

WORKING TOWARDS BEST CANCER CARE

Spring 2010

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Message from the Director



Kathy Simons

There have been a number of staff changes at NEMICS over the past four months. I would like to welcome and thank the following people.

Following the departure of Chris Scott in May this year, Kathy Simons commenced as Program Manager; Kathy previously held the role of Manager Quality and Projects at NEMICS.



A/Prof David Allan

After almost five years as Chair of the Governance Committee, A/Professor David Allan stepped down in June this year. I would like to thank David for his hard work and commitment to NEMICS over this time. I would also like to welcome Alan Lilly to the position of Chair of the Governance Committee. As the CEO of Eastern Health, Alan has a keen interest in cancer services and a commitment to taking a region wide approach to achieve the goals and targets set out in the Victoria's Cancer Action Plan, 2008-2011.



Alan Lilly

Earlier in the year, NEMICS commissioned a review of its governance structures and processes to ensure it is well positioned to be an effective network. The recommendations of the review are currently being implemented.

In July, the members of the Governance and Reference groups met to set the priorities for the next NEMICS strategic plan. This plan is currently being refined and will be available at the end of the year.

A/Prof Paul Mitchell
Director, NEMICS



Northern Health



Mercy Health
Care first



Online Supportive Care Directory

Available Now

In 2009 NEMICS published a directory of services available to people affected by cancer who live in Melbourne's northern and eastern suburbs.

An updated and searchable electronic version of the directory is now available at:

www.FindCancerCare.org.au

Coming Soon: CANMAP

CANMAP is a multidisciplinary meeting (MDM) administration tool that will:

- streamline administrative processes for MDMs across health services
- enable clinicians to submit patients for discussion and view meeting agendas online from any computer that has an internet connection
- enable clinicians to record meeting recommendations in real time
- enable clinicians to view meeting recommendations after the meeting
- enable the collection of data for each MDM such as the number and type of cases discussed, and clinicians in attendance
- act as a communication tool by generating and distributing meeting outcomes to MD team members, referring clinicians and the patient's GP.

Supportive Care

Supportive Care Workshop

On 28 July, 60 staff from public, private and community services, and consumers attended the NEMICS supportive care workshop.

The focus was on implementing routine supportive care for cancer patients and their families. This was an opportunity for health service executives and supportive care staff to:

- understand the Government's supportive care policy drivers
- discuss the implications for implementing routine supportive care
- hear about NEMICS' role in supporting health service supportive care initiatives



Speakers at the event included:

- NEMICS Director, A/Prof Paul Mitchell who set the scene by emphasising the benefits and drivers for enhancing supportive care in health services and NEMICS' role in assisting the process,
- Ms Fay Fraser, a consumer, shared her experience of cancer and the care she received,
- Ms Spiri Galetakis from the Victorian Department of Health, who spoke about the supportive care policy context, and
- Dr Cathie Piggot from Supportive Cancer Care Victoria at Melbourne University summarised resources available to assist in implementing routine supportive care

The second part of the workshop involved group discussion on supportive care implementation within individual health services and planning future directions.

Material presented at the workshop is available on the [NEMICS website](#)

Supportive Care Seminar

On 1 September NEMICS hosted a supportive care seminar at Austin Health attended by 30 people from NEMICS health services. Additionally a number of health professionals linked in from Ballarat, Box Hill Hospital and Northern Health via videoconference. We were lucky to have Professor Afaf Girgis present a NSW perspective on implementing routine assessment and management of cancer patients' psychosocial well-being.

A panel discussion followed discussing the challenges and opportunities of implementing routine screening and follow up.

Issues highlighted included:

- challenges in capturing data that track the number of referrals made following implementation of a screening process
- the importance of defining referral and care pathways with the multidisciplinary team before screening is implemented
- the need to adequately train clinical staff in supportive care screening, communication and referral

We wish to thank our panel members, Sheilla Hirst, Christine Scott and Mirela Matthews for their time and thoughts.

Survivorship

The Australian Cancer Survivorship Centre has been officially launched by the Hon. Daniel Andrews, MP Minister of Health. The ACSC, led by Associate Professor Michael Jefford, is a centre for education, knowledge and advocacy in cancer survivorship, promoting:

- Improved knowledge and collaboration within the health system on survivor issues
- Survivor focused solutions to barriers within the health system

For more information visit

www.petermac.org/cancersurvivorship

Do You Have a Question About Supportive Care?

You can visit [Supportive Cancer Care Victoria](#) and ask a question on their [discussion board](#)

The Supportive Cancer Care Victoria (SCCV) website has been developed to ensure easy access to information and resources and to foster communication and collaboration between the nine Integrated Cancer Services (ICS) in Victoria.

NEMICS Annual Forum

NEMICS held its Annual Forum on Tuesday 31 August with the key theme being supportive care. The night was very well supported with 73 people attending.

