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Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009

### **BATTLE CONTINUES AGAINST CANCER IN SA**

A new report from SA Health says that mortality rates for two key cancers; prostate and breast cancer, have declined over the past fifteen years in South Australia.

Health Minister John Hill today tabled in State Parliament the annual report, [Cancer in South Australia 2006](#), including the latest cancer statistics for SA. He also tabled the [Report on the Review of Cancer Services in SA](#), commissioned last year by the Minister to look at ways of improving cancer treatment in this state.

Minister Hill said there was evidence that screening programs and better treatment of cancers were leading to improved mortality rates.

“It’s really clear that early detection of cancers and new and innovative treatment of cancers over the past decade has led to much better outcomes for people with this insidious disease,” he said.

“The Cancer Council SA tells us that survival rates for many common cancers have increased by more than 30 per cent in the past 20 years. While there is great hope that survival rates are improving, the key really is better lifestyles so people don’t develop cancer in the first place.

“The review of cancer services provides us with valuable guidance on how to improve our systems across the public health sector – helping cancer patients get the best possible chance of recovery.

“In South Australia we’re determined to get the best possible care for cancer patients, with the roll-out of the Statewide Cancer Control Plan, and SA Health’s collaboration with the Cancer Council SA where we will match their \$54 million contribution in a joint campaign against the disease.”

The review, conducted by the SA Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care, was commissioned following incidents with radiotherapy at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, and chemotherapy at the Women’s and Children’s Hospital and Lyell McEwin, where patients were given cancer treatment that varied from the advisable dosage.

Minister Hill said he had requested SA Health to implement all 12 recommendations – with some of the recommendations already in progress.

“The review acknowledges the work already underway across SA Health to improve systems, processes and staff accreditation, and helps identify areas that require further attention,” he said. “Importantly, the recommendations do not indicate shortcomings in patient care, but are focused on governance, incident management, and reporting, and staff credentialing.”

The Chair of the SA Council on Safety and Quality in Healthcare, Hans Ohff, said: “South Australia is fortunate to have some of the most qualified and respected cancer clinicians in the country. Better application of their knowledge and experience, as well as strictly controlled, independent auditing systems, would deliver an enhanced health service to all South Australians,” he said.

The report, *Cancer in South Australia 2006*, also revealed:

- There were 8592 new cases of cancer and 3436 cancer deaths in 2006.
- The most common cancers were prostate, breast, colorectal, lung and melanoma.
- People 65 and over accounted for 60% of all cancers.

Both reports can be found online at [www.health.sa.gov.au](http://www.health.sa.gov.au)

### **Recommendations from Report on Review of SA Cancer Services:**

1. The South Australian Department of Health has developed a statewide cancer control plan with 107 recommendations. It is recommended that progress of the implementation of these recommendations be reviewed to ensure that the plan is fully implemented. It is essential that the implementation process is monitored for quality and timely execution.
2. Implementation of regional leadership and governance roles and structures should be finalised. The role of the Clinical Cancer Network (CCN) and how that differs from regional leadership and governance arrangements should be communicated.
3. The establishment of regional cancer management committees is planned.  
It is recommended they be appropriately supported to:
  - Provide support and leadership at the regional level to develop strategies as determined by the Statewide Cancer Control Plan, co-ordinated through the CCN.
  - Provide support and leadership for the collection, monitoring and reporting of process and outcome data on cancer services.
  - Receive reports on quality of care from cancer services within the region.
  - Report to the regional clinical governance and appropriate SA Health governance committees on the quality of care in cancer services.
  - Implement standardised protocols and systems of care.
4. The regional cancer management committees develop a three-year quality improvement plan for cancer services. This plan is to include:
  - A systematic audit schedule for radiation and cytotoxic therapies.
  - Guidelines for multi-disciplinary team function.
  - Clinical case and peer review guidelines.
  - A suite of clinical indicators.
  - A targeted approach to improvement activities.
  - The requirement for mandatory regular reporting of the outcomes of these audits.
5. Regional Cancer Directors be made responsible for effective risk assessment of cancer services in the regions to ensure that:
  - Identified risks are recorded on the relevant organisation’s risk register and appropriate mitigation strategies are implemented.
  - All cancer risks are reviewed at the regional and state levels.
6. The state incident management system be reviewed to ensure:
  - Identification, reporting and management of incidents, complaints and adverse events.

- Access to easily obtainable incident reports for service level reviews.
- That education and training is provided to all staff after the release of the incident management policy and guideline.

**7.** The development and implementation of a SA Health standard for multidisciplinary team (MDT) assessment in cancer services and that MDTs be appropriately supported to implement the standard.

**8.** The development and implementation of a standardised suite of clinical cancer indicators and reporting framework for the monitoring of safety, effectiveness, efficiency, satisfaction and access, as identified in the SA State Cancer Control Plan. This will require:

- That information systems are in place to collect data for the monitoring and evaluation of clinical outcomes
- The adoption of quality indicators at all points on the cancer continuum. Indicators may include the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) radiation oncology indicators and clinical indicators currently under development by the Cancer Institute, NSW.
- The statewide monitoring of key outcomes such as patient satisfaction, cancer incidence, staging, mortality and survival.
- The support of the cancer registry to provide up-to-date information, and the expansion of hospital cancer registries for the collection of clinical data.
- A commitment to benchmarking of services to monitor compliance with standards and achievement of quality.
- To support the development and implementation of processes and procedures for accreditation of services and credentialing of practitioners to ensure that quality outcomes are achieved and standards are adopted.

**9.** The following recommendations are submitted for improving the credentialing and competence assurance of clinical cancer services staff, including medical practitioners, nursing staff, pharmacists, radiation therapists and physicists.

- Medical staff standards, credentialing and scope of practice processes be defined, standardised, implemented and regularly reviewed in accordance with the soon to be released SA Health Policy.
- A statewide standard for the credentialing of chemotherapy nurses be adopted.
- Standardised training for oncology pharmacists and pharmacy technicians be developed and implemented.
- Training and competence testing of radiation therapists and medical physicists be benchmarked with interstate health services.
- Development and implementation of a SA Health credentialing and scope of practice information system.

**10.** The following recommendations are made to improve medication management:

- The development and implementation of a statewide, standardised protocol for manufacturing, delivery and ordering of chemotherapy.
- The development and implementation of a statewide, systematic approach to the development and review of chemotherapy protocols.
- Implementation of CHARM or an equivalent oncology information management system across SA Health hospitals.
- Review the SA policy on the management and handling of cytotoxics.

**11.** It is recommended that a review of safety and quality procedures in Country Health SA cancer services is undertaken.

**12.** It is recommended that SA Health implement a cancer services accreditation model within the next three years. Such a model should be consistent with national accreditation frameworks and in particular with Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care recommendations. In addition to, or included in this accreditation model should be a regular and robust audit process against the national radiation oncology standards.