

Dr. Christine Brezden-Masley (left)
with patient and colorectal cancer
survivor Kate Walker



Our thanks

At Sinai Health, we are proud to care for patients with some of the most complex and rare cancers — and equally proud of the research and training programs that are advancing the future of care. What sets our cancer program apart is its breadth and depth, and the team of incredibly talented and compassionate doctors, nurses and allied health professionals it comprises. From surgical expertise that draws referrals from across Canada, to research that is changing practice worldwide, to education programs that train the next generation of leaders — your support is changing the lives of our patients and their families.

This report reflects just a fraction of the progress that has been made possible thanks to your generosity. Your support equips our teams with cutting-edge technology, fuels discoveries that are transforming treatment, and ensures we can prepare future specialists to carry Mount Sinai's impact far beyond our own walls.

On behalf of our patients, families and colleagues, thank you for standing with us. Together, we are changing the future of cancer care.

Dr. Christine Brezden-Masley
Medical Director
Cancer Program, Sinai Health

CANCER CARE
AND RESEARCH

2025 Activity Report



SHE-CAN Clinic launches

For many young women with breast cancer, treatment brings an unexpected and often devastating side effect: early menopause, and many of the symptoms that go with it. These can include pain, dryness, loss of desire and difficulties with intimacy — issues that not only affect quality of life, but also make it harder for patients to stay on life-saving therapies. Until recently, most women in Canada waited years for help, if they sought it at all.

Thanks to donor support, Sinai Health launched the **SHE-CAN (Sexual Health in CANcer) Clinic** last year in partnership with the Weston and O’Born Centre for Mature Women’s Health. Now, patients can access specialized gynaecological care much sooner than they could previously. By providing early intervention and tailored support, the clinic is helping women manage symptoms, preserve their relationships and continue with treatment that improves survival.

The SHE-CAN Clinic is one of only a handful in North America, and the only clinic in Canada advancing research in this area. The team is collecting critical data that will shape new care models, influence treatment guidelines, and inform national policies — ensuring sexual health becomes a recognized and integrated part of breast cancer care.

Expanding the reach of SHE-CAN

The impact of SHE-CAN extends far beyond Mount Sinai. Through donor-funded fellowships, Sinai Health is training the next generation of leaders who will bring this survivorship model to other communities. One example is **Dr. Jennifer Leigh**, whose fellowship was supported by Hold’em for Life. Her research explored how endocrine therapy affects sexual health and quality of life, directly informing how the clinic supports patients.

Now, Dr. Leigh is carrying this expertise to Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, where she will help establish a second SHE-CAN program — ensuring more women have access to compassionate, research-driven care.



PYNK Program expanding to improve care

For young women, a breast cancer diagnosis is uniquely devastating. Many are balancing careers, raising children or planning families — all while navigating the shock of a life-threatening illness. Treatments often bring fertility concerns, early menopause and long-term health challenges that the health-care system isn't designed to address.

Thanks to donor support, the PYNK Program at Sinai Health is changing that reality. Since its formal launch in late 2023, PYNK has grown rapidly, now serving nearly **150 patients under the age of 45**. The program provides specialized care and wraparound support tailored to younger women's needs, ensuring they receive the guidance and resources to get through treatment and into survivorship.

Philanthropy has also enabled research collaborations with Sunnybrook and Hamilton Health Sciences, combining data across institutions to uncover how breast cancer uniquely affects younger patients. These insights are already leading to more personalized treatment approaches.

Donors are also helping launch **M-PYNK**, a specialized stream of the program focused on young women with metastatic breast cancer. A new needs assessment is underway to explore how digital tools can strengthen support for this particularly vulnerable group.

Sara's story

When Sara was diagnosed with breast cancer in December 2023, her first reaction was silence. Then came the thought: *"Okay, what's next?"*

For more than 15 years, Sara had cared for others as a nurse at Mount Sinai Hospital. Suddenly, she was the patient. Over seven months, she underwent chemotherapy and a bilateral mastectomy. Through it all, her focus remained on her family.

She remembers one night, reading her daughter a bedtime story. "I was in pain and nauseous, but I wouldn't move until she fell asleep in my arms. Those moments kept me going. I didn't want to miss a single heartbeat."

In July 2024, Sara received the news she had been hoping for: she was cancer-free and in remission. She is grateful to the care she received at the MKBC, enabled by donor support.

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I would not have made it this far without you."

