

Mr. Elton Humphery

Thank you for extending the deadline for submissions to the References Committee into Services and Treatment Options for Persons with Cancer. I submit the following preamble and responses to *its* terms of reference.

Preamble.

I am a professional chartered engineer in my late 70's and for the last 5 years have been and still am the co-ordinator/convenor for the Kingborough Cancer Support Group, in Kingston, Tasmania. During this time I have had to come to realize, but not accept, the extremely narrow focus of oncologists when treating Cancer patients i.e. where only conventional treatments are used. I have also become aware that the public (and therefore patients) have no understanding or knowledge of the treatment options available to them-including current oncology practice.

Persons diagnosed with cancer, in general, are neither offered or take responsibility for their own health treatment decisions except in some cases.

Having sat with cancer patients consulting their oncologists I witnessed questions like 'well what else can be done if I'm terminal like you say?' being *told* 'nothing' and when probed on complementary/alternative (CAM) treatments received off hand dismissal or being told that 'you can but why waste your money! One oncologist just rolled his eyes upward in dismissal. Another cancer patient who admitted to being on an organic food diet was asked in a later visit, at which I attended, Are you still on that silly diet?'

So what we have here is a deliberate barrier being put up to deter cancer patients from details of all known evidence-based cancer treatments. This very narrow focus on patient treatment must be removed as a matter of urgency if medical costs are to come down and survival rates improved i.e. GP's, Oncologists and the Public made fully aware of all the treatments already available and their efficacy.

Federal Government recognition via Medicare of the CAM cancer treatments is long overdue.

We (Australia) just have to get outside the current closed mind/narrow focus of the medical profession regarding cancer treatment and GET FUNDING FOR INDEPENDENT RESEARCH INTO ALL CANCER THERAPIES.

Sincerely.



A.J. Cope MIEE, Grad Dip Mgt(CQU)

7th.Apri] 2005

Mr. Elton Humphery,
Secretary
Australian Senate
Community Affairs
Reference Committee,

Response to terms of reference;

In summary form,

A)

- i) At present the efficacy of conventional cancer treatments is far lower than it could be on an ALL known cancer treatments approach.
- ii) Obviously desirable if we get out of the current oncology approach and recognise and involve all trained health practitioners.
- iii) Outside of my present experience but obviously being utilised by such as The Gawler Foundation etc.
- iv) Outside my present experience and knowledge.
- v) The acceptance by mainstream medical practitioners that their present approach is not working and that trained health practitioners outside the conventional grouping offer exceptional skills in immune supportive treatments.

B)

- i) a) Lack of research funding and usually non-patentable products means less profits for manufacturers; this causes CAM treatments to be quite unattractive profit-wise thereby less likely to gain the research funding given by pharmaceutical companies.

National (Federal Government) funding and support must surely be the way to go WITH acceptance under Medicare as a boost to getting evidence-based cancer treatments into mainstream health.

- i) b) Conventional treatments would also need to be assessed on the same basis as i) a) above. Pharmaceutical Companies currently fund research in this area to the exclusion of CAM medicine/treatments; hence the urgent need for Federal Government funding.
- ii) Both conventional and CAM treatments need to be researched on an openly transparent basis as to efficacy with initial attention being given to conventional treatments as this is where most of the funding is spent to little effect.
- iii) The Federal Government has an inescapable duty to the Australian People to ensure that no bias exists in the provision of the most effective health treatments to the nation with equal access to Medicare for relief of the present cost burden on the patients under treatment.

THIS COVERS ALL CANCER TREATMENTS AS WELL AS ALL TREATMENTS USEFUL IN RESTORING HEALTH TO THE NATIONS SICK.

Glaring omissions in Medicare cover for conventional treatments offered over past years would be Dentistry and optical treatment

Response to Inquiry (by Mr. AJ. Cope 7th. April 2005)