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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: LUNG CANCER CANADA SHINES A SPOT LIGHT ON THE CANCER THAT KILLS MORE NOVA SCOTIANS AT THE FIRST HALIFAX PATIENT SUMMIT AND AWARENESS EVENT**

*On April 26, 2017, at the Delta Halifax, the Nova Scotia lung cancer community is gathering for the first Halifax Regional Hope is Here Patient Summit*

**Halifax NS, April 26, 2017** - Lung cancer is the cancer that takes the lives of more Nova Scotians than any other cancer. In Canada, it has a 17% five-year survival rate which falls well below the five-year survival range for prostate cancer (95%) and breast cancer (87%). Nova Scotians experience an even higher burden as the five-year survival rate for lung cancer is only 14%.

Stigma, lack of awareness and disparities in research funding have constrained progress but advances in lung cancer treatments have given patients a chance at new hope. On Wednesday April 26, 2017 the lung cancer community, including patients and caregivers, are gathering at the Delta Halifax hotel in the first Halifax Regional Hope is Here Patient Summit to celebrate new hope and increase awareness for this disease.

“In recent years, new treatments are changing the way we treat lung cancer”, says Dr. Stephanie Snow, Medical Oncologist at the QEII in Halifax and member of Lung Cancer Canada’s Medical Advisory Committee. “Advances in targeted therapies and immunotherapies have given patients a chance at treatments with higher response rates and fewer side effects than chemotherapy.”

Targeted therapies are treatments that “target” specific aspects of the cancer cell such as genes or proteins called biomarkers. Currently treatments are available for two biomarkers: EGFR and ALK. Although these only represent a small proportion of lung cancer patients, (3 - 5 % for EGFR; and 2 -3 % for ALK), research is underway on many other targetable genes.

Immunotherapies are a new class of treatments which stimulate a person’s own immune system to target and attack cancer cells.

However, some of these new treatments are oral medications which means that lung cancer patients in Nova Scotia are disadvantaged compared to other provinces as take home cancer medications are not covered the same way as in-hospital treatments.

“For us patients, access to care and treatments is key,” says Archie Stewart, who lost both his mother and brother to lung cancer and was diagnosed with lung cancer in 1995. “When I was first diagnosed I received care very quickly. Now my cancer has returned and although there are no treatments available, I still have hope for the possibilities that new research will bring. As one of my doctors said, ‘what was terminal 7 years ago may not be terminal today’. So, as of today, I’m living my life like I have no expiry date stamped on my forehead.”



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Fighting the lung cancer battle involves a team of dedicated researchers, clinicians, patients and their families. It needs increased awareness, voices and communities to rise up in support for research, and care. "I am in the 17% of people diagnosed with terminal cancer that survive in excess of 5 years. I'm working on 8 years now and hope to break the record. I often think of the other 83%. I know the fight they bravely fought, mostly in silence, including my mother and my 52 year old brother", says Archie Stewart. "Today's options are innovations in treatment but won't meet everyone's needs." adds Dr. Snow. "We need to work together to discover new treatments and help patients gain access to them so that survivorship can improve and families can stay together longer."

#### ABOUT LUNG CANCER CANADA

Lung Cancer Canada is Canada's only national charity solely focused on lung cancer. Lung Cancer Canada serves as Canada's leading resource for lung cancer education, patient support and advocacy. Lung Cancer Canada's mission is fourfold: 1) to increase public awareness of lung cancer, 2) to support and advocate for lung cancer patients and their families, 3) to provide educational resources to patients, family members, healthcare professionals and the general public and 4) to raise funds in support of promising research opportunities.

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