

National Bowel Cancer Screening Program

Victorian implementation news

Issue one May 2007

Introduction

This information sheet has been developed to provide key facts about the implementation and progress of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP) in Victoria.

NBCSP overview

The NBCSP is a Commonwealth-funded population health initiative aimed at early detection and prevention of bowel cancer. Phase One of the NBCSP will see Australians turning 55 and 65 between 1 May 2006 and 30 June 2008 invited to participate.

The Commonwealth Government has provided some funding to implement aspects of the NBCSP. This funding will provide: a National Screening Register; distribution by mail of faecal occult blood test (FOBT) kits; pathology testing of completed and returned FOBT kits; information for general practitioners and other clinicians; and national monitoring and evaluation of the program.

The Commonwealth commenced inviting eligible Victorians in January 2007. Participants with a positive FOBT result will be presenting to their GP and health service providers for further assessment and referral for colonoscopy if appropriate.

Assessment colonoscopy is provided through 'usual care' within the public or private system.

No additional Commonwealth funding is being provided for screening program-generated colonoscopies in the public sector. Medicare rebates will continue to apply for General Practitioner visits, and for colonoscopies and other specialist services in the private sector.

National Register

The National Register monitors the journey of participants along the screening pathway, through the provision of information reports by service providers (general practitioners, clinicians conducting the colonoscopy and histopathology).

Submission of a satisfactory report to the National Register qualifies service providers for a Commonwealth information payment of \$6.60 per report.

Screening pathway

1. Eligible participants are sent an invitation and a FOBT kit with return mail instructions.
2. Participants return their sample to the NBCSP pathology company and are notified of their test result by letter. Participants may nominate their GP to also be informed of the results.
3. If the FOBT result is positive, the participant is encouraged to consult their GP for further assessment and referral for colonoscopy if appropriate.

Victorian implementation approach

The Victorian Government has allocated \$14 million over the next four years to support public health services in responding to the NBCSP. The program will generate additional demand for colonoscopies and will potentially place additional service and cost pressure on the Victorian public health system. Other impacts on the system arising from the NBCSP include demand for follow-up treatment and care for those who have bowel cancer or other bowel conditions detected.

The Victorian budget allocation will be utilised to support three important activities:

- Funding for public health services designated by the department to provide colonoscopies generated by the Program.
- Funding Integrated Cancer Services (ICS) to lead regionally-based service redesign initiatives involving public health services performing colonoscopy.
- Supporting general practitioners and other health professionals with information, and education and support on the NBCSP and bowel cancer.

Designated providers

The Victorian model for Phase One of the program will comprise a selected number of designated public sector providers, to ensure that those program participants requiring assessment colonoscopy in the public sector are able to access this in a timely way.

The rationale for limiting the number of providers in Phase One is to trial and refine a future program model, and to allow time for capacity-building across the sector more broadly.

The department has initially nominated 14 public health services across the state as 'designated providers'.

While all public hospitals will be expected to provide service to patients requesting it, designated providers will be promoted by the department as those best able to ensure timely access for NBCSP-generated patients requiring colonoscopy in the public sector.

Funding arrangements for public hospitals are detailed in the departments Policy and Funding Guidelines, which are available at www.health.vic.gov.au/pfg

The designated providers are:

Southern Melbourne ICS:

- Bayside Health (Alfred)
- Southern Health (Monash & Dandenong)

North Eastern Metropolitan ICS:

- Austin Health

Western and Central Metropolitan ICS:

- St Vincent's Health

Barwon South Western Regional ICS:

- Barwon Health (Geelong)
- South West Healthcare (Warrnambool)

Gippsland Regional ICS:

- La Trobe Regional Hospital (Traralgon)
- Central Gippsland Health Service (Sale)

Grampians Regional ICS:

- Ballarat Health
- Wimmera Health Care Group (Horsham)

Hume Regional ICS:

- Goulburn Valley Health (Shepparton)
- Northeast Health (Wangaratta)

Loddon Mallee Regional ICS:

- Bendigo Health
- Mildura Base Hospital.

GP education and support

General Practice Divisions Victoria (GPDV) and The Cancer Council of Victoria are working together to ensure GPs have access to information, education and support regarding the NBCSP. Clinicians from designated providers will be actively involved in education sessions.

Evaluation

The full extent of the impact of the NBCSP on the Victorian public health system demand will not be clear for some time.

A review of Phase One implementation in Victoria is planned and will add to information gathered by the Commonwealth for the national evaluation. In the meantime, all public health services (including non-designated providers) will be monitored by the department over coming months for changes in demand attributable to NBCSP generated services.

Full instructions on coding of NBCSP procedures will be provided in upcoming Hospitals Circulars and Health Data Standards and Systems Bulletin.

Service redesign

Funding for colonoscopy service redesign will enable ICS to undertake service mapping, analysis and improvement work in each public health service, in collaboration with health service gastroenterology departments. Service redesign is essential to ensure that future system capacity will be adequate to respond to the progressive roll out of NBCSP to participants aged between 55 and 74 in the years leading up to 2012.

Further information

Further information on the NBCSP initiative is available at:

www.cancerscreening.gov.au

For specific information on the Victorian implementation of the NBCSP, contact:

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