

**PRESS RELEASE**

## **GOC AND SCC PARTNERING WITH CPAC TO PROVIDE UPDATED GUIDELINES FOR PATIENTS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR HPV**

**MARCH 23, 2021**

**Ottawa, Ontario** - The Society of Gynecologic Oncology of Canada (GOC) and The Society of Canadian Colposcopists (SCC) are partnering to develop clinical practice guidelines with support from the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (the Partnership). These will outline evidence-based recommendations for triaging patients who test positive for Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and for referring patients with the highest risk of cervical cancer precursors to colposcopy. The guidelines for primary care practitioners, gynecologists, and gynecologic oncologists in Canada will be available by March 2022.

In Canada, every year, there are more than 1,300 women newly diagnosed with cervical cancer and there are up to 400 deaths annually. HPV infections are responsible for virtually all cervical cancers and the pre-cancerous cervical changes that can lead to cancer. Pap tests are routinely done to screen for pre-cancerous cervical lesions. Approximately four million Pap tests are done every year in Canada, and approximately 325,000 will have abnormal results. The new guidelines will detail the next steps in the care of patients who have a positive HPV test and promote the best possible care while ensuring efficient use of health care resources.

The guidelines for managing abnormal Pap test results were originally developed in 2012 by SCC in collaboration with the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada (SOGC) and GOC through their formal Policy and Practice Guidelines Committee. An update to the guidelines is required to account for the planned switch to HPV testing as the primary cervical screening method and the introduction of patient-collected samples.

The Partnership is leading work to eliminate cervical cancer in Canada through the development and implementation of the [Action Plan for the Elimination of Cervical Cancer in Canada, 2020-2030](#), a key priority of the [Canadian Strategy for Cancer Control](#). Two key activities of the Action Plan are:

- Replacing the Pap test with the HPV test as the primary screening method, including the use of patient-collected samples; and
- Implementing standardized follow-up care pathways for abnormal screening results (positive HPV tests).

"The coming switch from PAP to HPV screening means we need new pathways for patients with a positive screen. These guidelines are crucial to the successful implementation of Canada's action plan to eliminate cervical cancer. The Partnership is working with partners to implement the action plan's key priorities, which include the shift to primary HPV screening in cervical cancer screening programs and ensuring all people receive appropriate follow-up when abnormalities are identified," said Dr. Craig Earle, Vice President, Cancer Control, Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. We welcome this partnership with GOC and SCC which will ensure that up-to-date clinical guidance is in place and help achieve the goal of eliminating cervical cancer in Canada by 2040."

GOC and SCC will collaborate with the Partnership to develop clinical guidelines that will specify how to manage patients from the point at which they test positive for HPV, this will include colposcopic management and appropriate follow-up after treatment for cervical abnormality.

**For more information:**

**Carine Trazo, National Manager**

**The Society of Gynecologic Oncology of Canada**

**Email: [enquiry@gyneoncology.ca](mailto:enquiry@gyneoncology.ca)**

**Tel: (888) 496-3662 ext. 700**

**Website: [www.gyneoncology.ca](http://www.gyneoncology.ca)**