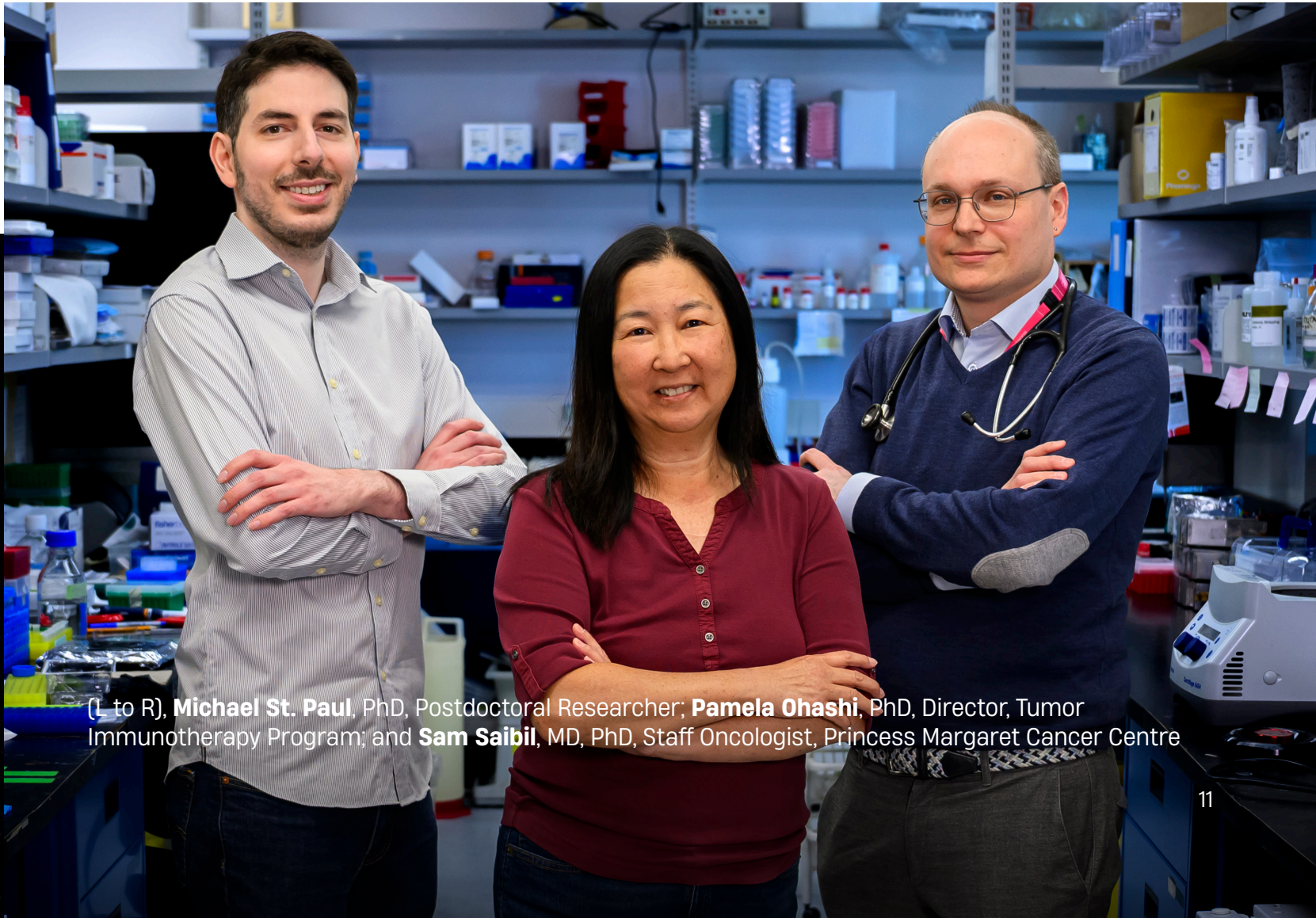
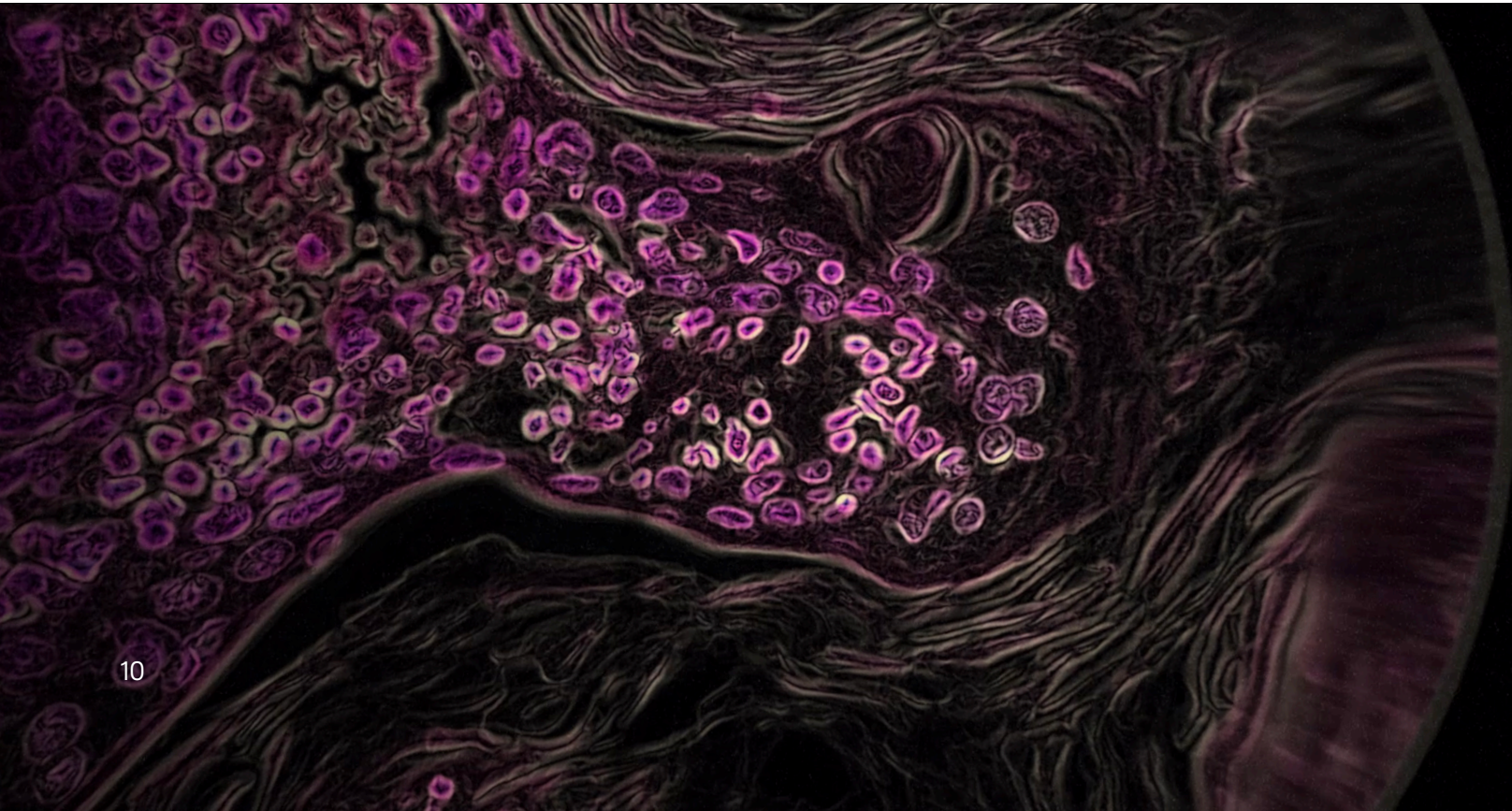
[READ MORE: Targeting a Cancer Driver | UHN Research](#)

