

WORKING TOWARDS BEST CANCER CARE

Spring 2009

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Since the launch of the Victorian Cancer Action Plan there has been a lot of activity around implementation – most recently with the announcement of the ICS partnership grants. Other recently announced initiatives are the Victorian Nurse Practitioner Program (oncology) and the project to trial development of a cancer clinical indicator system (see our website for a factsheet).

The supportive care strategy in NEMICS has kicked off with the first of the health service grants being funded and commenced. Cancer and Palliative Care Unit have contracted with a group from University of Melbourne, led by Professor Sanchia Aranda to provide education and training to the ICS in the area of supportive care, so we will keep you posted.

We also look forward to the first combined ICS Supportive Care Conference (October 19th). NEMICS is supporting around 30 people to attend – see below for more information.

CanNET Victoria continues at least until the end of September. There are some excellent achievements in on-line meeting technologies to support linkages into multidisciplinary teams and in consumer participation. See page 3 for more details. If you would like to know more about the options around using technology for linkages, please contact the Directorate office.

In early August we farewelled two significant people from NEMICS – Ian Roos and Andrew Smith. A short article about them appears in this newsletter, and I would like to add to this the sincere thanks of the Governance groups and the Directorate for their substantial contribution in time, intellect and perseverance!

Chris Scott, Manager

NEMICS Supportive Care Directory

Copies are available –
contactus@nemics.org.au

or

jan.townsend@austin.org.au



PDF version of the Directory
is now available on our
website

www.nemics.org.au

Supportive Care Grants Program

Supportive care is an umbrella term used to refer to services which may be required by those affected by cancer. It includes information, psychological support, symptom control, social support, rehabilitation, spiritual support, palliative care and bereavement care. The importance of supportive care is reflected in Action Area Four of Victoria's Cancer Action Plan 2008-2011 (VCAP), which commits to strengthening supportive care services for people with cancer and their carers.

In recognition of this, NEMICS has provided grants to its health service to pilot models of routine supportive care screening for cancer patients. It is anticipated that the pilot program will commence in October 2009 and evaluation of the program will be carried out in November 2010.

Victorian ICS Supportive Care Conference Monday 19 October 2009 at RACV Club Melbourne

The Victorian Integrated Cancer Services are hosting a Supportive Care Conference. The central theme of the conference is "Integrating supportive care: a team approach". The objectives are to:

- establish the evidence including screening tools, definitions, roles and responsibilities of a team approach to supportive care
- understand the enablers and barriers to successful integration of supportive care practice
- explore examples of best practice.

NEMICS will support a number of places for clinicians and consumers wishing to attend the conference. **Registrations are now open** - forms are available on our website or contact Olive Lee NEMICS olive.lee@austin.org.au

Cancer Care Referral Pathways Workshop held at The Ivanhoe Centre, 17 June

The evening, opened by Professor Moyez Jiwa, provided an opportunity for open discussion between local GPs and oncology clinicians. The focus was on what is valued and works well regarding referrals & multidisciplinary cancer care teams.

The occasion also provided GPs with the opportunity to suggest how processes could be improved. The directorate is currently reviewing this information & will provide a report of the findings that will be used by tumour groups to generate strategies to strengthen referral pathways.



Dr Lisa Newton, Chris Scott, Dr Caroline Hawkins



Dr Shane White, Prof Moyez Jiwa, Dr Phillip Bain, Dr Wendy Fisher

Annual Forum



This year's annual forum was held on Tuesday June 16th at Manningham Council Offices. Moyez Jiwa – Professor of Health Innovation from Curtin University of Technology, WA, provided the keynote address. Professor Jiwa is a practising GP with particular research interest in the development and testing of interventions to facilitate the prevention, diagnosis and management of cancer across acute and primary care sectors.

His presentation, titled *The 15 minute consultation-the role of the GP in cancer*

diagnosis, treatment and supportive care, covered issues GP's experience when dealing with a cancer diagnosis or possible diagnosis within their clinic.

This year 55 people attended the forum from across acute and community health sectors, from a range of health professions and management positions, as well as attendees from other ICS and the Cancer and Palliative Care Unit. Feedback was positive, particularly in relation to the range of topics covered during the presentations. Presentations are available on the website.



