Winter 2022 Newsletter

Prostate Cancer Supportive Care

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Seasons Greetings!

Winter arrived abruptly this year, and the holiday season is now upon us. We want to take this opportunity to reflect on 2022 and give thanks and appreciation to all members of the PCSC team who are dedicated to our mission to help patients and families affected by prostate cancer.

In 2022 we had a record number of registrants to the PCSC Program. This is partly due to our virtual platform for education and clinic sessions that enables patient participation from any location in British Columbia. Our education sessions are available wherever there is internet access.

The PCSC Program also has an active research team who has presented numerous posters at international meetings and published several academic papers in 2022. We are proud to announce that our Master's student, Bibianna Kemerer, won an award for her presentation on using mindfulness and cognitive behavioural therapy in the PCSC Clinic. For more details on Bibi's honour, please see page 7.

On September 13th, 2022, the PCSC Program held our first fundraiser event. It was an intimate dinner attended by 55 individuals at the Vancouver Club to raise funds for the program. We are grateful for the donors who contributed just shy of $75,000 toward our $150,000 annual goal. Since the PCSC Program is funded primarily by philanthropic donations, we could not provide our programs free of cost to our

patients without their generosity. As we close out 2022, please consider helping us reach our goal by donating to the PCSC Program. For more details on how to donate, please go to page 7.

In this newsletter, you will find great tips to enhance your holidays, from maintaining healthy eating and getting fit for the New Year to managing your worries during the holiday season.

In the New Year, we will revamp our PCSC webpage: www.pcscprogram.ca. If you have any suggestions to make our webpage more user-friendly, please let us know your thoughts via email at pcsc@vch.ca.

Finally, please note that the PCSC Program will be closed during the holidays from December 26th, 2022-January 2nd, 2023. We will re-open on Tuesday, January 3rd, 2023. We wish you and your family a safe and wonderful holiday season and all the best in 2023!

Tia Higano MD, FACP
PCSC Program Medical Director
Monita Sundar, MA
PCSC Provincial Program Manager

CHRISTINE'S AND MEGHAN'S WORDS OF WISDOM (WOW) MOMENT

At the PCSC Sexual Health Clinic, the focus is often on penile sexual dysfunction. However, when we work with many of the heterosexual couples in our clinic, there is more to consider when it comes to sexual intimacy. That is why for this quarter's newsletter, we have decided to shift the focus onto vaginal pain or discomfort.

You may have heard terms like "vaginal dryness" or "vaginal tightness" and wondered what they mean. These terms are both synonymous with what is known as **vaginal atrophy**. But why does this occur? Similarly, to how testosterone can affect erectile function, estrogen plays a significant role in vaginal sexual function. As women age and become menopausal (this means any time closely before, during, or after menopause), their estrogen levels drop. Lowered estrogen leads to thinning of the vaginal lining, which makes the vagina less elastic. Also, when aroused, the vagina produces less of that slippery lubrication that typically prepares the vagina for penetration. This can lead to pain with any form of vaginal penetration.

If this is a concern for you or your partner, here are several things you can try:

- **Do not push through the pain.** The association between pain and intercourse may affect sexual desire. The body may also become tight before sex, including muscles at the vaginal opening (also known as **vaginismus**), as the body is expecting pain. Instead, talk to each other about the pain and the changes you are experiencing because of menopause. Explore solutions together; There may be other types of sexual activities you are both open to that do not cause pain, such as massaging, gentle caressing, or oral sex.
- **Allow yourself time to become fully aroused.** Menopause can increase the time it takes for your body to become fully aroused and prepared for sex. You may also consider trying a vibrator around the labia and clitoris. This can increase arousal or enhance outercourse.
- **Try incorporating lubricant**. You can apply it around the clitoris and vaginal opening. Prior to penetration, apply some lubricant over the head of the penis.
- **Consider using a vaginal moisturizer** 3 times a week, or every other day before bed. Note that the vaginal moisturizer may leak if you are sitting or standing upright. Effects are typically seen within 4-6 weeks of regular use and continued use is required to maintain effects.
- **Vaginal dilators** can also be an option. Dilators are used to slowly stretch the vaginal tissue and help with vaginal muscle relaxation. Dilators come in several sizes and are made of plastic or silicone. You need to use a lubricant with your dilator.
- **Skincare** for the face is all the rage these days, but have you thought about skincare for your vulva? The vulva is the outer part of the female genitals and includes the opening of the vagina, the outer lips, inner lips, and clitoris. Proper vulvar skin care can help with day-to-day comfort and prevention of irritation. Following the BC Centre for Vulvar Health guidelines: Rinse the skin with water once per day and pat dry with a soft towel and use a moisturizer on the vulvar skin daily after cleansing.
- Last, but not least, getting in touch with a **pelvic floor physiotherapist** can be helpful in terms of investigating other sources of sexual pain and working on pelvic floor exercises. Performing pelvic floor exercises can allow you to recognize the difference in feeling between tense and relaxed vaginal muscles.

