



**STEERING  
COMMITTEE:**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

September 16, 2003

**Fiona Nelson**  
*Chair*

### **50% of cancers are preventable! What are we waiting for?**

**Anne Birks**  
*Toronto Public Health*

"Cancer is a serious public health threat and a potentially huge drain on provincial coffers if Ontario doesn't act," says Fiona Nelson, Chair of the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition. "Twenty-six thousand Ontarians every year don't have to get cancer. What are we waiting for?"

**Dr. Lynn From**  
*Division of Dermatology,  
Women's College Campus,  
S & WCHSC*

Ms. Nelson will discuss recommendations of the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition at a news conference today, Tuesday, September 16, 2003 at 11:30 a.m. in Meeting Room E, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Councillor's Offices, Toronto City Hall. She is joined by representatives of some of the coalition working groups: Norman Giesbrecht, Senior Scientist, Centre for Addiction & Mental Health, Andrew King, National Coordinator, United Steelworkers of America, National Office, and George Kapelos, Chair, Ryerson University Department of Architectural Science.

**Norman Giesbrecht**  
*Centre for Addiction  
& Mental Health*

**Marlene Greenberg**  
*Toronto-Sunnybrook  
Regional Cancer  
Centre*

Cancer is a looming threat that will overburden our strapped sickness system. Right now, 52,000 new cases of cancer are diagnosed every year in Ontario. By 2020, that number will be 91,000. Half of those cases can be prevented, and the province has already identified prevention as a priority.

**Brian Hyndman**  
*Centre for Health  
Promotion,  
University of Toronto*

"Identifying a priority, however, and acting on it are two different things," Nelson says. "Many cancers are an unavoidable function of aging, but lots are preventable and we should be working now to reduce our future costs – and give people a healthier life."

**Andrew King**  
*United Steelworkers  
of America –  
National Office*

Good diet, avoiding tobacco and regular exercise are habits learned primarily in childhood. "If Ontario is serious about curbing the cancer threat, there is a significant role for schools here," Nelson says.

**Jack Shapiro**  
*Citizen Member*

Cancer education has to be part of the school curriculum if Ontario is going to meet its target of reducing and even eliminating preventable cancers. "It's going to be another Walkerton unless we get cancer prevention as part and parcel of the education funding formula," says Nelson.

**Rich Whate**  
*Toronto  
Environmental  
Alliance*

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