Pamela Goodwin Mount Sinai 100 Chair in Women's Cancer

The Pamela Goodwin Mount Sinai 100 Chair in Women's Cancer, together with the Irit and Michael Shay Breast Cancer Research Endowment, is already driving innovation across the Marvelle Koffler Breast Centre. Fundraising for the Chair has now reached nearly the halfway point, with \$1.43 million raised to date.

This support is fueling cutting-edge research and collaboration. Highlights include a new tomosynthesis study, led by breast radiologist Dr. Vivian Freitas, using donor-funded 3D contrast-enhanced mammography to improve tumour detection. Sinai Health also continues to lead Canada's only dedicated breast cancer and pregnancy program, now with national nursing guidelines to ensure safe chemotherapy administration during pregnancy — and the largest research cohort of its kind in Canada.

Donor investment in the Pamela Goodwin Chair is helping Mount Sinai lead research that not only changes care locally, but also shapes standards across Canada and beyond.

[Click here to donate.](#)





Transforming care for patients with sarcoma

Sarcomas are among the rarest and most complex cancers, often requiring treatments that only a handful of centres worldwide can provide. At Sinai Health, patients have access to Canada's largest and most advanced sarcoma program, where teams of specialized surgeons, oncologists and researchers are pushing the boundaries of what is possible.

Donor support this year has advanced care and discovery in several important ways

- **Expanding access to clinical trials:** Donor investment has allowed Sinai Health to broaden participation in first-in-class and combination studies, giving patients across Ontario the opportunity to access leading-edge therapies without leaving the country.
- **Strengthening care teams:** Philanthropy funded specialized nursing and clinical staff positions, reducing wait times and enhancing team-based care. These investments ensure patients with rare and complex sarcomas receive timely, coordinated treatment.
- **Circulating tumour DNA (ctDNA) research:** Sinai Health is leading research into ctDNA, a type of liquid biopsy that uses a simple blood test to detect fragments of tumour DNA in the bloodstream. This approach could help identify signs of relapse much earlier than imaging alone, allowing doctors to tailor treatment plans more precisely for high-risk sarcoma patients.

- **Immunotherapy innovation:** Our program is running pioneering immunotherapy trials, including novel combination strategies to convert “immune cold” sarcomas into “immune responsive” tumours. Among the first of their kind worldwide, these studies underscore Sinai Health’s leadership in sarcoma drug development.
- **Improving quality of life:** The SARQUALITY trial is evaluating early versus late palliative care interventions, with the goal of defining best practices to optimize supportive care and quality of life for patients with advanced sarcoma.
- **Building global research resources:** With support from the Fidani Foundation, Sinai Health researchers created nearly 50 patient-derived sarcoma cell lines. These are living models of patients’ tumours, which scientists can grow and study in the lab. They allow researchers to test how sarcomas respond to different drugs, explore the genetics of rare subtypes, and share these resources internationally. Published in *Clinical Cancer Research*, this unique collection is already being used by scientists worldwide to accelerate discovery and drug development.
- **Uniting the field nationally:** In May 2025, Sinai Health hosted the 6th Canadian International Sarcoma Symposium, drawing clinicians, researchers, trainees, patients and advocates from across Canada and internationally. This biannual meeting, launched by Dr. Rebecca Gladdy with donor support, has become a cornerstone for collaboration, trial development and patient advocacy.
- **Training the next generation:** Donor generosity continues to power one of the world’s leading sarcoma fellowship training programs. Alumni from Toronto now lead sarcoma care and research across Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Nigeria, Ireland, the UK, Philippines, Australia and Hong Kong.



Advancing surgical oncology, restoring lives

Donor support is powering Mount Sinai's leadership in cancer surgery — from new care pathways to cutting-edge technology that transforms outcomes for patients.

Freeman Chair fuels innovation in Surgical Oncology at Sinai Health

Thanks to donor support for the **Dr. Jeremy Freeman Chair in Surgical Oncology**, Sinai Health is leading ambitious quality and innovation projects that are transforming surgical care.

Faster recovery after surgery

With your support, Sinai Health has launched a new model of care for colorectal surgery that helps patients heal faster and get home sooner. By focusing on preparation before surgery, encouraging early mobility and using smarter pain control, patients are experiencing smoother recoveries, fewer complications and more time at home with loved ones.

Safer surgery through teamwork

Transitions between the operating room and recovery are now smoother and more reliable, thanks to new handover checklists and team huddles at the start of each day. These changes ensure every member of the surgical team shares critical information, reducing risks and improving both safety and patient confidence.

