

Wellspring Key Program Highlights April 2025 – March 2026

Throughout the 2026 fiscal year, Wellspring Cancer Support Foundation continued to grow and expand our reach and impact for people with living cancer locally and across Canada. Below is a summary of key areas of program development and growth that have allowed us to reach more people with cancer and their families.

1) French Translation Phase 2

Wellspring is reaching more Canadians in Atlantic Canada with the official opening of Bannon House (Wellspring New Brunswick) in January 2026, increasing Wellspring's physical location from nine to ten.

Key Developments:

This new location is helping Wellspring reach more French-speaking Canadians. As New Brunswick is Canada's only bilingual province, program materials must be available in both French and English. This year, Wellspring completed Phase 2 of its French translation project. This included translating all participant slide decks from the Nourish series and the Relaxation and Visualization program leader manual.

Learnings/Next Steps:

Wellspring will continue translating its remaining core programs as part of Phase 3 of this initiative. This work will further increase access to evidence-informed supportive cancer care for French-speaking Canadians.

2) Nourish RxFood

Nourish Rx Food combines access to a nutrition-focused mobile application with a series of small-group discussions led by a registered dietitian. Sessions are centered on the core concepts of Wellspring's Nourish program.

Key Developments:

In winter 2024, funding from Longo's Family Foundation enabled Wellspring to begin development of Nourish: RxFood. The program was initially piloted with two participant groups: individuals living with breast cancer and those living with prostate cancer. Based on findings from the first phase, the program was redesigned from a six-month to a six-week format. The second phase was delivered successfully between January to July 2025 and, following positive results, was incorporated into Wellspring's core programming in March 2026.

Learnings/Next Steps:

The program has provided valuable insight into how technology can enhance and evolve Wellspring's services. These learnings will help inform future opportunities to integrate technology and app-based approaches into program delivery.

3) Inuit Nourish Initiative

Wellspring is participating in a co-design initiative that uses a people-specific, self-determined approach to develop a culturally adapted version of the Nourish program for the Inuit community in Ottawa. The adaptation is being developed through a partnership between Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI), The Ottawa Cancer Foundation and Wellspring. Program development is being guided by both cultural and content experts including Inuit Elders and knowledge holders, members of the Inuit Food Bank team, an Inuit chef, dietitians and Inuit cultural navigators. The adapted program emphasizes both the nutritional and cultural significance of traditional Inuit country foods, while also highlighting accessible, nutritious foods available through local food banks. Food is approached not only as sustenance, but as an important source of healing, identity, and community connection.

Key Developments:

To date, three seasonal workshops (Fall, Winter and Spring) have been delivered at the Tungasuvvingat Inuit Food Bank. A fourth workshop (Summer) will take place June 2026. This past fiscal, 88 individuals have

participated in the program. Evaluation activities are ongoing, with a comprehensive Sharing Day planned for Fall 2026.

Learnings/Next Steps:

Work is also underway to develop a sustainability and scalability plan that will support the continuation and future expansion of the Nourish for the Inuit Community beyond the current project period.

4) Be Well Talks

Wellspring is recognized as a trusted source of support and credible information for people navigating cancer. Through both our centres and Virtual Centre, we provide access to expert-led educational resources, including the Be Well Talk webinar series.

Key Developments:

In fiscal 2026, Wellspring hosted 17 live webinars as part of our Be Well Talk Series. These presentations addressed current topics of interest within the cancer community and complimented Wellspring's existing program offerings. All webinars are recorded and made available for viewing through Wellspring's online resource library, providing on-demand access for individuals who are unable to attend live sessions. Be Well Talks also address important topics that fall outside Wellspring's formal program roster, further extending our value to the cancer community.

This year's presenters included medical oncologists, educators, leadership and health coaches, social workers and case managers. Topics included:

- Fertility through a psychosocial lens
- Navigating Intimacy in Relationships
- Working with Grief
- AYA Mental Health
- Inclusive Care for 2SLGBTQIA+ Communities
- Supporting Young Caregivers
- Managing Boundaries and Information During a Diagnosis
- Self-Compassion

Learnings/Next Steps:

This year Wellspring revised its participant feedback process to collect real-time feedback during webinar sessions. Participants are invited to complete a brief survey by scanning a QR code/clicking a link displayed during the Q&A period. This enhancement has significantly increased response rates and provided more timely insights into participant satisfaction and program impact. Feedback is also helping identify future topics of interest, informing plans to expand the series to more than 40+ webinars this coming year.

5) Fear of Recurrence Therapy (FORT)

Developed by Dr. Sophie Lebel and Dr. Christine Maheu, FORT teaches practical coping strategies such as relaxation techniques and cognitive restructuring. It helps participants increase their tolerance for uncertainty, re-evaluate life priorities, and better manage fears related to cancer recurrence. This cognitive-existential group intervention supports cancer survivors in finding new ways to manage anxiety while identifying meaning and purpose in their experiences.

Key Developments:

Wellspring successfully delivered two overlapping pilot cohorts of the FORT program between September and December 2025. Twenty-five participants were assessed and enrolled in the program, and 20 completed the full series. Upon completion, participants' average fear of cancer recurrence score decreased from 6.5 to 5.7 on a 10-point scale, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in reducing fear of cancer recurrence. Based on these positive outcomes and strong participant demand, Wellspring's Program, Evaluation and Research Committee approved FORT to its program roster.

Learnings/Next Steps:

Nine FORT series are scheduled to run this coming year, including online offerings and the planned launch of in-person groups at Wellspring centres.