For more information on lubricants, vaginal moisturizers, or dilators, you can reach out to us! We have some written information that you can take home. For more information on vulvar skin health, we recommend visiting the BC Centre for Vulvar Health website and checking out their patient handouts.

If you are interested in booking an appointment with the PCSC Sexual Health Clinic, please contact us at 604-875-4495, or pcsc@vch.ca.

Christine Zarowski, RN
Sexual Health Clinician

Meghan Lui, RN
Sexual Health Clinician

EXERCISE: HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?

The period of time after diagnosis can be a time filled with medical appointments, new information to absorb, and decision making - while facing the impact that prostate cancer and cancer treatments will have on you and your family. It's a difficult time, and exercise may not seem like a top priority as you navigate these early days.

There is, however, significant evidence that exercise is an important part of treatment for men with prostate cancer. Regular exercise has been shown to reduce the side effects of treatments, such as ADT. It helps in the management of the profound fatigue that many men experience. There is also strong evidence that exercise helps to reduce feelings of anxiety and loss of quality of life for men with prostate cancer (Cormie 2017; Gorzelitz 2022; Kang 2021; Nadler 2019).

In addition, there is early evidence that exercise may contribute to slowed tumour growth by increasing the production of substances in the blood that discourage prostate cancer cells from growing. It is thought that exercise results in increased blood supply within tumours that may enhance the effect of chemotherapy. Exercise also appears to play a role in supporting the body's immune response to cancer cells (Kim 2021; Rundquist 2013; Courneya 2022).

Since exercise is known to reduce side effects and potentially slow cancer growth, it makes sense to begin an exercise program as soon as possible. This is the focus of Module 3 of the PCSC Program, which provides support to men through individualized exercise education and prescription. Our exercise physiologists will meet with you individually to develop a plan that takes into consideration your treatment, side effects, current activity level/lifestyle, and importantly, your likes and dislikes.We then follow you through the next 12 months to assist you in maintaining a regular exercise program that works for you.

If it isn't possible for you to start a structured exercise program immediately, there are still things you can do to get started on increasing your activity levels right away. Even small amounts of physical activity are beneficial.

One simple thing you can do is find ways to replace the amount of time you spend sitting or reclining. Small amounts of physical activity can be interspersed throughout your day and these add up, reducing the risks associated with being sedentary. After a period of inactivity, muscles stop producing many helpful proteins and enzymes that support a healthier metabolism, immune system, and brain function. Reducing time spent being sedentary with light activity results in healthier, active muscles.

When you know you are going to be seated for a while, get up and move around every 20 – 30 minutes, even just for a minute or two. It takes only 5 minutes of movement every 2 hours to re-activate muscles. Get up and get a drink of water; or do a few squats or push ups on a wall - these are called movement snacks and they make a big difference! While sitting, extend your knees or lift them up several times. Do some stretching.

Changing the amount of time you are sedentary is a good place to start. From there, consider adding other types of activities that you enjoy. All types of exercise show benefits, for example: aerobic, such as cycling, walking briskly, and playing pickleball. Adding weightlifting to your aerobic exercise was found to provide added benefit in a recent study (Gorzelitz et al 2022). Other beneficial forms of exercise for men with prostate cancer include high-intensity interval training or HIIT (Kang 2021) and even exergaming (Villumsen 2019).

We encourage you to make a plan to start being physically active regularly. We know that men who are physically active or regularly exercising when they start their treatment fare better in the long run than those who are not active (Friedenricht 2016). For this reason, we encourage you to join us in the Exercise Clinic sooner rather than later. We're here to help you get started and support you as you settle into an exercise program that works for you.

