



11 September 2020

Tēnā koutou katoa,

One year ago, the Prime Minister announced the establishment of a cancer control agency in New Zealand. As I reflect on this 'unprecedented' year, I am immensely proud of my team. It is no small feat to set-up an Agency from scratch in the middle of a global pandemic. I am also humbled by the determination of cancer nurses, doctors, researchers, volunteers and support staff, among many others, who have worked tirelessly to manage the impacts of COVID-19 and better the lives of people affected by cancer.

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini

Success is not mine alone, it is the work of many people.

Expressions of Interest in Consumer Reference Group

We have received many Expressions of Interest for our Consumer Reference Group. This group will focus on identifying practical, creative, person-centred solutions to the problems facing people affected by cancer and sharing them with me. I am looking forward to the establishment of the group and working with them to improve outcomes for people living with cancer.

COVID-19 Resurgence

Tuesday 11 August saw a return of COVID-19 to New Zealand communities. Te Aho o Te Kahu rapidly refreshed cancer treatment guidance, thanks to our working groups, and we supported DHBs to continue delivering cancer treatment under all Alert Levels. Early indications are the impact of the August lockdown on cancer surgeries in the wider Auckland region has been minimal. I would like to acknowledge all those involved for their determination to continue delivering essential cancer treatments.

In April, our Equity team led a stocktake of Patient Transport and Accommodation services available during lockdown. This work has been developed over the last month, culminating in the production of information sheets on Patient Transport and Accommodation Services for affected regions. This has been a great opportunity for

Te Aho o Te Kahu to work directly with people on the ground in each region to improve the experiences of people living with cancer.

COVID-19 catch-up in full swing

In August we released the third report in our series looking at the impact of COVID-19 on cancer services. The report shows there was a substantial increase in new cancer registrations and diagnostic procedures in June compared to May 2020. This report shows that we are catching up on cancer registrations from the lockdown period. The overall number of diagnostic procedures and new cancer registrations in 2020 remains lower than 2019. Cancer treatment services continue to be delivered at pre-COVID volumes.

The COVID and Cancer Report to end July has recently been circulated to DHBs and will shortly be up on our Reports webpage. <http://reports.teaho.govt.nz/>

Updated Polyp Surveillance Guidance out now

In a joint initiative with the National Screening Unit, working through the National Bowel Cancer Working Group, we have released updated guidance for Polyp Surveillance to DHBs. This advice brings us in line with international best practice and means that, for some groups, the interval between procedures can be extended and for others, at lower risk of bowel cancer, follow up can now be a recommendation to participate in the bowel screening programme. I am excited about the impact this will have on colonoscopy waiting lists.

Cancer Society receives Govt funding boost

It was announced last week that the Cancer Society is to receive one-off government funding of up to \$650,000 to help them continue delivering their essential accommodation and support services at increased COVID alert levels. This is wonderful news for people living with cancer and I would like to acknowledge the essential work the Cancer Society has been doing to provide transport and accommodation during the COVID-19 resurgence. We worked closely with the Ministry of Health, the Minister's Office and the Cancer Society to get this across the line and I would like to thank everyone who contributed to making this happen.

Telehealth Webinar

Also in August, Dr Chris Jackson, Medical Director of the Cancer Society NZ, successfully facilitated our first national cancer webinar on telehealth during COVID-19. Experts from New Zealand and Australia came together to discuss their

experiences and the challenges and opportunities ahead. There were 200+ registrations and feedback has been very positive. It is now available to view here: <https://youtu.be/LkQqpJ4Qilk>

Neuroendocrine cancer treatment in Auckland

We are working with ADHB, the Ministry of Health, PHARMAC and the Unicorn Foundation NZ to have PRRT, Peptide Receptor Radionuclide Therapy, up and running in Auckland. We are aware of how distressing it is for those who are unable to get to Australia for their treatment and the impact of this on their wellbeing. Finding a way to deliver treatment in New Zealand is an example of cancer sector collaboration at its best and we are hopeful the first patients will receive treatment before the end of September.

Look after yourselves, your whānau, staff and colleagues, and stay safe.

Ngā manaakitanga
Di

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