

Cancer Voices Australia NEWS UPDATE

August 2015

Priority issues for Australians affected by cancer

As facilitator of the Australian Cancer Consumer Network, Cancer Voices has developed a survey using Survey Monkey to ask cancer consumer organisations about their main *generic* priorities. It will be sent out shortly and results will be used to inform our representatives in the lead up to the coming federal election, and to advise cancer agencies and charities what differences people affected by cancer in Australia want to see made.

Better access to cancer drugs:

The Senate Inquiry report on *Availability of new, innovative and specialist cancer drugs in Australia* is now due 9 September. It will be accessible via:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/Cancer_Drugs

Informed consent for cancer treatment and costs

Responding to concerns raised by consumers, CVA has released a Position Statement calling for regular, written informed consent for both treatment and costs of treatment, if any. See CVA website.

Implications of chemo under-dosing in SA

Media interest in this case has highlighted the need for quality & safety standards for the delivery of chemotherapy in both public and private sectors.

Travel insurance for cancer patients

CVA has met with the Insurance Council of Australia to outline the problems faced by people affected by cancer (experienced previously or currently) when trying to arrange travel insurance, and ways these might be addressed. So far, the ICA's interest in addressing this issue is very encouraging.

Regulator of Medical Cannabis Bill 2014

Following the positive recommendations of the Senate Inquiry, Cancer Voices supports the introduction and debate of this Bill ASAP. CVA has approached the Australian Cancer Consumer Network, all members of the Parliamentarians Supporting Cancer Causes (Friendship Group), and selected Senators to support its passage. We have welcomed the \$34m funding of the Lambert Initiative for medicinal cannabis research at USyd.

Cancer Screening: Are we harming the healthy?

Cancer Voices was invited to provide the consumer view on a panel for University of Sydney's *Sydney Ideas Health Forum* on this topic on 29 July. Roberta Higginson was our nominee and held the fort strongly for us.

Medibank Private's proposed changes to PHI: Cancer Voices has written to Medibank Private to express our concern about coverage changes at Canberra's Calvary Hospital, and potentially at other private hospitals, especially as they affect cancer patients who may have to return within 28 days of release.

CVA contributions to current Reviews: PBAC's Review of biosimilar drugs regulations; Senate Inquiry into Chronic Disease, the Medical Research Future Fund Bill and the Medicare Benefits Schedule Reviews.

Consumers attending cancer conferences: a rebuff from COSA, but CVA is pleased to note the arrival of an international movement, Patients Included see www.patientsincluded.org which establishes a Charter to support the participation of consumers in conferences which are associated with relevant health care. Meanwhile, CVA has offered two consumer related Abstracts to the COSA ASM Conference in November.

Jeannie Ferris Cancer Australia Recognition Award: received by Cancer Voices' Bridget Whelan for an exceptional contribution to supporting women affected by gynaecological cancer, through her commitment to improving outcomes as a consumer advocate. Congratulations, Bridget!

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