If you are interested in booking an appointment with the PCSC Exercise Clinic, please contact us at 604-875-4495, or pcsc@vch.ca.

Joy Egilson, CSEP-CEP, CATA(C)
Clinical Exercise Physiologist

BLADDER CONTROL PROBLEMS WHEN YOU MOVE?

Some people experience stress urinary incontinence after a prostatectomy, where activity and movement can result in urine leakage. Stress urinary incontinence can make it difficult to have confidence in your bladder control and fully enjoy things you want to do in life. For example, going for a walk, dancing at your next celebration, playing tennis, or even simply going from sitting to standing. In addition, the wet sensation and possibly concern that your protective garment might not be enough to keep your clothes dry can be very distressing. But rest assured, pelvic floor physiotherapy can help in different ways! When you participate in physiotherapy for bladder control, your physiotherapist will do everything they can to help you become as dry as you can be. We hope that people can embrace two goals. Goal one is to learn how to use your pelvic floor to prevent leaking with activity and movement. This involves pelvic floor exercises (Kegels) to develop skill and to learn how to integrate a pelvic floor contraction with activity and movement to prevent incontinence. Goal two is to help people engage in every aspect of their lives with full enjoyment and confidence in their bladder management strategies, even if they are leaking! This could mean using disposable or washable absorbent products, clamps, or collection devices. Clamps can be very helpful for people, allowing them to fully engage in what they love to do while freeing them from the worry of bladder control and leaking. This article will share some information on the use of penile clamps.

A penile clamp is applied to the shaft of the penis. The pressure from the closed clamp squeezes the urethra shut so urine cannot pass. The clamp must be removed to empty the bladder. People report feeling pressure, but not pain, while using a clamp. In order to use a clamp safely, the person must:

- Be alert and oriented
- Have normal genital sensation
- Be aware of a sensation telling them their bladder is full and it is time to empty
- Have intact skin along their penis. Sometimes urinary leakage irritates the skin. If the skin is irritated in any way, a clamp cannot be worn.
- Have the physical ability to open and close the clamp
- Never wear a clamp in bed or when sleeping
- Never wear a clamp if they have a penile prosthesis or device implanted within their penis.
- Limit wearing time according to the product instructions

When it is time to empty your bladder, make sure your clothes are out of the way and your penis is directed at the water in the toilet bowl before you undo the clamp! Once the clamp is released there can be an immediate, strong urine stream that you will not be able to stop with a pelvic floor contraction as the urine has already passed beyond where a pelvic floor contraction can stop the flow.

We recommend that people consult a healthcare professional prior to using a clamp and if a clamp is used, to choose the frequency of clamp use wisely. If it is used a lot, the person will not be aware of bladder control improvements, nor will they be able to learn how to manage their incontinence using their pelvic floor muscles.

There are many clamps available on the market. Here are a few that our patients have found helpful:

Pacey Cuff

Uriclak

Cunningham

Dribblestop

Weisner

If you are interested in booking an appointment with the PCSC Pelvic Floor Physiotherapy Clinic, please contact us at 604-875-4495, or pcsc@vch.ca

Marcy Dayan BSR, MHA
Registered Physiotherapist

Anna Hudon-Kaide, BSc, MHScPT
Registered Physiotherapist

COUNSELLING AND WORRY

Life can give us ample opportunities to worry. Even upcoming holidays can feel that there is no end of things to worry about. When we add in a cancer diagnosis or treatment outcomes, it makes sense that we spend time worrying about things in the past, present and the future. I think worry can be helpful at times. The more we understand about worry, the better able we can manage it.

Worry can play an important role to help us process information and to come up with solutions to our problems. In fact, worry can even be linked to our ability to survive as a species allowing us to anticipate and prepare for real or perceived danger. Worrying allows us to think about a variety of possible scenarios and come up with options to address them. Worry also allows us to feel that we are preparing our best for all foreseeable outcomes - it allows us to feel that we are working towards a solution rather than sitting idly and waiting. Worry can also play an important role in helping us feel we have agency and control over things that often feel out of our control.