Our key note speaker was Professor Afaf Girgis, Director of the Centre for Health Research and Psycho-oncology (CHERP) and conjoint Professor in the Faculty of Health at the University of Newcastle.

Professor Girgis is a leader in the area of supportive care having extensively researched the unmet needs of people affected by cancer including supportive care screening and interventions. She presented a paper entitled:

We want to provide patient-centred care: The case for routine screening for distress



Other speakers at the forum included:

- a report on projects to implement routine supportive care screening at three of our member health services
- BreaCan reported on their project "*Reaching out to women with gynaecological cancers: Innovations in supportive care*", and
- Maroondah hospital reported on a project to improve discharge planning processes for oncology patients; a project funded through the NEMICS Professional Development Grants program.

The [presentations](#) can be found on our website.

The night also provided the opportunity to trial our web-based supportive care directory now available. Two computers were available to test out the features and functions of www.FindCancerCare.org.au website.



L to R: **Prof Afaf Girgis**, **Alan Lilly** (Chair of NEMICS Governance Committee), **A/Prof Paul Mitchell** (Director, NEMICS), **Katherine Simons** (Manager, NEMICS)

CanNET Victoria Update

The second phase of the CanNET project officially commenced in July. This second phase includes:

- a state wide approach to developing linkages for multidisciplinary care utilising online meeting technology is one of the key work areas
- further development of the consumer participation work that commenced in the original project.

To this end CanNET Victoria hosted a workshop for ICS staff working on consumer participation and consumers from each ICS on 9 September at the Cancer Council of Victoria.

The aim of the workshop was to share information about consumer participation activities across all the ICS and to scope interest in working together on common areas.

All nine ICS were represented and three consumers attended. Presentations from Catherine Harmer and Linda Nolte from the Department of Health provided the group with insight into health services responsibilities in relation to consumer participation and the Department's expectations of the ICS in this area.

Consensus was achieved in relation to working together on a number areas including policy development and training for both consumers and health service staff.



Last month CanNET Victoria welcomed its newest team member, Matthew Pollard. Matt has a background in information technology and will be a great asset to us working on the linkages part of the project.

Consumer Update

Consumer Contribution

Our consumers have had a very busy time recently attending and contributing to a number of workshops, particularly in the area of supportive care.

They have been assisting in the development of the NEMICS supportive care strategy and many attended the supportive care workshop held on Wednesday 28 July 2010.

Community Prostate Cancer Education Session

In collaboration with the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA) and Austin Health cancer services, in July 2010, NEMICS assisted in hosting a community prostate cancer education session.

This session was initiated by Heidelberg and Diamond Valley prostate support groups who were seeking a way to provide better links between support groups and the local hospital.

These two groups are very keen to provide their members and other interested community members with regular prostate cancer education sessions. It is their view that by creating better links with local health professionals, the community is provided with high quality information in relation to prostate cancer care and management; and in turn, health professionals are reminded of the value of support groups and supportive care, promoting these aspects to their patients.

This first session focussed on advances in medical treatment for prostate cancer and was presented by A/Professor Ian Davis. Peter Gebert and Max Shub from PCFA Melbourne office also presented on the role and functions of support groups and the PCFA in general.

The main presentation was well received with a very active question time. Very keen interest was expressed by the audience in topics such as clinical trials, communication with GPs and supportive care for patients and carers.

The session was held in the evening and attracted close to 60 people. The audience was predominately men, with many spouses and partners also in attendance.



Thank you to Ian Davis, Max Shub, Peter Gebert and Tammy Boatman.

A highlight of the day was a presentation by Fay Fraser, NEMICS consumer, about her experience of having a cancer.

Our consumers were also invited to attend two workshops recently run by Austin Cancer Services in relation to the Olivia Newton-John Cancer and Wellness Centre (ONJCWC) planning.

COSA Annual Consumer Forum

Each year the Clinical Oncological Society of Australia (COSA) holds an annual meeting for all cancer care clinicians. This forum is held as part of COSA's commitment to seeking consumer input to improving cancer services.

The forum is intended for people whose lives have been affected by cancer and will provide an opportunity to:

- hear presentations by world renowned cancer specialists
- hear from people with personal experience of cancer including patients, carers and cancer care specialists
- raise questions and provide comment on issues raised.

Additionally the forum provides an opportunity to meet and connect with other people whose lives have been affected by cancer.

The forum is free and will be held on:
8 November 2010
Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
From 1.00pm to 5.00 pm

To register, email Jim Fawcett jf@asnevents.net.au

Inaugural Consumers Reforming Health Conference

18th - 20th July 2011
Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
 A public lecture will be held on Sunday 17th of July 2011

This conference has been developed specifically for those with an interest in involving consumers in health care, policy and governance. The conference upholds the essential principle that consumer participation is fundamental for health development, clinical governance, community capacity building and health outcomes.

We will circulate more information as it becomes available.

Visit www.consumersreforminghealth.org