6) Young Adult Programming

Young adults (ages 18–39) affected by cancer often face unique challenges that differ significantly from those experienced by older adults. Cancer can disrupt education, careers, relationships, family planning, financial stability, and identity during a critical stage of life. Recognizing these distinct needs, Wellspring continues to expand programming and resources specifically designed for Adolescents and Young Adults (AYA).

Key Developments:

During fiscal 2026, Wellspring expanded its AYA offerings through the introduction of new programs and educational opportunities designed to address the psychosocial needs of younger adults living with cancer. In addition to enhancing peer connection opportunities, Wellspring broadened access to expert-led education through programs and Be Well Talks focused on topics such as fertility, mental health, relationships, and navigating life transitions after a cancer diagnosis. Wellspring also strengthened its profile within the AYA cancer community through participation in healthcare and supportive care conferences focused on improving outcomes for young adults affected by cancer.

Learnings / Next Steps:

Feedback from participants continues to highlight the importance of age-specific support and opportunities to connect with peers who share similar life experiences. As a result, Wellspring will continue to expand and refine its AYA programming, with a focus on increasing accessibility, enhancing peer support opportunities, and addressing emerging topics identified by young adults living with cancer.

7) Body Image Awareness Seminars (BIAS)

Changes in appearance, physical functioning, and self-image are among the most common yet least-discussed impacts of cancer and its treatments. To address this important area of supportive care, Wellspring introduced Body Image Awareness Seminars (BIAS), a new educational initiative designed to help participants better understand and navigate body image concerns associated with cancer.

Key Developments:

In fiscal 2026, Wellspring launched the Body Image Awareness Seminars (BIAS) pilot program. The seminars provide a safe and supportive environment where participants can explore the emotional, psychological, and social impacts of body image changes resulting from cancer and treatment. The program encourages open discussion, self-reflection, and practical coping strategies while helping participants build confidence and self-compassion as they adapt to changes in their bodies and sense of self. The introduction of BIAS addresses an important gap in supportive cancer care and complements Wellspring's broader commitment to whole-person wellness.

Learnings / Next Steps:

Participant feedback has reinforced the need for dedicated programming focused on body image and self-esteem. Based on participant feedback, Wellspring has added BIAS to its program offerings while assessing future opportunities for program growth and expansion.

8) Outreach and Partnerships

Wellspring is committed to helping more people live better with cancer. To support continued growth and amplify our impact, we have focused on strengthening partnerships and building new relationships at both local and national levels.

Key Developments:

In fiscal 2026, Wellspring established new partnerships with organizations that share our commitment to supporting people living with cancer. We also participated in numerous patient, healthcare provider, and community events, helping increase awareness of Wellspring's programs and connect more people with supportive cancer care. Highlights include:

- Launch of a new Lung Cancer Support Group in partnership with Lung Cancer Canada in November 2025, delivered monthly in person at Westerkirk House in Toronto.

- Expansion of Wellspring's Peer Support Volunteer Training program through new partnerships with Lung Cancer Canada and Ovarian Cancer Canada.
- Presentations about Wellspring's programs and services to healthcare teams at Odette Cancer Centre, Markham Stouville Hospital, St. Michael's hospital, and North York General Hospital.
- A presentation by Wellspring's Senior Manager of Financial and Workplace Strategies on "Paying the Price: Addressing Financial Toxicity in Cancer Survivorship" was delivered at the inaugural Breast Cancer Survivorship and Supportive Care International Conference.
- Participation at the Asian Women's Health Fair, the University Health Network Conference AYA Conference, the Canadian Association of Oncology Nurses (CANO) Conference, and the Canadian Association Psychosocial Oncology (CAPO) Conference.
- Delivery of wellness workshops featuring Wellspring programs for residents of the L'Chaim Retirement Home.

Learnings and Next Steps:

Wellspring will continue to explore opportunities to increase awareness of its programs and services among underserved populations. To support this goal, Wellspring will take a national and strategic approach to engaging primary care organizations and provincial cancer agencies across Canada. These efforts will help expand awareness of Wellspring's online programs and services while identifying opportunities for future growth in in-person program delivery.

9) Building Capacity Through Technology

As Wellspring continues to grow nationally, investments in technology and systems are helping improve the participant experience, streamline operations, and create the infrastructure needed to support future growth. Throughout 2025/26, Wellspring continued to enhance its participant management and program delivery systems to better serve individuals and families affected by cancer.

Key Developments:

Several system enhancements were implemented during the year to improve both participant access and administrative efficiency.

- A new household management feature was introduced, allowing family members to be linked within the system and managed through a designated household representative. This enhancement simplifies registration and communication for families accessing multiple Wellspring services and programs.
- Wellspring also introduced calendar integration with registration emails, making it easier for participants to know when their upcoming programs are. These improvements support participant engagement by reducing barriers to access.
- Behind the scenes, numerous enhancements were made to program administration processes, helping staff manage registrations, reporting, communications, and program delivery more efficiently. These improvements reduce administrative burden and allow teams to devote more time to participant support and service delivery.
- In addition, Wellspring launched a pilot of its new Community Forum, an online space designed to foster peer connection, information sharing, and engagement among participants beyond scheduled programs and workshops.

Learnings / Next Steps:

As participant demand and national reach continue to grow, Wellspring remains committed to investing in technology that enhances accessibility, strengthens participant engagement, and improves organizational efficiency.

Building on the Community Forum pilot and recent system enhancements, Wellspring will continue exploring digital solutions that support connection, streamline service delivery, and enable the organization to scale its impact while maintaining a high-quality participant experience.