

Thinking of a child being
diagnosed with
CANCER
is heartbreaking.

Last year at CHEO,
110 children and youth heard
that terrible news.

This number continues to rise each year, meaning that CHEO is not only caring for more oncology patients but also seeing an increasing demand for services to surround each family with support as they face an incredibly difficult time.

In 2024 CHEO's Oncology Department recorded a total of **5,986 visits**. While the numbers are scary, they do not weaken the determination of CHEO staff and medical staff to help – they know they can because you have chosen to make this your work too.

Your unwavering support has made a real difference in the lives of these young patients and their families.

Every breakthrough in research, every life-changing program, and every success story at CHEO is made possible by donors like you.



Easton, age 3
B Cell Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia

We are proud to share some of the accomplishments in advancing cancer care at CHEO — each one made possible by your incredible support. Because of you, CHEO can continue to transform the lives of young cancer patients today and help shape the future of pediatric cancer care, both in our region and beyond.



This special space offers a much-needed break, a chance to step away from the medical environment, and feel supported. It's a space for parents to rest, reflect, and recharge — so they can continue to be there for their child, no matter the challenges ahead.”

– Dr. Lindy Samson, Chief of Staff

A SPACE FOR FAMILIES TO RECHARGE

Thanks to donor support, the 4 North Family Room has officially re-opened its doors, marking a significant milestone for families who had been anticipating this moment for nearly four years. This beautiful new space is a warm and inviting room for families who spend time at CHEO with their children during oncology treatments.

The room offers a bistro table, comfortable seating and loungers where families and caregivers can relax. It also includes charging stations, a large fridge for snacks and meals, a microwave, toaster, kettle and complimentary coffee. A wall-mounted screen provides useful information for families. The 4 North Family Room is made possible by donors who are making CHEO as comfortable as possible for oncology families.

RESEARCH IS IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR PATIENTS WITH ACUTE LYMPHOBLASTIC LEUKEMIA

In the past year, it was found that Blinatumomab therapy greatly improves outcomes for patients with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL) and is now the standard treatment for most of these patients. ALL is the most common cancer in children, making up 25 percent of all childhood cancer cases. Over the years, cure rates for ALL in children and adolescents have improved, but some patients will experience a relapse of the disease, and when that occurs their disease is harder to cure and requires intense treatment. Bone marrow transplants and CAR T-cell therapy are examples of treatments given for relapsed ALL, these can be costly and they have significant side effects. New studies have tested Blinatumomab, a type of immunotherapy that targets a protein called CD19, found on most B-ALL cells. The research shows that this treatment can prevent two-thirds of relapses in oncology patients. Studies of this kind are possible thanks to the support of generous donors. Donations are crucial to supporting the labs that advance innovative oncology research at CHEO.

Your generosity has had a profound impact not only on newly diagnosed children but also on the 500 oncology patients currently receiving treatment at CHEO. Just last year, the Medical Day Unit, where patients receive outpatient cancer care, saw more than 10,000 visits.



MEET CHARLIE:

DONORS LIKE YOU HELPED SAVE HER LIFE

Charlie is a vibrant 16-year-old with remarkable strength. This resilient teenager is a talented artist, a mathematics wizard and she's always ready with a witty joke. Charlie is also a cancer survivor, having won her battle with stage 2 ovarian cancer this past year.

CHEO became Charlie's second home as she endured three challenging rounds of chemotherapy, each requiring her to be hospitalized for five days. During the off weeks, she attended outpatient chemotherapy appointments, then spent the following week at home resting. Despite facing immense adversity, Charlie approached her chemotherapy treatment like a true champion, maintaining a positive attitude throughout. Today, Charlie is thriving. With the world at her feet, she's focused on finishing high school and pursuing her dream of becoming an architect.

CENTRALIZED CARE AT CHEO

In January 2024, donor dollars helped CHEO to launch a new clinic for children with neurofibromatosis (NF1), the first of its kind in Canada. This clinic makes it easier for families by turning what used to be a series of separate appointments into just one visit. NF1 is a rare genetic condition that causes benign tumours to grow under the skin and can also affect bones, hormones, and other parts of the body. It affects 1 in 3,000 births, and half of those diagnosed also have learning disabilities. In the past, families had to travel long distances to specialized clinics in Toronto and Montreal and make additional trips to CHEO. These clinics offered specialized care but didn't have all the needed specialists in one place. Dr. Nirav Thacker, a pediatric oncologist at CHEO, thought that having a dedicated clinic at CHEO with all the necessary specialists in one location would greatly improve the experience for families. CHEO physicians from departments like pediatrics, oncology, neurology, genetics, plastic surgery, ophthalmology, and radiology now work together to provide a better and more integrated care experience for these patients.

FAMILIES STRUGGLING UNDER THE WEIGHT OF EXTRA EXPENSES

A cancer diagnosis affects the whole family, bringing not only emotional hardship but also unexpected financial burdens. The need for one or more family members to cut back or stop working can make things even more difficult. These added costs create enormous stress for families already facing an incredibly challenging situation. Your generous donations help provide financial assistance to families in need, covering essential expenses like transportation, parking passes, meal vouchers, grocery gift cards, essentials like toiletries, snacks and clothing, and coverage or reimbursement for medical expenses related to medications, travel and accommodations. These financial resources help ease the burden on families, making it easier for them to be with their children while managing other commitments. Donor funded financial assistance removes key barriers to attending medical appointments, accessing necessary medical care, and obtaining essentials for maintaining a healthy life.

Donor support can make a meaningful impact on oncology patients by funding research into early detection, offering financial support to families, advancing more precise treatments, and improving the delivery of cancer care.