

Cancer bulletin

No.1 December 2004

Welcome to the first edition of the *Cancer bulletin* prepared quarterly by the Cancer Coordination Unit. The purpose of this bulletin is to provide you with updates about the Victorian cancer reforms and related programs of interest across the department.

Cancer reform is an important priority for the Victorian Government. The key policy documents guiding cancer reform in Victoria are the *Cancer services framework for Victoria* and the *Fighting cancer policy*. The major components of these policies are:

- cancer service reforms
- strengthening cancer research
- the establishment of a Ministerial Taskforce for Cancer (MTFC).

The Cancer Coordination Unit was established in late 2003 to support and coordinate key aspects of cancer service reform with particular responsibility for implementation of the *Cancer services framework for Victoria* and the *Fighting cancer policy*.

Dr Mary Turner, Senior Medical Advisor and her team have particular responsibility for implementing the cancer research agenda. Professor Richard Smallwood chairs the MTFC.

This bulletin provides information about the cancer services reforms as well as the work of the Senior Medical Advisor's Unit and the MTFC.

I believe the cancer services reforms will establish a cancer service system that will offer the highest quality cancer treatment and care to Victorian patients, their families and the community.

Concomitantly, we are seeking to integrate research and services to facilitate best practice in cancer care.

The coming years will be an interesting and challenging time as we work together to ensure that Victoria is well placed to address the burden of cancer on the health system and on our communities.

I look forward to sharing the progress and successes of these developments with you.

Elise Davies

Manager, Cancer Coordination Unit



On behalf of the Ministerial Taskforce for Cancer (MTFC), I would like to extend our welcome to readers of this first edition of the *Cancer bulletin*. The bulletin will provide an opportunity for the MTFC to highlight its key activities in cancer service reform on a regular basis.

The aim of the MTFC, established in November 2003, is to provide strategic advice and clinical leadership on the implementation of cancer services reforms. One of our most important tasks is to promote and consult on the implementation of the cancer reforms, and we are committed to talking with and hearing from key groups in the cancer service field including health services, clinicians, consumers and professional groups.

What the MTFC aims to do

In order to progress the implementation of the cancer reforms, we have established three working groups in areas where we believe leadership and focus are vital to achieving the goals of cancer reform. These working groups are:

The Clinical Services Working Group: Professor Bob Thomas, member of the MTFC and Director, Surgical Oncology at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, chairs this group. This group aims to collaborate with stakeholders in the development and implementation of strategic directions and service improvement programs to enhance patient care.

The Data / Information Working Group: This group is chaired by Professor David Hill, member of the MTFC and Director of the Cancer Council Victoria and is working on the identification and development of cancer data collections to facilitate quality improvement, performance monitoring and reporting for clinical practice and research.

The Cancer Research Working Group: Dr Paul Mitchell, member of the MTFC and Director of Cancer Services at Austin Health, chairs this group. The group provides advice on better integration, coordination and development of cancer research in Victoria and promotes communication between research centres and health services to facilitate the translation of cancer research into clinical practice. This Group is also considering the options for a Comprehensive Cancer Centre for Victoria.

Activities sponsored by the MTFC in 2004 have been:

- first Patient Management Framework Workshop conducted 3 & 4 December 2004
- pilot project on collection of the cancer data set developed by the National Cancer Control Institute
- Translational Research Seminar held 18 & 19 November 2004.

I would encourage you to find out more about the MTFC and the cancer service reforms by accessing the Victorian Government Cancer Initiatives website at www.health.vic.gov.au/cancer

Professor Richard Smallwood

Chair, Ministerial Taskforce for Cancer

What the cancer service reforms aim to do

The *Cancer services framework for Victoria* aims to ensure the right treatment and support is provided to patients as early as possible in their cancer journey. The reforms are being delivered through two mechanisms:

Integrated Cancer Services (ICS) have been established to support improvements in the integration and coordination of services within a geographic area. Four key principles guided decisions about the establishment of a statewide integrated cancer services system and the configuration of the ICS. The principles are:

- Services will be population-based.
- People with cancer will have access to a wide range of services from prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment, through to supportive and palliative care.
- Services will be coordinated across the patient pathway, and delivered in multidisciplinary settings.
- Services need to be self-sufficient so critical mass can support quality, safety and access.



