

**INQUIRY INTO CURRENT AND FUTURE PROVISION OF  
HEALTH SERVICES IN THE SOUTH-WEST SYDNEY  
GROWTH REGION**

**Organisation:** South Western Sydney Local Health District Cancer Services  
**Date Received:** 19 March 2020

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Our Ref : GD/ck

19 March 2020

### **Submission to the NSW Parliamentary enquiry from SWSLHD Cancer Services**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the parliamentary enquiry into South Western Sydney services. I write as the Director of the South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) Cancer Services stream .

We endeavour to provide high-quality care to our cancer patients in South-Western Sydney and have also developed some unique innovative services to set ourselves apart from other services. Some of the work that we are extremely proud of is ensuring we maximise our research potential to attract high-quality staff to the district. Some of our innovative work includes the development of an MRI-linac to research better methods of radiotherapy delivery by putting together MRI diagnostic methods with radiotherapy machines to enable better treatment accuracy, the establishment of a Phase I clinical trials unit to trial first in human drugs being tested for better cancer therapy, the research and development of an internationally-innovative patient reported outcomes tool to better support cancer patients, development of research and development strategies to better manage our significant non-English speaking and refugee population, high-quality innovative health services research, the development of community support packages (PEACH packages) to support those dying patients whose preference is to die at home, projects that promote integrated care between cancer services and general practitioners, and many more. Our innovation was recognised by our LHD by acknowledging that cancer services will be the flagship service for the new Liverpool Hospital development.

I attach the current Cancer Services strategic plan 2018-2023 which was developed to prioritise the enhancement of services in Cancer across the LHD, especially to deal with the projected growth in cancer cases expected in the next 1-2 decades. The plan provides projections for future service demand. As you will see, the Local Health District expects to see an incredible 60% increase in cancer cases in our LHD in the next 15 years (page 14). This equates to an additional 3000 cases per year compared with the current rate of 4,800. This is an increase that is greater than the workload currently seen in some inner city cancer services total.

The increase is expected across all Local Government Areas in SWSLHD. The greatest projected increase will be in complex cancers such as lung and oesophageal cancer. Liver cancer is also significantly over-subscribed in our LHD due to our ethnic population with the associated risk factors. These cancers require more significant treatment than some other cancers.

The Cancer Services Strategic Plan highlights some of the significant challenges that we face in our district. These include the lower levels of health literacy, the later stages of presentation (i.e. more patients present with more advanced stages of cancer than in other districts), the high levels of co-morbid diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity and smoking related illnesses, the higher levels of non English-speaking patients, and a higher proportion of patients who are refugees from war-torn countries with significant mental health and post-traumatic stress disorders. Our patients will often present with enormous cancers that have often been neglected for some time and these require significantly more multi-disciplinary care than early cancers. In addition, due to the evolution of successful cancer treatments we find patients now require more prolonged therapy than ever before (thus increasing demand on chemotherapy and survivorship resources), more complex radiotherapy techniques and greater requirement for outpatient support especially survivorship and allied health services. A large proportion of patients come from poor backgrounds, often with no health insurance (and frequently no Medicare) and cannot afford therapy outside of the public system.

Our services are currently stretched, especially in this current health environment. Our Strategic Plan provides the roadmap for where we need to better develop services. Funding of this plan has been behind target in the plan, and it is expected enhancement funding will worsen from the impact that COVID-19 and the response to recent natural disasters has on health spending. We cannot lose sight of the fact that Cancer remains a significant disease with unacceptable mortality rates for our South-Western Sydney patients and therefore funding will need to follow at some point. I believe that if we were to deliver the strategic plan then we would meet the needs of our patients. Some of the key challenges is ensuring a sustainable workforce to meet the growing demand (this is felt especially in some surgical specialties such as cardio-thoracic surgery, gynaecological oncology and head and neck cancer, all allied health disciplines, palliative care, dermatology and care co-ordination), increasing the health literacy of our patient cohort to better support decision-making, maximising our efficiencies to keep patients out of hospital when they don't need to be in hospital and providing timely care at all times.

In terms of capital funding, the Liverpool Hospital redevelopment will better enable us to meet the needs of Liverpool patients. This is due for completion in 2025. The proposed new Bankstown Hospital redevelopment provides a tremendous opportunity to provide better access to cancer care for Bankstown patients especially with an expansion of chemotherapy facilities, greater cancer inpatient facilities and proposed radiotherapy treatment machines. We propose this be developed as part of a truly integrated cancer service across the LHD. This needs fast-tracking as the current Bankstown Cancer Centre is severely limited.

The Campbelltown Hospital Development provides some limited additional treatment capacity but it will not adequately address the projected demand for Cancer Services in the Macarthur-Wingecarribee district. This will require further funding for further development on the Campbelltown Hospital site.

I would be happy to answer any further questions that the enquiry might have.

Yours sincerely

**Professor Geoff Delaney**

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