Paul Mitchell, Moyez Jiwa
Chris Scott, Luellen Thek



Attendees at Forum



Judith Congalton, Catherine Schafer,
Felicity Sudman - SMICS

Farewell to Prof Andrew Smith and Dr Ian Roos



Associate Professor Andrew Smith, Chair of Reference Group and leader of the Head & Neck Tumour Group is leaving us to take up senior roles at the Curtin University of Technology and Dental Health Services WA. We thank him for his contribution to the improvement of head and neck cancer service in the north eastern metropolitan region of Melbourne and for his leadership as the first Chair of the Reference Group and wish him well in his new role.



We would like to thank **Ian Roos** for his significant contribution to the work of NEMICS. Ian has worked with NEMICS since 2005 and has been a strong advocate for the consumer need & voice. He has identified and contributed to initiatives that have involved consumer specific service improvement and has also been a member of the NEMICS Executive Committee and Reference Group, representing consumer issues. Although he will cease his involvement on these two groups, Ian will continue to be involved in improving cancer services through his participation on the National Advisory Research Group of Cancer Australia, the Radiation Oncology Research Working Group of the Department of Health and Ageing, Cancer Voices Victoria, and a member of the project board for the DHS review of consumer and carer involvement in the Integrated Cancer Services.

Health Issues Centre Consumer Consultations

– report available

CanNET Victoria would like to thank all those who participated in consultations conducted by Health Issues Centre (HIC) from November 2008 through to March 2009. The initial consultations largely attracted consumers from rural areas within the network. We have recently undertaken additional consultations to seek the views and experiences of urban consumers. These consultations aimed to hear about the experiences of people affected by cancer from the northern metropolitan region of Melbourne and the

Hume regional area who were not previously engaged in initial consultations in 2007.

The final report – “The development of a consumer participation strategy for difficult to access consumers in the NEMICS & Hume RICS geographic areas” – details the findings from these consultations with 57 consumers and five Indigenous community workers.

To view the report visit website:

<http://www.nemics.org.au>

YOU CAN – stories of the cancer experience

A number of people involved in sharing their experience of cancer with **CanNET Victoria** in 2007 agreed to have their story included in a booklet. “*YOU CAN – stories of the cancer experience*” is a collection of stories of people, their families and loved ones who have experienced cancer. They are not medical histories – they are not about statistics, facts and figures.

They reveal how a group of people, living in Victoria, have been affected by cancer. Stories are a very powerful way for people to give meaning to experience they have had. We hope this booklet will help others understand the experience of people affected by cancer.

To receive your copy of YOU CAN – stories of the cancer experience contact Kate De Bono Ph: (03) 9496 3804 or visit website: www.nemics.org.au

Online Meeting Technology: a tool for accessing multidisciplinary meetings

CanNET Victoria has piloted an online meeting product, Cisco WebEx to enable regional clinicians to link into MDMs from their desktop computers. Radiology, including PET scans, and pathology images can be viewed in real time and discussion with MDM members who may not be available in regional areas can occur. The initial part of the project focused on identifying a product that could meet the functional requirements of clinicians wishing to consult with colleagues from a distance. These included ease of use, viewing of diagnostic images, the capacity to see and speak to each other at the same time and the need for any new system to be compatible with existing videoconferencing equipment.

Liaison with information technology (IT) departments has been a key component of the project to ensure that the technology can be used in a number of organisations and any local issues affecting usage can be quickly rectified.

Training of staff and support to participants using the technology has ensured linkages into an Austin Health multidisciplinary meeting and have occurred with minimal disruption. A user guide for meeting participants has been developed.

WebEx has been used successfully to link three medical specialists from North East Victoria to an Austin Health lung cancer MDM. Early problems with the quality of the audio component of the meeting have been resolved by linking the WebEx technology to existing videoconferencing equipment.

