

Cancer Voices Australia NEWS UPDATE

September 2013

Review of pharmacy funding arrangements for chemotherapy services

CVA members participated in the consumer consultations held by Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) during August in Adelaide and Sydney, and electronically. CHF's report will be an integral part of the DOHA Chemotherapy Funding Review due to be provided to the new Minister for Health in early October. CVA has also made a submission to the Australian National Audit Office investigation of the Administration of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

Clinical Practice Standards

Cancer Voices is advocating for the adoption, at national and state levels and in public and private sectors, of Clinical Practice Standards for both radiation oncology and medical oncology. We agree that this would offer both clinicians and patients assurance that treatment recommended is best practice. We support the adoption of *Radiation Oncology Practice Standards (2011)*, presently only mandated by Queensland. We have raised the concept with relevant Ministers, the Medical Oncology Group of Australia and the ACSQHC.

Cyclophosphamide – Security of continuous supply

Imports by Pfizer of this commonly used cancer drug are due to cease on 1 October. Alternative supplies have been found, but not in preferred tablet form. It appears that patients must pay as the new tablet imports have not been put through Australian approval processes. CVA continues to inquire into how a threat to supply can be allowed to arise and how to ensure it does not do so again.

Federal election issues

CVA wrote to the three major parties, seeking their views on the principal issues for people affected by cancer. The Greens, Labor and Coalition responded (received in that order) and these were immediately posted on our Facebook page. Cancer Voices welcomes the new Minister for Health, the Hon Peter Dutton MP, and looks forward to working with the Coalition Government.

Meetings with leading cancer organisations

CVA members appreciated the opportunity to attend two consultations seeking consumer opinion with Cancer Australia in recent months. It's good to know that our needs and views are valued by Australia's principal cancer agency. The consumer forum organised by the Tripartite Committee through the Faculty of Radiation Oncology, RANZCR, was another excellent opportunity. CVA also made an invited presentation to a Melbourne conference of Youth Cancer Services.

Say NO to Human Gene Patents campaign

CVA will continue to press for legislative change to address this issue with the new Government. We plan to build on the bipartisan support expressed to us during the year. Cancer Voices attended the first day's hearing of the five-judge Federal Court in Sydney (7-8 Aug).

Clinical Oncology Group of Australia (COSA) ASM, Adelaide Nov 2013

Cancer Voices will be represented by Cancer Voices SA which has assisted COSA with the Consumer Forum, has had an Abstract accepted and has nominated informed consumers to participate in ASM panel discussions.

Our revamped **website** www.cancervoicesaustralia.org has been launched. News Updates and all submissions are posted. It also includes electronic forms for:

- Stakeholders wishing to request informed Consumer Representatives
- Consumers wishing to be nominated for committees and projects
- Cancer consumer organisations interested in joining the Cancer Voices Alliance for input on mutual issues.

Cancer Voices Australia is the independent, volunteer voice of people affected by cancer since 2000.