**Dr. David Kirsch has discovered that adding an innovative immunotherapy treatment, called pembrolizumab, to standard radiation and surgery improves cancer-free survival by 15%.** It offers new hope to patients with high-risk, soft tissue sarcomas – a rare cancer with few treatment options.

[READ MORE: Breakthrough in Sarcoma Treatment | UHN Research](#)

**Drs. Michael St. Paul, Sam Sabil, and Pamela Ohashi have discovered a promising way to boost the effectiveness of immunotherapy cancer treatments.** By activating a certain molecule in cytotoxic T cells, a type of white blood cell capable of eliminating cancer cells, they triggered a sustained metabolic shift that improved immune function. This discovery could pave the way for more durable and targeted cancer immunotherapies by tapping into the body's own cellular stress response.

[READ MORE: Boosting Immunotherapy Efficiency | UHN Research](#)



(L to R), **Michael St. Paul**, PhD, Postdoctoral Researcher; **Pamela Ohashi**, PhD, Director, Tumor Immunotherapy Program; and **Sam Sabil**, MD, PhD, Staff Oncologist, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre



COMPREHENSIVE CARE

CALM is going national.

Patients living with advanced disease often experience worsening symptoms of depression, demoralization, and fear of death. The Princess Margaret's Managing Cancer and Living Meaningfully program (CALM), designed by Drs. Gary Rodin and Sarah Hales with support from participants and their donors, proactively addresses their psychological, social, and cultural needs—giving them the space and time to reflect on what they are going through, communicate their distress, and think about their goals and values when making treatment decisions. Launched and now operating across The Princess Margaret, CALM National has expanded to six cancer centres located in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, and Nova Scotia.



**It's empowering to have options available, like CALM, to take control of my experience. When negative thoughts creep in, I rely on CALM and the strategies that shift my mindset. Then, I can focus on what truly matters: my family."**

– Anna, ovarian cancer patient at The Princess Margaret



How mental health services helped Munira face her cancers with courage.

A highly respected HR practitioner, Munira was at the top of her game when symptoms including fatigue and a reduced appetite led to her needing an emergency blood transfusion. Suddenly, she was faced with a devastating diagnosis: stage 3 multiple myeloma, an incurable blood cancer. But the worst was yet to come. One week later, she was diagnosed with a second cancer, stage 4 non-Hodgkin lymphoma, an aggressive form of cancer that attacks the lymph tissue.

"I went through all the stages of grief... sadness, depression, anger... I never imagined this would be my life," recalled Munira. And so, she began a journey of chemotherapy, medication, and stem-cell transplants. Nothing could have prepared her for what came next. Three years after her initial diagnoses, and while still going through treatment, she was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer.

That third diagnosis is what pushed her to seek help from Dr. Mary Elliott, a psychiatrist at the Psychosocial Oncology Clinic at The Princess Margaret. "I felt that I needed a space where I could speak to somebody and gain perspective,"

said Munira. The clinic provides practical and psychological care for patients and their loved ones to help them cope with their illness and treatment. "Having someone who understands cancer – it's exactly what I needed," said Munira.

Today, Munira's lymphoma and breast cancer are in remission, and she takes an immunotherapy medicine to keep the myeloma at bay. Now she's able to be a source of support for others, offering advice and resources to other cancer patients, and encouraging them to look for hope wherever they can.



**Hope is everything to me. I don't think you can have hope without gratitude. I'm immensely grateful for Princess Margaret supporters.. Because of them, I know I get the best possible care."**





# Providing a home away from home.

As Canada’s premier cancer centre, The Princess Margaret delivers life-saving care to patients from across the country. For patients travelling from out of town to receive treatment, the Princess Margaret Lodge offers “a home away from home.”

Following four years of renovations, supported by our participants and their donors, the newly transformed Lodge opened in April 2024 with expanded space and upgraded amenities designed to foster a sense of connection, healing, and community among patients. Many come to the Lodge alone but find support and companionship with others going through a similar experience.



**Ensuring people feel supported throughout their entire journey is our top priority. Thanks to our participants and their donors, the enhanced Lodge eases the burden of finding comfortable and affordable accommodations that they might otherwise not be able to access.”**

– Dr. Miyo Yamashita



# OUR NEW RALLY CRY IS CARRY THE FIRE.

Carry The Fire is about bringing light to something that can often feel dark and difficult to face. Our goal is to unite Canadians in a collective effort to push the boundaries of cancer research, treatment, and care. It reflects the relentless resolve and optimism that drive our team every day.

In Carrying The Fire, The Princess Margaret community is committed to realizing a bold vision:  
**To light the way to a world free from the fear of cancer.**

## WHO YOU SUPPORT



**#1**  
specialized oncology  
hospital in Canada

**TOP 10**  
in the world  
(Newsweek)

Only cancer centre  
in Canada to treat  
all **200+** cancers

Collaborations with  
**500** institutions  
across **107** countries



**91,000+**  
patients

**19,883**  
new patients  
in 2024

**20%**  
participate in  
clinical trials

**600,000+** patient  
visits across **14**  
disease site groups

## THE PRINCESS MARGARET IS HOME TO 4,000 TALENTED PROFESSIONALS

### PERFORMING

**5,050**  
surgeries  
(80% referred  
from other  
hospitals because  
of their complexity)

**54,188**  
systemic therapy  
and malignant  
hematology day  
unit visits

**508**  
stem cell transplants  
  
**88,894**  
radiation visits

### ...AND TEACHING

**185**  
residents and fellows

**435**  
health professional students

These breakthroughs and advances – and the hope they offer people with cancer – are a testament to both The Princess Margaret's leadership in cancer innovation and the impact of your generosity. Thank you.



The Princess Margaret  
Cancer Foundation  UHN



THE PRINCESS MARGARET  
**JOURNEY**  
TO CONQUER CANCER®

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