Online meeting technology is widely used in other industries and has exciting possibilities for the health sector in a range of applications. In addition to the MDM application, the WebEx system has enabled CanNET Victoria to conduct online steering committee meetings, document reviews and education sessions. There is significant potential to utilise WebEx for a range of meetings in regional and metropolitan areas to decrease travel requirements for participants. For further information about the project contact Ms Christine Scott at 9496 3322 or christine.scott@austin.org.au

Upcoming events:

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|---------------|--|
| 19 October | ICS Supportive Care Conference @ RACV Club |
| 30-31 October | Inaugural Whole Person Care National Symposium @ Swiss Grand Bondi Beach |
| 17-19 October | COSA Annual Conference @ Gold Coast Convention Centre |
| 9-10 December | Integrated Cancer Centres Symposium @ Hilton on the Park. |



Welcome to Gabriel Luka Matthews who arrived on 29th July weighing in at 3.9kg. Congratulations to Mirela and Peter.

CONSUMER FOCUS

Consumer Participation within NEMICS

This year has seen an increased focus on consumer participation within NEMICS with the implementation of the NEMICS Consumer Participation Plan 2008-2010. This plan sets out how NEMICS will recruit new consumers and support new and existing consumers. It also defines the ways in which consumers can contribute to the work of NEMICS.

Over the past couple of months we have particularly focused on the recruitment of new consumers in order to:

- increase the number of consumers available to contribute to the work of NEMICS
- reduce the burden on our existing consumers
- allow for the expansion of the role of our consumers given the increased number of consumers available

Implementation of this recruitment strategy commenced in June 2009. This strategy identified three distinct methods of recruitment:

1. Public advertisement – advertisements were placed within the Fifty Plus newspaper and three local Leader newspapers in the NEMICS region.
2. Community group presentations – two distinct groups were identified for presentations; cancer support groups and community groups such as the Red Cross. These presentations aim to increase the knowledge of NEMICS within the community and to identify individuals within these groups who may be interested in contributing.
3. Building linkages – establishing relationships between the NEMICS Directorate and existing consumer networks such as health service community advisory committees (CACs) and consumer organisations such as the Health Issues Centre.

It is anticipated that this recruitment phase will be completed by mid October, and a report will be available on the outcomes by the end of November. To date we have had very pleasing results from the implementation of this strategy with interest expressed from a wide variety of people keen to be involved.

A copy of the NEMICS Consumer Participation Plan 2008-2010 is available on the NEMICS website: www.nemics.org.au located under the 'What's New' section.

Evaluation of Consumer and Carer Participation within the Integrated Cancer Services (ICS)

The Cancer and Palliative Care Unit of the Department of Human Services are in the process of undertaking an evaluation of consumer and carer participation with the ICS. This review will evaluate the current participation opportunities within the ICS, as well as the training needs of consumers, carers and ICS staff.

Consultants, JA Projects Pty Ltd, have been appointed to undertake the review which will be completed by the end of this year.

Further information can be obtained from Jessica Reynolds, Project Officer Quality and Clinical Networking, on 9096 2087 or jessica.reynolds@dhs.vic.gov.au

Participate in Health Conference

The Victorian Department of Human Services has funded the Health Issues Centre to facilitate the Participate in Health Conference. Participants attending this conference will have an opportunity to learn how consumer, carer and community participation at all levels of the health care system can improve health service outcomes.

The conference is open to anyone who would like to find out more about effective participation to improve health services and care delivery.

**The conference is on: Monday 21st & Tuesday 22nd September 2009
at Victoria University Conference Centre,
Melbourne.**

For more information about the conference visit website: <http://www.healthissuescentre.org.au>

or contact Melissa Shand on 9496 3831 or Anna Mascitti on 9496 3261.

Useful Website: labtestsonline.org.au

- Provides information about a range of tests relating to many types of cancers from screening tests such as pap smears through to those used to confirm a cancer diagnosis and to monitor treatment.
- labtestsonline.org.au can provide an on-going source of accurate and impartial information.
- It has been developed by the Australasian Association of Clinical Biochemists with support from the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia to help redress a lack of reliable information and to ensure that everyone has access to accurate, non-commercially skewed information. Development funding has been provided by the Australian Government.
- Information can easily be printed out for your own record.