MESSAGE FROM

Adrienne Co-Dyre
Member, 2025 PIP Working Committee

Hi everyone, my name is Adrienne Co-Dyre and I am a person with lived experience of cancer. I refer to myself as a 'momcologist' who suddenly entered the cancer world in 2013 when my then four-year old daughter was diagnosed with High Risk Pre-B Cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. She had two relapses resulting in her participation in a Phase III clinical trial and a stem cell transplant. With my daughter now 9 years in remission, I have redirected my cancer efforts to support the patient advocacy group, Helena's Hope, and as Advocate Co-Chair of the new national organization, ACCESS: Advancing Childhood Cancer Equity, Science and Survivorship.

Like many other cancer advocates, my advocacy journey started organically. Helena's Hope began as a conversation between me and another cancer mom on a cabin porch at cancer camp. Through Helena's Hope I was introduced to other advocates and organisations, who eventually referred me to the CCRA PIP program, that I had the fortune to attend in Ottawa in 2019. It was at that conference that I found my passion, and my footing, as a patient partner and advocate. I attended CCRC in 2023 and have the pleasure of returning this year as a member of the organizing committee of the PIP program and of the conference itself.

The Patient Involvement in Cancer Research Program — or PIP — began in 2016. It was inspired by longtime childhood cancer advocate Patrick Sullivan, who had seen similar programs in the United States. Patrick urged the Canadian Cancer Research Alliance to create something similar here, and he saw the biannual Canadian Cancer Research Conference as the perfect place to integrate patient engagement. Thanks to his efforts, PIP became a reality.

Since then, PIP has created space for patients to be true partners in research. One of the most meaningful parts of the program has been giving patient partners the opportunity to co-chair conference sessions alongside researchers. I've had the privilege of co-chairing several sessions myself, and it's always been a highlight.

This model benefits everyone. For patients, it's a chance to play a visible role in shaping research conversations. For researchers, it's an opportunity to connect with patient partners, hear their perspectives, and be reminded that the ultimate goal of cancer research is to benefit patients. Together, we're helping make research more understandable and relatable.

The impact has been clear. Since 2017, post-conference feedback has shown growing awareness of the value of patient engagement and an increased interest in bringing patients into research conversations. Each year, this momentum continues to build.

At its heart, PIP is about building capacity. It equips patient partners with knowledge and confidence to engage in cancer research. At the same time, it gives the scientific community opportunities to learn from and work directly with patients. This exchange of perspectives enriches both sides.
We're very grateful to the organizations that support PIP every year and support the conference. You make PIP possible, and you help grow this incredible group of enthusiastic patient partners.
PIP is proof that when patients and researchers come together, we all move forward.