



WORKING TOWARDS BEST CANCER CARE

Newsletter Spring 2008

Message from Director



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Cancer remains one of the top health priorities of the State Government. This was confirmed with the May budget announcement of \$150M for cancer over four years. Of this, \$77M is allocated to clinical services while \$73M is for the Victorian Cancer Agency to support cancer research. NEMICS has provided significant input on the priorities and implementation of the Cancer Plan.

Effective clinical networks require appropriate and robust governance structures. A review of governance of the eight Integrated Cancer Services (ICS) has recently been completed by DHS. At the core of governance is ownership of the ICS agenda by the ICS Executive and the Health Services, as well as accountability. Recommendations from this review form an important platform for improving the way our governance operates.

At NEMICS, members of the Executive and clinical leaders have already commenced reviewing our governance at a recent Planning Meeting.

Working within a virtual network such as NEMICS poses constant challenges to all its participants. An important message I wish to send out to people living within the north east region of Melbourne and beyond is that NEMICS remains committed to working in partnership with the community and with the Health Services to achieve the highest quality care for people with cancer

A/Prof Paul Mitchell

NEMICS' Governance Groups will work to achieve networked governance, reflected in the composition of the membership of the groups and the increasing alignment of health service goals with the goals of the Integrated Cancer Service

Executive Strategy

Members of the Executive and Reference Groups gathered at a strategic planning workshop on 15 May. Facilitated by Dr Cathy Balding (co-author of the recent ICS Governance review), the aim was to come to find the starting points for cancer planning on a network-wide basis.

Background context to the workshop was provided by presentations from Adam Chapman (Cancer and Palliative Care Unit, DHS) on policy directions, and by members of the NEMICS Directorate on the strategic and operational context.

Following some vigorous discussion based on 'likely' scenarios, the group guide the Executive in their future planning and decision-making. As well, there was a review of the role of

Executive and a new look at the membership of the Committee. As a result the membership will now be extended to include operational managers from health services and a consumer representative.



Attendees at the workshop: Tracey Batten, Cathy Balding, Ian Roos, Kathy Simons @ Heidelberg Golf Club



Professional Development Grants

As part of NEMICS commitment to the continuing development of the cancer workforce, and to cancer service improvement, grants have been made available to clinicians & consumers to support professional development activities such as:

- conference attendance
- visits to centres of excellence
- short course and workshop participation
- postgraduate study in a relevant area



Angelina Mercuri, Sarah Deck, Ronnie Knowles, Debra Harper, Jacqui Chirgwin, Mary John, Lesley Turner, Kathy Wallace

Following the evaluation of 2007/08 PD grants we will be announcing future developments in grant opportunities for the NEMICS cancer workforce via our website <http://www.nemics.org.au>

Successful applicants for 2007/08 were announced at the NEMICS Annual Forum, Tuesday 17 June :

Nigel Anderson - Austin Health
 Margaret Benci - Austin Health
 Karen Byrne - Austin Health
 Sarah Deck - Austin Health
 Nectaria Matsamakias - Austin Health
 Angelina Mercuri - Austin Health
 Jacqueline Chirgwin - Eastern Health
 Debra Harper - Eastern Health
 Veronica Knowles - Eastern Health
 Lesley Turner - Eastern Health
 Kate Freeman - Northern Health
 Mary John - Northern Health
 Kathy Wallace - Northern Health

Congratulations and well done!

NEMICS Annual Forum

State and National cancer initiatives come together for benefit of all people with cancer

On 17 June, NEMICS held its annual forum at the Manningham Council function centre. There were over 80 attendees from a range of areas including primary care, the community sector, public and private health services, consumers, ICS & government.

