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### Not just about money: The Cancer Advocacy Coalition's 2007 Report

The Cancer Advocacy Coalition of Canada produces the annual Report Card on Cancer in Canada. While full of numbers and costs, it also includes a compelling human perspective on living with this disease.

A lawyer by profession, James Connors is also one of about 850,000 Canadian cancer survivors. The story of his diagnosis, treatment, and state of mind is both touching and very practical for anyone struggling with a serious disease.

He described exceptional care – both negative and positive – over the course of therapy. In response to his extreme fatigue, his family doctor misdiagnosed a stomach ulcer. Fortunately, his company doctor was far more engaged in understanding his symptoms, and before long, there was a cancer diagnosis. Mr. Connors strongly recommends second opinions and understanding all the treatment options.

Other complications arose. Noting the inequity and unfairness, the expensive drug he needed was covered at that time in BC, QC and NL, but not in his home province of Nova Scotia. The PET scan he needed was not yet available in NS, but the government would pay only for one in QC, not one at the much closer facility in NB.

Cancer patients face important emotional and financial issues and stresses well beyond their medical care. Mr. Connor lauds the special understanding of two particular oncology nurses, calling them “the closest I have ever met to angels”.

Beyond numbers and dollars, there are too many big gaps in accessing high quality care. For better or worse, employer-sponsored benefit and other support programs are needed, and can make all the difference for those facing cancer or other serious illnesses.

Source: [www.canceradvocacy.ca](http://www.canceradvocacy.ca).