Clinical treatment and care will be delivered through ten major tumour streams to reduce variations of care and promote best practice. Tumour stream work will include the development of care and facility standards, clinical and performance indicators and role designation of services based on specification of the range of services that could be provided at an institutional level. The standards will be developed through statewide tumour stream groups and implemented at the ICS level through local collaborating tumour groups.

The cancer reforms represent a significant change in thinking about how services will be delivered in the future. The table below identifies some of the differences in how the delivery of cancer services across Victoria will change.

Current cancer service system

Health service planning focused on the needs of health services

Health services work independently to deliver services

Treatment and care options delivered by location

Clinical treatment based on local practice and interpretation of clinical practice guidelines

Unexplained variation in practice across Victoria

Management of resources for treatment and care by individual health services

Levels and scope of service delivery historical or based on individual experience and expertise

Integrated cancer service system

Health service planning focused on the needs of populations

Health services work together to deliver cancer services

Treatment and care options planned by streams along the patient pathway

Clinical treatment based on statewide standards of practice

Agreed best practice implemented across Victoria

Management of resources for treatment and care by integrated cancer service along the patient pathway

Levels and scope of service delivery based on agreed standards and needs of population

What we have been doing to implement service delivery reforms

- Three metropolitan and five regional ICS have been established (see map on back page).
- Draft governance principles and models have been developed.*
- Service mapping and data information kits have been developed for each ICS.*
- A provider working group has been established to provide advice on the development of a five-year service plan for radiotherapy.
- *Upfront*, a consumer booklet on breast prostheses, has been finalised and launched.
- The final report on the lessons learned from the *Strengthening support for women with breast cancer* has been published.*
- A transitional breast cancer reference group has been established to ensure completion of ongoing activities in breast cancer.
- The specialist statewide paediatric integrated cancer service has been developed.

* Available on website.

Activities in cancer research

One of the most productive ways to tackle cancer is through translational research. The National Cancer Institute in the United States defines translational research as using knowledge of human biology to develop and test the feasibility of cancer-relevant interventions in humans and/or determines the biological basis for observations made in individuals with cancer or in populations at risk for cancer. It also encompasses translation of knowledge from research on psychosocial care, health service delivery, prevention and screening. Simply put, this is about translating knowledge from research into care and services.

To facilitate the introduction of this approach a *Translational Research Seminar and Workshop* was undertaken on 18 & 19 November 2004. We were fortunate to have distinguished international and local speakers. International speakers were Prof Garrett Fitzgerald from the University of Pennsylvania, Dr Dennis Slamon from UCLA, and Dr Kristine Knox from the National Translational Cancer Research Network in the United Kingdom. From Victoria, Prof John Funder AO, presented insights into the challenges for clinician researchers. Also, Prof Tony Burgess from the Ludwig Institute and Prof John Zalcberg from the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre presented information on their work in translational research. The workshop component comprised small group discussion on a series of issues such as the integration of research into services and clinical trials. Dr George Morstyn, a Biotechnology Adviser, led this discussion. A report of the findings of the seminar will soon be displayed on the Departmental web site. A seminar on research in psychosocial care and impacts on people with cancer is planned to occur in the first six months of 2005.

In Victoria, a broad range of cancer research is undertaken and funded from many sources. There is no consolidated information on this or a strategy for strengthening cancer research. A survey of cancer research is being undertaken to identify these activities and areas for development. The information from the survey and outputs from the Translational Research Seminar and Workshop will inform the development of a Cancer Research Strategic Plan.