Worry, it seems then, can be helpful. And I think this is important…

We are, for the most part, reasonable and rational people who are trying to navigate often complex and emotional situations and circumstances that are difficult to manage. In fact, not putting any thought into our problems may seem irresponsible or naive. This is why, in my opinion, it's hard to simply say 'stop worrying so much' or 'just let things go'. Easier said than done because it's hard to let go of something that is helping us.

While worrying may seem like an idle event, it is actually contributing to a series of physiological responses in our body. When you experience worrisome thoughts, your body reacts in a similar way to perceiving a threat.

When we stop worrying, hormone levels should return to normal and things like adrenaline, cortisol, heart rate and blood pressure all return to normal levels. However, when we worry consistently, this "fight-or-flight reaction" stays turned on. The long term activation of this stress response system can lead to health problems including anxiety, depression, digestive problems, headaches, muscle tension and pain, heart disease, heart attack, high blood pressure and stroke, sleep problems, weight gain and memory, and concentration impairment.

In therapy, I often talk to patients about the value of their worry. I think this helps us understand why we might be worrying in the first place. When it comes to health issues, for example, it seems to me that some amount of worry is reasonable – even helpful.

However, at some point worry can become less helpful – even harmful. When our thoughts become difficult to manage and are distressing for us we may be doing more harm than good.

So what do we do?

The first thing is to recognize our thinking. In other words to bring awareness to the worrisome thoughts we are having. This can be difficult if we are not used to trying this but we can often feel the effects of the worrisome thoughts (stomach knots, chest pain, irritability, etc.). Once we get better at recognizing our worrisome thoughts we can validate that the thoughts have come up for a good reason (or a variety of good reasons). We can then ask ourselves "is this the right time for me to worry about this?" and "will I be okay if I let these thoughts go for the time being?" You might decide that in fact now is the right time to worry about this. And that's okay. I suspect however, that these thoughts also come up at times that are less desirable (at 3am while lying in bed for example). It's at these times that we want to ask ourselves if we will be okay to let them go – even if just for a minute or two – confident that we can spend time thinking about them later. If we pause for a minute or two and let go of our distressing thoughts, we give our body a chance to regulate – to find calmness. Our adrenaline lowers, our heart rate slows and our blood pressure lowers. This can be very helpful if we are trying to sleep for example. As we decide that we will be okay to let the thoughts go it becomes easier to make that happen.

For me, it's about recognizing the value that worry can bring for us and giving us the agency to decide when (and if) we want to worry about them at this moment. We need to feel safe to let the thoughts go – even if just for a minute. As a result, we give our bodies and mind a much needed break.

Sometimes, however, our worrisome thoughts can be persistent. If you feel like your thoughts are becoming too distressing and hard to manage you might find it helpful to reach out and ask for help.

If these ideas resonate with you or if worry is something you would like to learn more about – let's talk.

If you are interested in booking an appointment with the PCSC Counselling Clinic, please contact us at 604-875-4495, or pcsc@vch.ca.

Paul Griggs, MC, RCC
Clinical Counsellor

PROTEIN AND THE POWER OF PLANT PROTEINS

It's October 25th as I write this, and for many the holiday season has already started. For some it begins with Canadian Thanksgiving, Diwali, maybe Halloween, American Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, or one of many other festive dates between. You get the idea. During the holidays, from the office, to social gatherings and personal traditions, it seems we encounter endless opportunities to indulge in goodies. Keeping to your healthy lifestyle might seem like an overwhelming feat. Here are a few strategies you can try to honour your best health while living your best life.

Practice mindful eating: The main ideas of mindful eating are to eat slowly and to fully experience food by engaging all your senses. Start by making intentional food choices and savour small bites while chewing thoroughly. Notice the colour, sounds, smells, tastes and texture of the food as you eat. Mindful eating can help you replace "auto-pilot" eating with conscious choices while enhancing enjoyment of food which may help reduce overeating. Eating slowly allows time for your stomach to communicate with your brain, and you are more likely to recognize when you feel satisfied.

Enjoy the right portion for your body: When faced with an abundant amount and variety of choices, take a scan of all the food, then make a plan before filling your plate. Intentionally choose what you love and skip the dishes you can live without. A plate that is about 8- or 9-inches in diameter, filled ½ with vegetables, ¼ with grains and ¼ with protein foods is a good balance for most people.

