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## ADVERTISEMENT

# Toronto innovators win prestigious grants for work in metastatic breast cancer

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Amid efforts to address unmet needs in the metastatic breast cancer community, two Toronto scientists and clinicians have earned recognition – and grant funding – for their innovative work in this field.

Dr. Aisha Lofters and Dr. Philippe Bedard are among the recipients of this year's Pfizer Canada and Rethink Breast Cancer grants, which support projects that aim to measurably improve the quality of care for people living with metastatic breast cancer. This year's grants total almost \$280,000, which the Toronto recipients shared with a team of researchers and clinicians at the University of Calgary's Oncology Outcomes project.

Dr. Lofters, a family physician at Women's College Hospital, where she is also Chair in Implementation Science for the Peter Gilgan Centre for Women's Cancers, has received a grant for a project that will create informational supports and resources for Black women with metastatic breast cancer.

"We know that Black health is long overdue for targeted research and focus in Canada," says Dr. Lofters, who is also an associate professor and clinician scientist at the University of Toronto's Department of Family and Community Medicine. "We are thrilled to learn from and partner with the Olive Branch of Hope, a Black women's breast cancer survivorship group."

Dr. Bedard, an oncologist at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, was awarded for a project to develop a nurse navigator-led pathway to clinical trials and genomic sequencing for patients with metastatic breast cancer.

According to Lindsay Carlsson, a clinical nurse specialist at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre who works closely with Dr. Bedard, less than six per cent of adult patients across Ontario participate in clinical trials.

"Our goal is to improve patient access to clinical trials by overcoming barriers such as restrictive eligibility criteria, distance to trial sites, and lack of awareness of available trials," says Carlsson.

Dr. Bedard says the project will also help community oncologists.

"Existing trial databases are frequently out of date so oncologists must rely on direct communication with study investigators, leading to missed opportunities for trial participation," he says.

The funded projects are expected to finish by December 2024. To learn more about metastatic breast cancer, visit [www.rethinkbreastcancer.com](http://www.rethinkbreastcancer.com).

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