Dr Mary B Turner

Senior Medical Advisor

Getting involved

Currently, ICS across Victoria are appointing directors, strategic planners and other key staff, and identifying ways to support communication and representation across their cancer services. While ICS are in the early days of formation, there are still opportunities for you to become involved in your ICS, and in other statewide activities. We would encourage you to:



- raise issues with members of the MTFC
- contact your ICS director or host chief executive officer to express interest in participating in ICS activities such as the development of the local collaborating tumour groups and any planned ICS reference or advisory groups
- contact staff at the Cancer Coordination Unit to raise issues or register your interest in getting information about, and attending, workshops in 2005
- use the website to find out more information about cancer reforms in Victoria.

What to expect in future editions

It is our aim to keep you up to date on cancer reforms in Victoria. In future editions we also hope to be able to bring you interesting and relevant news from a range of programs related to cancer. These include programs that directly fund services that detect cancer such as breast and cervical screening or services that provide treatment for cancer such as hospitals, community-based and palliative care services. We will also bring you news from other programs within the department that support cancer services indirectly by developing the cancer workforce or planning for additional cancer services and equipment.

Your feedback and input is welcomed and encouraged. Please send ideas and small pieces of information you think would be of interest to the field to hannah.cameron@dhs.vic.gov.au

Unit profile

Cancer Coordination Unit

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Staff of the Cancer Coordination Unit can be contacted on 9616 2136 and further information is available from www.health.vic.gov.au/cancer/

The unit profile for the next edition of the Cancer bulletin will feature the Senior Medical Advisor's Unit.

Victorian rural health services

Key: Metropolitan ICS

Western & Central ICS: Melbourne Health, Royal Women's Hospital, Royal Children's Hospital, Western Health, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, Mercy Werribee Hospital and St Vincent's Health.

North Eastern ICS: Austin Health, Northern Health, Eastern Health and Mercy Hospital for Women.

Southern ICS: Bayside Health, Southern Health and Peninsula Health

Loddon Mallee

Bendigo Health Care Group
Boort District Hospital
Cohuna District Hospital
Echuca Regional Health
Inglewood & District Health Service
Kerang District Health
Kyabram District Health Services
Kyneton District Health Service
Maldon Hospital
Mallee Track Health & Community Service
Manangatang & District Hospital
Maryborough District Hospital
McIvor Health & Community Services
Mt Alexander Hospital
Mildura Base Hospital
Robinvale District Health Service
Rochester & Elmore District Health Service
Swan Hill District Hospital

Hume

Alexandra District Hospital
Alpine Health
Beechworth Health Service
Benalla & District Memorial Hospital
Cobram District Hospital
Goulburn Valley Health
Kilmore & District Hospital
Mansfield District Hospital
Nathalia District Hospital
Northeast Health Wangaratta
Numurkah District Health Service
Seymour District Memorial Hospital
Tallangatta Health Service
Upper Murray Health & Community Service
Wodonga Regional Health Service
Yea and District Memorial Hospital

Grampians

Ballarat Health Services
Beaufort and Skipton Health Service
Djerriwarrh Health Services
Dunmunkle Health Services
East Grampians Health Service
East Wimmera Health Service
Edenhope & District Hospital
Hepburn Health Service
Rural Northwest Health
Stawell Regional Health
West Wimmera Health Service
Wimmera Health Care Group

Barwon South Western

Barwon Health
Casterton Memorial Hospital
Colac Area Health
Coleraine District Health Services
Hesse Rural Health Service
Heywood Rural Health
Lorne Community Hospital
Otway Health and Community Services
Moynes Health Service
Portland District Health
South West Healthcare Service
Terang & Mortlake Health
Timboon & District Health Care Service
Western District Health Service

Metropolitan Melbourne

North Eastern ICS
Western & Central ICS
Southern ICS

Gippsland

Bass Coast Regional Health
Bairnsdale Regional Health Service
Central Gippsland Health Service
Gippsland Southern Health Service
Kooweerup Regional Health Service
Latrobe Regional Hospital
Omeo District Hospital
Orbost Regional Health
South Gippsland Hospital
West Gippsland Healthcare Group
Yarram & District Health Service

