

## Cancer Voices Australia NEWS UPDATE

February 2014

### **World Cancer Day, 4 February** ([www.worldcancerday.org](http://www.worldcancerday.org))

World Cancer Day is a global initiative to raise awareness about cancer and encourage governments, organisations and individuals to rally to action. Cancer Voices Australia (CVA) is proud to be back working towards its aims and objectives on behalf of the cancer consumers of Australia. 2013 saw us fully engaged in providing the broad, networked, consumer view on national issues of Australians affected by cancer. We look forward to continuing to work closely with all national cancer agencies and service providers to pursue further improvements to the cancer experience and its outcomes. We are delighted with the response to our invitation to consumer-governed cancer groups to work together on national generic issues on an “as needs”, alliance basis. Such collaboration boosts the volume of the voices and ensures they are heard when and where they need to be.

### **Chemotherapy Funding Review**

Extended interim funding arrangements for the dispensing of chemotherapy drugs (\$82m until 30 June 2015) were announced by Health Minister, Peter Dutton, in December. CVA has called for an efficient and transparent funding model to address the present complex and opaque arrangements under the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement (5PCA). We support Consumers Health Forum’s (CHF) advice that negotiations should include stakeholders beyond government and industry.

### **Medical Oncology Practice Standards**

Our call for development of clinical practice standards in medical oncology has been well received. To meet a demonstrated consumer and clinician need, this issue remains a priority on our advocacy program for 2014.

### **A Cancer Drugs Fund?**

Initial discussions around the concept of an Australian version of the UK Cancer Drugs Fund are encouraging. CVA looks forward to offering the consumer perspective towards this and other proposals about how to ensure affordable and timely access to effective cancer drugs as the challenges increase.

### **Security of Cancer Drug Supply**

CVA welcomes the news that Cyclophosphamide in 50mg tablet form is again available to fill the gap since Pfizer ceased supply on 1 October 2013. TGA has granted exemption from registration for Baxter’s brand Endoxan which will be available from 1 February, 2014.

CVA remains concerned about the security of supply of necessary cancer drugs and the uncertainty which remains without supply assurance. Cancer patients want to see development of a policy which enables a speedy process to begin whenever cessation of supply is advised. We call for Government and industry, perhaps through the good offices of the TGA, and with consumer representation, to explore options so that this kind of situation won’t occur again.

### **Cancer Surgery Waiting Times** (See [www.myhospitals.gov.au](http://www.myhospitals.gov.au) or <http://www.nhpa.gov.au>)

The National Health Performance Authority (NHPA)’s report and most recent data, covering all Australian hospitals, were released on 28 November 2013. Two CVA consumer representatives served on the advisory committee which contributed to the analysis and presentation of this vital data. The majority of hospitals met the 30 day waiting time criteria. We encourage our network groups to approach State Health Departments to ensure those hospitals which have difficulty meeting criteria are assisted to do so.

### **National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA)**

Cancer Voices has accepted an invitation to become a Friend of the Alliance of the NRHA Inc, an important connection.

**Cancer Voices is the independent, volunteer voice of Australians affected by cancer - since 2000**