Drink mainly water: Enjoying sparkling water with a citrus wedge or splash of juice rather than the typical alcoholic fare can save you substantially when it comes to calories. When enjoying holiday beverages such as eggnog, seasonal coffee drinks or alcoholic drinks think small portions and not too often. Keep eating a whole food plant-based diet; plan healthier meals based on whole grains, lots of vegetables and lean protein foods as much as you can. Bring and offer healthy options at parties. Balance out the rich and decadent treats with delicious whole food choices, such as hummus with vegetables or tomato bruschetta on whole grain baguette, rather than standard fare of spinach dip or the sausage and cheese plate.

Be kind to yourself: Healthy eating is not about perfection. Neither one meal, nor one day is a make-or-break event for your health. Sometimes we simply focus on the deliciousness of foods and the company of others. Give yourself permission to enjoy your favourite holiday foods.

Here is a whole food plant focused holiday dish for sharing with something everyone can enjoy. Eating plant based doesn't mean you always need to make everything from scratch. This impromptu platter relies on a few minimally processed products, combined with nuts and fruit, and plenty of colourful vegetables.

DIPS / SPREADS

- Antipasto
- Olive tapenade
- Hummus (homemade or store-bought)
- Tzatziki (homemade or store-bought)

ACCOMPANIMENTS

- Selection of raw vegetables, such as cucumber, radishes, cherry tomato, peppers, broccoli or cauliflower
- Fruit, such as grapes, apple or pear wedges, dried dates or dried apricots
- Olives and other marinated vegetables such as mushrooms or artichoke hearts
- Nuts (walnuts, almonds, pistachios, or mixed nuts)
- Cocktail shrimp
- Falafel balls (homemade or store-bought)
- Whole grain pita or baguette
- Whole rice crackers, such as Mary's, Ryvita or Triscuits

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Choose the desired components from the list above to arrange on nice platter or wooden board.
2. Place the olives and dips in small dishes, add to the platter.
3. Arrange the vegetables and fruits, followed by other accompaniments as desired.
4. Fill in with grilled pita or your choice of crackers.

Andrea Holmes, RD
Registered Dietitian

SUPPORT THE PCSC PROGRAM

We have been grateful for your support over the past nine years, and your generosity has helped us support over 4000 patients to date. We hope you will help us continue our work by making a donation to our program. To donate, please go to https://pcscprogram.ca/pcsc-program/donate/. All donations are tax deductible.

CONFERENCE UPDATE

To increase the awareness of the PCSC Program among family physicians, the PCSC team set up an exhibit booth at the 68th annual St. Paul's continuing medical education (CME) conference. The meeting was held at the Vancouver Convention Centre from November 22nd to November 25th and is the largest CME conference for primary care practitioners in Canada. With over 800 in-person participants, the PCSC staff updated inquiring physicians about the various virtual and in-person services PCSC offers to prostate cancer patients and their partners.

Daniella Sare and Monita Sundar

RESEARCH UPDATE

The PCSC Program's Research team has been busy over the last few months disseminating our research study findings to the academic community! We attended multiple major conferences across the country and the US in efforts to spread the word on our program and the research that we do to improve our services. You can find all of our posters and presentations on our website at: https://pcscprogram.ca/pcsc-program/research/presentations/.

In particular, we'd like to shine a spotlight on Bibiana Kemerer and her Knowledge Translation project, "Use of Knowledge Translation Methodology to Incorporate Research Results into Clinical Practice: Bringing Mindfulness and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy into a local prostate cancer program". She presented her findings at the Sexual Medicine Society of North America's recent annual scientific meeting and was awarded the Sexual Tipping Point award for her bio-psychosocial approach towards treating sexual disorders. Bibi completed this project as part of her Master's program. Congratulations to Bibi and a job well done!

