

A Fountain of Knowledge Flows from a \$1 Million Gift

Boundless opportunities to improve lung cancer care

A longtime supporter of the BC Cancer Foundation, Eleni Skalbania knew she wanted to make a significant gift that would have a lasting impact on cancer care across B.C.

Lung cancer has lacked a strong voice and philanthropic support over the years, and Eleni's commitment to the cause truly provided a breath of fresh air to research initiatives with promise to improve treatment delivery and learn new ways to prevent and detect this deadly disease.

Eleni, owner of Vancouver's Wedgewood Hotel & Spa, gifted \$1 million to the BC Cancer Foundation to support research into the deadliest cancer, which has long been underfunded—lung cancer.

"I knew there was a significant need as lung cancer impacts so many people in every community, and that a gift supporting lung cancer research could really spark new knowledge and benefit patients for years to come," says Eleni.

Her gift is laying the groundwork to help transform lung cancer care in our province as it has established an endowment fund for research and the Eleni Skalbania Lung Cancer Outcomes Unit, which tracks patient data and informs new ways to provide treatment.

The Outcomes Unit is already at work within the first year as BC Cancer Agency clinicians have found compelling data around the evolving use and benefits of new chemotherapy treatments. Their research shows that over a 10-year period the number of patients receiving chemotherapy for lung cancer has doubled and so has the number of patients who receive a second line of chemotherapy



Eleni Skalbania, owner of Wedgewood Hotel & Spa, with daughter Elpie, gave \$1 million to support lung cancer research.

in their treatment regimen. Over this same period there have been gains in survival for patients with advanced disease. This research proves that second and third line treatments have a worthwhile effect.

"It's heartwarming to know that I am able to contribute to cancer research that has a real impact on patients being treated today and tomorrow," says Eleni.

Housing patient data on treatment history, side effects to current therapies, and responses to treatment, the Outcomes Unit opens up new opportunities to evaluate current clinical decision making. As trends are identified, clinicians can shift and refine treatment decisions.

Dr. Cheryl Ho, medical oncologist at the BC Cancer Agency, treats lung cancer patients and has already tapped into the Outcomes Unit to help improve their understanding of the disease. "We've identified a changing trend in our patients' smoking history, with a significant increase in patients over the past six years who are never or former smokers being diagnosed with lung cancer," says Dr. Ho.

The Outcomes Unit contains data from patients across British Columbia, making it a unique and powerful tool. There is no other province in Canada or state in the U.S. with the capability to collect, review and analyze data from their entire population. ●

DONATE

Give Today

If you'd like to support cancer research and help improve survival rates for those diagnosed with the deadliest types of cancer, contact the BC Cancer Foundation at **604-877-6040** for more information.

