

Wellspring Key Program Developments 2023-24

During the 2023-24 fiscal year, Wellspring Cancer Support Foundation (Wellspring) made significant strides in expanding its reach and enhancing its services. This period was marked by a series of initiatives aimed at strengthening its infrastructure, improving accessibility, and broadening support for diverse communities. Below is a summary of the key developments, the reasons behind each initiative, and the learnings derived from these efforts.

- 1. Digital Transformation:** This initiative was critical for setting the stage for future growth by revamping the front-end websites and moving to a unified data management system (Salesforce) across the network.

Key Developments:

- Data Transfer and Process Review: Within the program-space, the last half of the year focused on transferring data, reviewing administrative processes, and training staff and volunteers for the new digital platform's launch.

Learnings/Next Steps:

- Change Management: The project involved significant change management at all levels, including staff, volunteers, program leaders, and members.
- Data Quality: Not all data transferred cleanly from various systems, necessitating some ongoing clean up and reconfiguration to ensure data quality was intact.
- System Improvements: The new system is easier to update and allows for future enhancements. Data captured post-launch is clean and standardized, facilitating better data collection.

- 2. French Expansion:** To ensure that Wellspring is a Canada-wide cancer support organization, able to support French Canadians through various programs and partnerships, we developed a French website.

Key Developments:

- Website Launch: The French website launched in March 2024, with the program portal going live in July 2024.
- Volunteer Training: The first Volunteer Support Training in French was piloted, expanding opportunities for francophone peer support volunteers.

Learnings/Next Steps:

- Expertise: Necessary French-language expertise was secured this past year to ensure high quality programming.
- Website Simplification: Based on available resourcing, the website was simplified to reduce the need for frequent updates, such as excluding a news section.
- A plan is being created to adapt further programming in French, in consultation with francophone partners.

- 3. New Brunswick Expansion:** To expand in-person services within New Brunswick, as part of a larger strategy to expand Wellspring's reach across Canada, through program licensing by Horizon Health New Brunswick.

Key Developments:

- Program Launch: Programs launched in Saint John in November, including Peer Support, Cancer-Related Fatigue, Relaxation and Visualization, and Nourish.

Learnings/Next Steps:

- Quick Implementation: The project progressed quickly due to effective partnerships and dedicated individuals.
- Ongoing Expansion: Efforts continue to expand programs throughout the province and train staff on the digital platform for efficient program registration.

- 4. Update Training Programs:** To review and update training programs to ensure language and concepts are current. Programs are selected for review based on licensing partnerships and when the last review was done.

Key Developments:

- Healing Journey: Completed a review of materials, which had not been done since its creation. Developed new virtual leader training modules for levels 1 through 5 to allow for more training opportunities. The pilot launched in 2023-24 and will conclude in December 2024.
- Peer Support: Updated Wellspring's training program for Peer Support volunteers, which was last reviewed in 2017. Secured new volunteer training contracts with Lung Cancer Canada, London Regional Cancer Centre, and Enliven Muskoka.

Learnings/Next Steps:

- Training Feedback: For Healing Journey, training program leaders on updates required more time than anticipated. However, feedback from the first few training sessions was used to create valuable modifications to materials/training. The pilot for the new Healing Journey training will conclude in 2024 and feedback will be used on the final training program going forward.

5. 2SLGBTIA+ Initiative: To ensure support for individuals of all backgrounds and identities in their cancer journey.

Key Developments:

- Awareness Workshop: Staff participated in a sexual and gender diversity awareness workshop.
- Support Group Development: Conducted research and networking.

Learnings/Next Steps:

- Language Updates: It was necessary to update some of our language based on new learnings.
- Leadership Recruitment: Launching the Lesbian and Queer Cancer Support Group took longer than expected due to recruitment challenges, emphasizing the importance of selecting the right leaders. The new Lesbian and Queer Cancer Support Group is planned to launch in fall 2024.

6. New Program Development: To innovate and expand Wellspring's program offerings.

Key Developments:

- MAiD Bereavement Support Group: Launched to support individuals navigating Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) bereavement.
- Nourish - RxFood Application: Pilot project to assess the value of using an application to integrate knowledge gained from the Nourish program.
- Discussion Forum Development: Conducted background research and program development for a new Wellspring Discussion Forum, set to launch in 2024-25.
 - o Collaborated with the University of Toronto Human Biology program on an Experiential Learning Project to conduct an environment scan and literature review on Discussion Forums for cancer patients.

Learnings/Next Steps:

- Wellspring continues to monitor pilot programs and, based on feedback, will explore whether they become permanent programs.

7. Program Evaluation Review and Enhancement: To gather meaningful feedback and outcome-based measures for program improvement.

Key Developments:

- Evaluation Implementation: Fully implemented the new program evaluations.

Learnings/Next Steps:

- New evaluations have provided more impact-based and actionable feedback. Wellspring continues to monitor potential areas of improvement.

8. Expand Access Locations to Programs: To explore community-based programming and partnerships in order to provide in-person programs in more locations.

Key Developments:

- New Partnership: Launched programming on-site at ELLICSR Health, Wellness and Cancer Survivorship Centre.
- Licensing Agreement: Entered into a licensing agreement with the Ottawa Cancer Foundation to provide the Nourish program in the Ottawa region.

Learnings/Next Steps:

- Limited Program Participation: Wellspring has found that partnerships with strong engagement see a higher program participation rate. This coming year, an analysis will take place along with recommendations on how to move forward.
- Knowledge Expansion: Wellspring continues to learn in this space and are exploring possible cultural adaptations of Nourish in collaboration with Ottawa Cancer Foundation.