David Currow, CEO of Cancer Australia, gave the keynote address on the opportunities for better coordination of cancer services. Highlighting the Commonwealth cancer agency's key initiatives of:

- Consumer involvement
- Primary care
- Cancer networks
- Multidisciplinary care

Three tumour streams presented their work:

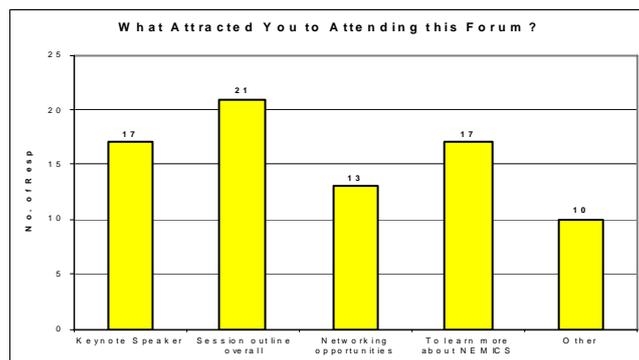
- mapping the patient journey following a lung cancer diagnosis
- auditing the upper gastrointestinal multidisciplinary cancer care meeting
- minimising delays in investigation of lymph node enlargement.

Marg McKenzie - CanNET Vic, reminded all of the significance and value of listening to people's experiences of cancer as a patient or carer. The CanNET

Vic team undertook community forums and individual interviews with over 130 people who shared their experiences and insights.

Paul Mitchell (NEMICS Director) provided an update on some of the other NEMICS initiatives.

People who attended the forum nominated the program and the keynote speaker as the main attractions. The opportunity to network and learn more about NEMICS were also of interest.



Some of the NEMICS team: Anna Mascitti, Melissa Shand, Marg McKenzie, Solange Altarac, Mandy Byrne, Megan Farquhar, Sandi May



Marg McKenzie (CanNET Vic), Chris Scott and Spiri Galekatis (DHS) @ Manningham Council Function Centre

Cancer Learning

www.cancerlearning.gov.au

Cancer Learning is an initiative of Cancer Australia. It is an online, continuing professional development hub that aims to consolidate the enormous variety of evidence-based learning activities, resources and information in cancer care available across Australia in a single location.

Cancer Learning is designed for use by all health professionals involved in providing cancer care, or interested in moving into this field of practice. Cancer Learning has learning activities, information and resources in five key themes:

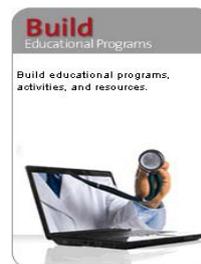
- Latest treatments and evidence based practice
- Fundamentals of oncology
- Coordination of care
- Multidisciplinary care
- Supportive care

Cancer Learning also contains information and resources to help health care providers to design and build educational programs and to help individual professionals plan and carry out professional development.

Cancer Learning is still under development and the project team is keen to receive feedback about the site and how it might be improved. Please fill in the online feedback form when you visit the site at www.cancerlearning.gov.au

You are also invited to share resources you have developed via the hub eg online course or learning module, information about a face-to-face workshop, printed learning materials or information, checklist or other practical tool, CDROM or DVD, web site. All resources submitted to Cancer Learning are reviewed (the review methodology is available on the site).

For further information please contact Gemma Connolly (Cancer Learning Project Manager) at gemma@med.usyd.edu.au or phone 02 9351 3888.



www.cancerlearning.gov.au

Palliative Care beds open at Wantirna Health



NEMICS directorate staff were recently given a tour of **Wantirna Health**. This new facility in Eastern Health provides 30 overnight palliative care beds and 30 complex care/rehabilitation beds. The Centre also houses a Community Rehabilitation Centre and an Education and Research precinct. To facilitate liaison with the community, Eastern Palliative Care services are also located on site. For more information on the services available, visit the website www.easternhealth.org.au

Sonia Fullerton, Palliative Care Consultant, and Vicky Jacques, Site Manager/ Co-Director of Nursing, at Wantirna Health

NEMICS Education Forum
Wednesday 22 October 2008
 9.00 am—1.00 pm
Communication skills
workshops
@ Mercy Hospital for Women,
Heidelberg

Staff Profile

Luellen Thek
Service Improvement Facilitator – Eastern Health

Luellen provides support for the Gynaecology and Colorectal tumour streams across NEMICS and service improvements in cancer services within Eastern Health.

