

Sunshine Coast Haematology & Oncology Clinic

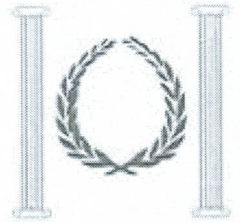
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To Whom It May Concern,

"You are the silver lining in the cloud we call Cancer".

(Source: anonymous patient from our clinic.)

I am writing this submission as the Chief Executive Officer of Sunshine Coast Haematology and Oncology Clinic. I represent the silent voices of the many thousands of patients that we have cared for over the past 15 years.

I was told by Federal Health officers during our visit to Canberra in 2010 that the Royal Brisbane Hospital could not cope with the resultant increase in workload (approximately 5000 patient episodes per year) if we ever decided to close our doors. This sentiment has been repeated in numerous conversations with various Brisbane based Haematologists and Oncologists from both the private and public sectors.

Recently, as a consequence of inadequate external funding, our pharmacy provider has been forced to reintroduce an additional charge to prepare infusions for our patients. If this fee was increased to \$100 per infusion we would be forced to close our doors or attempt to recover this from patients.

We don't want to do either of these things and we don't think either outcome is what our patients want.

It would mean the death of an exemplary service that has been showcased in Geneva at the International Ambulatory Surgical Association. It would mean the closure of a service that has won so many "excellence in service" awards that we've been inducted into the Sunshine Coast Business Council's Hall of Fame.

Despite our rapid growth we have continued for a decade and a half to provide exemplary care to our patients. Our patient satisfaction surveys

scores continue to sit at excellent or very good. This is partially due to providing care close to home in a personalised environment.

As the Queensland Minister for Health said when we opened in 1998, "The extent of benefit this facility will bring to others cannot be measured in terms of millions of dollars".

During accreditation with the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards we received 8 excellent achievements in our first audit. Major city hospitals would be delighted with such a result. I can recall that at the time a colleague from a large Brisbane based hospital mentioned that they were extremely pleased with an audit showing 3 excellent achievements.

We are very highly regarded across all segments of the community in our region and praises are always flowing forth from patients. In fact, our patients give our staff gifts of flowers, chocolates, wine or dinner as tokens of their appreciation on a daily basis.

Our team is dedicated to our hospital with 18 staff employed. Most have been with the facility for 10 years or more. Building a team, referral base and service reputation such as ours has taken 20 years of 24 hours a day, seven days a week dedication.

It seems unfair to our team, unjust to our patients and a backward step for our community that this established health service centre of excellence may disappear due to a failure to properly fund the chemotherapy supply chain.

"You are the silver lining in the cloud we call Cancer".

(Source: anonymous patient from our clinic.)

We hope that we can continue to be the silver lining.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Reardon CEO
Sunshine Coast Haematology and Oncology Clinic