More efficient care, more patients helped

Delays between operations and inconsistent set-ups used to slow things down. Today, Sinai Health is tackling both challenges: reducing the time it takes to prepare for the next surgery and digitizing set-up guides so every team can work quickly and consistently. These improvements mean operating rooms run more smoothly — allowing more patients to receive the care they need.

Rob's stride restored

Diagnosed with a rare bone cancer, Rob Broberg underwent surgery using Sinai Health's **GTX navigation suite** — "Google Maps for surgeons." This donor-funded technology spared healthy bone, preserved his mobility, and helped him return to daily life.

[Read Rob's full story here.](#)

Eva's 3D printed jaw

When Eva Aimable-Kolosko needed surgery for a jaw tumour, her team at Mount Sinai used **3D-printing technology** to plan a "jaw-in-a-day" procedure. The result was a shorter, safer surgery and smoother recovery.

[Read Eva's full story here.](#)



A major milestone in advanced GI cancer surgery

For patients with advanced gastrointestinal (GI) cancers, options are often limited. Many live with pain, fluid buildup or other debilitating symptoms that affect daily life. At Sinai Health, a highly specialized procedure called **Hyperthermic Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy (HIPEC)** is offering hope — helping patients live longer and with better quality of life.

This year, Mount Sinai Hospital celebrated its **500th HIPEC surgery**, making it Ontario's largest and most experienced program. HIPEC combines complex surgery to remove visible tumours with heated chemotherapy circulated through the abdominal cavity to target microscopic disease. These operations can last up to 12 hours and require extraordinary surgical skill, advanced imaging and intensive patient care.

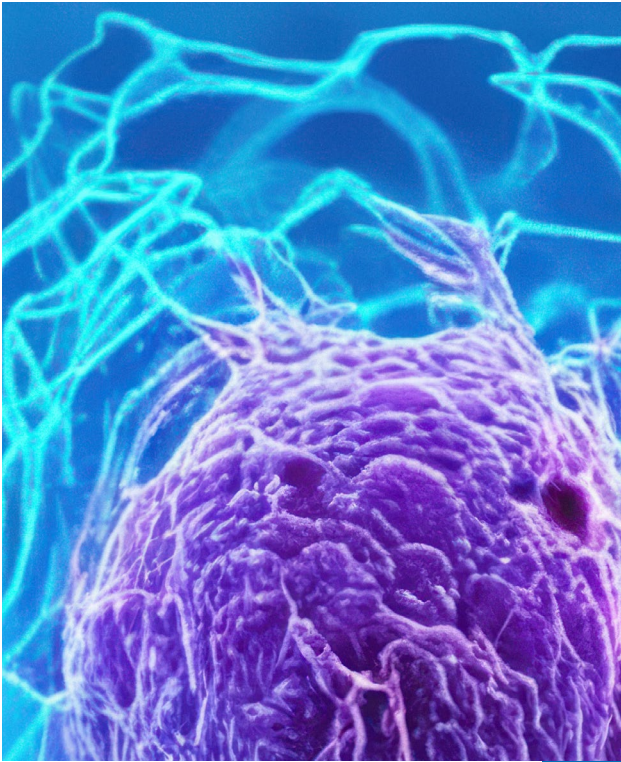
Thanks to donor support, patients from across Canada now come to Mount Sinai for this specialized procedure — care that may ease symptoms, extend survival, and give them more time with loved ones. The program's success is also setting a new standard of excellence for centres nationwide.

Training global leaders in GI oncology

Philanthropy is fueling the training of specialists who will shape the future of gastrointestinal (GI) cancer care worldwide.

One fellow from Greece is leading Mount Sinai's first comprehensive database of peritoneal mesothelioma patients — a rare cancer that Sinai Health treats more than any other centre in Canada. By integrating surgical, medical and molecular data, the database will improve care, guide research and build the evidence needed to secure government funding for life-saving treatments. An incoming fellow from Israel will apply a similar approach to appendiceal cancers, helping establish evidence-based treatment protocols for this highly specialized tumour type.

These fellowships ensure discoveries made at Sinai Health ripple outward — influencing policy, shaping practice and improving care worldwide.



Pioneering research in pancreatic cancer

Unlike other cancers where treatments have advanced rapidly, progress against pancreatic cancer has been frustratingly slow. That's why donor support is so meaningful: it is giving our researchers the resources to pursue bold, high-impact projects that could finally change the outlook for patients and families facing this devastating disease.