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Projects underway

Advanced Breast Cancer (ABC)

Women with advanced breast cancer have particular care needs. The breast tumour group identified that there is no documented, evidence-based pathway of care for this group and initiated the development of a care pathway to be used across NEMICS health services.

The following values and philosophies underpin the development of the pathway:

- a team approach to providing evidence-based care
- woman and family centred care
- an holistic approach to care
- a systematic yet flexible approach to care
- optimising care at home and in the local community
- continuous improvement

To date, the project teams have:

- commissioned a literature and documentation review to identify the needs of women and models of care
- developed a care pathway based on the review and their own extensive clinical experience working with this client group
- are developing an implementation plan

CanNET Victoria and the Centre for Innovation in Professional Health Education and Research (CIPHER) have conducted three pilot sessions of the Cancer Learning online Psychosocial Support Module.

The sessions promoted the resources available on the Cancer Learning website and also to assess the user friendliness and accessibility of the resources.

The sessions were held at
The Northern Hospital

North East Health Wangaratta and Wodonga attended by a range of health professionals including nurses, allied health staff and psychologists. Those attending identified a number of ways that the module could be used for both individual learning and staff training. www.cancerlearning.gov.au is a free resource for anyone interested in professional development around the needs of people with cancer.

For more information about **CanNET Victoria** contact Marg McKenzie at margaret.mckenzie@austin.org.au.

Supporting women with gynaecological cancer.

In collaboration with BreaCan – Gynaecological and Breast Cancer Support, NEMICS are conducting a project to improve access to information and support for women with gynaecological cancers in northeast metropolitan Melbourne.

The project includes:

- identifying women's needs and the appropriate support strategies to assist them in their care and treatment, and adjust to living with cancer
- extending BreaCan's volunteer program to provide support for women with gynaecological cancers
- assist health services to respond to the support needs of women through referral to appropriate support services.

Consultations have occurred with women and health services about support needs and referral pathways.

As one woman who was surveyed said

'...when they send you home – that is the end.

Sometimes putting your life back on track (especially for a younger person) is harder than the treatment itself.'

BreaCan has also recruited two women with gynaecological cancers to participate in the peer support volunteer training program.

Strategies to meet the needs of women are currently being developed.

For further information contact Jeanette Liebelt at BreaCan on 9921 0837, email jeanette@breacan.org.au or visit their website at www.breacan.org.au

Upcoming Events:

Head & Neck Tumour Group	1 Sept
Skin Tumour Group	2 Sept
UGI Tumour Group	9 Sept
Reference Group	15 Oct
NEMICS Education Forum	22 Oct
Lung Tumour Group	5 Nov
Haematology Tumour Group	17 Nov
Colorectal Tumour Group	24 Nov
CNS Tumour Group	24 Nov
Gynaecology Tumour Group	25 Nov
Breast Tumour Group	26 Nov

WCMICS Supportive Care Conference	17 Oct
Palliative Care Vic Conference	23-24 Oct
Cancer Care Coordinators Conference	23-24 Oct
COSA IACR Scientific Meeting	18-20 Nov
Living with Cancer Program	18-19 Nov

What's new

- >> Looking to improve your Multidisciplinary Cancer Meeting? MDM templates now available, please contact Melissa - melissa.shand@austin.org.au
- >> Guide to claiming MBS items 871, 872 applicable to discussion of private cancer patients in an MDM. Download from <http://www.nemics.org.au/Display.aspx?tabid=2478>
- >> NEMICS annual forum was held on 17 June 08. View PowerPoint presentations on www.nemics.org.au