Presented by Dr. Michael A. Perelman, Ph.D. on behalf of the MAP Education & Research Foundation Sexual Tipping Point Award in Mental Health presented at the 23rd Fall Meeting of the Sexual Medicine Society of North America, Miami, October 2022.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Living with prostate cancer is an experience that is fundamentally male (although it affects partners as well). In working with men living with prostate cancer, we have learned that they have a lot of questions regarding their experience. Some of these pertain to grief, depression, relationships, sex, sexuality, masculinity, and other features of their altered lives. There are likely many other questions. We would like to learn about the questions you have regarding your experience of living with prostate cancer. The question you have is probably shared by others. Our goal is to respond to the questions in a book to serve as many men as possible. Therefore, we need your help, and kindly ask you to send your questions to pcsc@vch.ca. Your questions will remain anonymous.

Dr. Larry Goldenberg
Dr. David Kuhl

Cardiovascular and lifestyle risks in prostate cancer patients

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

To identify factors associated with the development of cardiovascular disease in men with prostate cancer.
Radical PC 1 arm: observational data collection of the prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors and major adverse cardiovascular events in men with prostate cancer.
Radical PC 2 arm: whether lifestyle modification and additional cardiovascular care improve physical, cognitive and cardiovascular function in prostate cancer patients.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

Men aged ≥45 diagnosed with prostate cancer that is either:
- new (diagnosed within the past year), or
- treated with androgen deprivation therapy for the first time within the past 6 months, or
- to be treated with androgen deprivation therapy for the first time within one month.

WHAT IS INVOLVED

Eligible patients will be followed in an observational registry, or randomized between either standard treatment or extra care from a cardiologist (including prescriptions for cardiac medications). Research clinic visits at enrollment, 1 year, 2 years, and study closeout. Randomized arm will also have telephone visits at 3, 6, 18, and 36 months after enrollment.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Eugenia Wu, Research Coordinator
Phone: 604.875.4111 ext 62338
Email: ewu@prostatecentre.com

Lend a hand. Help find hope for future generations.

Say yes to research!

vchri.ca/participate

Vancouver CoastalHealth
Research Institute

STUDY TIME/ DURATION

April 2018 to December 2025

STUDY LOCATION

Gordon and Leslie Diamond Health Care Centre
6269-2775 Laurel St, Vancouver

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Dr. Margot Davis
Clinical Assistant Professor, UBC
Research Investigator with VCH Research Institute

To learn more about this study, visit vchri.ca/participate

Version date: October 20, 2021

SIRvivor BC

EXERCISE FOR PROSTATE CANCER

SIRvivor BC is a specialized exercise program for men who have been diagnosed with prostate cancer, in any stage of treatment or recovery. It helps you improve muscle and cardiovascular fitness, meet new people, and learn safe and effective exercises.

Province-Wide Virtual Program
Zoom Video Conference
Jan 9 - Apr 13, 2023 • Mon/Wed 10:30-11:30am
inspiredlifestyles@shaw.ca • 778-281-0694

Dunbar (Vancouver)
Dunbar Community Centre
Jan 11 - Mar 29, 2022 • Wed 4:45-5:45pm
Jan 13 - Mar 31, 2022 • Fri 1:15-2:15pm
ca.apm.activecommunities.com/vancouver
604-222-6060

Creekside (Vancouver)
Creekside Community Centre
Jan 4 - Mar 10, 2022 • Wed/Fri 12-1pm
ca.apm.activecommunities.com/vancouver
604-257-3050

City of Kelowna
Parkinson Recreation Centre
Jan 9 - Mar 30 2022 • Mon/Thur 3-4pm rec.kelowna.ca
250-469-8800

This program is currently being evaluated under a research study with the University of British Columbia. For more information, please contact us. Funding for the program is provided by a philanthropic donation to the Prostate Cancer Supportive Care (PCSC) Program.

Information on research study:

604-827-1914

sirvivor.bc@ubc.ca

cepl.rehab.med.ubc.ca/research-2/sirvivor-bc

PC SC Prostate Cancer Supportive Care

BCRPA BC RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION

UBC

CONTACT

If you are interested in finding out more about anything described in this newsletter, the schedule for upcoming sessions, individual appointments, or if you'd like to suggest other topics to be covered in these newsletter, please contact PCSC Program Coordinator, Jenna Bentley.

Jenna Bentley, BA
PCSC Program Coordinator

604-875-4485

pcsc@vch.ca

Website: www.pcscprogram.ca

Social Media: pcscprogram @PCSC_Program

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We also thank the philanthropists who have provided support to the PCSC Program