

ALBURY WODONGA HEALTH INTEGRATION UPDATE

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVES

This fortnight's newsletter focuses on the AWH oncology unit. It is the first in a series of articles to help you get to know AWH, the services on offer and the staff teams responsible for these services.

Ms Heather Gray
Chief Executive
Greater Southern Area Health Service

Mr Ray Sweeney
Chief Executive Officer
Wodonga Regional Health Service

IN THIS EDITION

AWH Oncology Unit

Albury Wodonga Health Oncology Unit

Initially, the AWH oncology unit will continue to operate from the existing oncology unit at the Albury Base Hospital. The unit at Albury Base Hospital is a non-inpatient service consisting of eight chairs and two beds. It is situated near the main entrance of the hospital next to the Allied Health department.

The service operates from 9:00am to 5:30pm on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. On Tuesday it operates from 8:30am to 5:00pm. The unit provides chemotherapy and other treatments to oncology patients from Albury, Wodonga and the surrounding regions of southern NSW and north east Victoria.

There are approximately 300 occasions of service each month, with patient admission to the medical ward on a needs basis. The medical ward is situated close to the oncology unit, across the main corridor of the hospital.

There are six Registered Nurses working in the unit. Each of the nurses has completed or is undertaking specialised professional development qualifications in oncology. The medical ward team rotate through the unit for clinical development and succession planning.

Other clinical services include a designated oncology social worker and a range of allied health services accessed through the hospital. There are also specialist cancer care coordinators who link closely with the unit.

The service is supported by four specialist oncologists and an accredited oncology registrar.

The Cancer Institute of NSW's recent survey has confirmed that ABH oncology patients are receiving a high quality of care from dedicated staff of the medical, nursing, allied health and administration areas. The survey identified that 98.1% of patients classified their care as excellent or very good. Patients also believed that a particular area of strength is the delivery of coordinated care by multi-disciplinary teams.

The oncology unit is currently undertaking a range of initiatives focussing on developing patient education and information. These include topics such as:

- Nutritional needs of cancer patients
- Patient rights and responsibilities
- How cancer can impact on changes in work and other activities
- How the hospital and staff can make chemotherapy sessions more comfortable for patients while in the unit



Oncology staff on duty in the unit on 24 April 2009 are (l-r): Mr Alan Pegler (RN), Ms Narelle Steinke (RN) and Ms Jennifer Commins (Nurse in Charge).

Further information

Visit: www.health.vic.gov.au/awh or email: awh@dhs.vic.gov.au