Overcoming immunotherapy resistance

The WARRIOR trial is investigating why immunotherapy has not been effective in pancreatic cancer and testing ways to make it work. By studying tumours before and after treatment, the trial aims to unlock new strategies that could extend survival for patients.

Targeting cancer subtypes

In partnership with University Health Network (UHN), researchers are using groundbreaking technology and patient-derived organoids (PDOs) to identify the unique drivers of different pancreatic cancer subtypes. Organoids are 3D, miniaturized and simplified models of a human organ or tissue that are grown in a laboratory from stem cells or tissue — in this case, a miniature model of each patient's tumour. This groundbreaking work could pave the way for personalized treatments matched to each patient's tumour biology.

Expanding personalized models

Building on Mount Sinai and UHN's combined leadership in PDO research, an expanded PDO biobank will allow faster drug testing, biomarker discovery and studies into treatment resistance. This platform will accelerate the development of personalized therapies that could transform pancreatic cancer care.

Donor-powered breakthroughs in uro-oncology

Cancers of the bladder, prostate and kidneys are among the most common worldwide – yet too often, patients face invasive surgeries, unreliable screening tools and treatments with lasting side effects. At Sinai Health, donor support is helping to change that reality.

Led by internationally renowned clinician-researchers Dr. Alexandre Zlotta, the Howard Sokolowski Chair in Uro-Oncological Research, and Dr. Chris Wallis, both part of the Murray Koffler Urologic Wellness Centre, Mount Sinai's uro-oncology program is pushing the boundaries of what's possible. With philanthropy driving discovery, our teams are delivering new ways to preserve organs, detect cancer earlier and personalize treatment – advances that are already influencing care in Canada and around the globe.

Bladder preservation

Sinai Health's landmark study, published in *The Lancet Oncology*, proved that a combination of surgery, radiation and low-dose chemotherapy offers comparable survival outcomes to complete bladder removal – saving lives while [sparing patients the devastating impact of living without a bladder.](#) This work, which was fully supported by donors, has already changed international treatment guidelines in urology and oncology.

Early detection tool

In partnership with UHN and collaborators worldwide, Mount Sinai is leading the development of a new tool to detect aggressive prostate cancer earlier and more accurately. Using AI in nearly 40,000 men, this project may offer a major improvement over the traditional blood test, which often produces false positives and cannot reliably distinguish slow-growing from dangerous cancers. Dr. Zlotta is also working with UHN and UCLA to earlier detect aggressive prostate cancers using genetic biomarkers. This work is poised to save lives while reducing the anxiety and unnecessary procedures often caused by current screening tools.

Prostate cancer in diverse populations

Sinai Health research recently showed that East Asian men are just as likely as other men to develop aggressive prostate cancer, challenging long-held assumptions. This discovery is poised to influence screening practices in Toronto's diverse population and ensure care reflects the realities of the communities Sinai Health serves.

Jim's second chance at life

When bladder cancer struck Manitoba resident Jim Shasky during the pandemic, he feared the worse. Jim traveled all the way to Mount Sinai Hospital, where a second opinion from Dr. Zlotta offered a path forward – one that preserved his bladder and changed his future. Jim's story exemplifies how donor-funded innovation and world-class care offer new hope when few options remain.

[Read Jim's full story here.](#)



Oncogenomics research changing lives

For patients whose cancers don't respond to standard treatments, the search for answers can feel endless. At Sinai Health, oncogenomics is offering new hope by unlocking each tumour's unique genetic blueprint, enabling personalized treatments as never before.

To date, more than **60 patient samples** have been processed through the **OncoGx500 test**, developed in part with donor funding. This advanced profiling tool has already led to **treatment changes in 10 per cent of patients**, providing options that standard care could not.

OncoGx500 is one of the most comprehensive tests available in Canada. While many genomic tests examine fewer than 350 genes and only analyze DNA, OncoGx500 analyzes both DNA and RNA across 500 genes — offering a far more complete picture of each tumour.

Looking ahead, Sinai Health researchers are working to integrate liquid biopsy into the program. This minimally invasive approach, which uses blood samples rather than tissue, is faster, less costly and easier for patients — a critical step toward making precision oncology accessible to more people.

Thank you

From cutting-edge research to innovative treatments and specialized training, Sinai Health's cancer program is advancing care in ways that touch patients here at home and influence practice worldwide.

This progress is only possible because of you. Your generosity ensures our teams have the tools, talent and support needed to deliver life-changing care today — and transform cancer care for tomorrow. On behalf of our patients, families and colleagues, thank you.



See what care can do.

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