



MEDIA RELEASE

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LEADER IN CANCER CARE

South Western Sydney Area Health Service (SWSAHS) is leading the way in the management of patients suffering from cancer.

A new State-wide plan, recently announced by the Premier of NSW, Mr Bob Carr, calls for the recruitment of 50 new cancer care nurses, to act as a 'one stop' contact point for patients needing help with every stage of their illness and treatment.

"We already have, not just one, but five specialised coordinators already doing this job," said the Project Manager, SWS Cancer Service, Katherine Tynan, who is based at Liverpool Hospital.

"They mainly work out of Liverpool and Campbelltown Hospitals but cover patients from the whole area, and they've been doing the job for the last eighteen months," she said.

"The coordinators provide a continuous stream of information, and help patients diagnosed with cancer through the often complex treatment process.

"Cancer patients are often faced with extra difficulties brought on by their illness, such as accommodation and coping with everyday life problems.

"For example, a patient may require surgery, then chemotherapy or other treatment, and also require support from their family and community. The coordinator is there every step of the way to help and guide them through all the appointments, treatment, referrals and anything else they have to undertake," said Ms Tynan.

SWS Cancer Service Lung Care Coordinator, Clare Baulman said patients did not need to go to hospital as often. "They have confidence to get on with their everyday lives knowing a care coordinator is just a phone call away."

Ms Baulman, a Registered Nurse with a background in Neurosurgical Intensive Care as a Clinical Nurse Specialist, is the single point of contact for lung cancer patients to contact anytime during their illness.

She also organises regular multi-disciplinary team meetings where the patient's history and treatment is discussed by a variety of clinical specialists to make sure the best treatment is given.

She also attends hospital business meetings where she provides feedback from the point of view of the patient, right through the system to management.

A Campbelltown man, Reg Wales, who was diagnosed with small cell lung cancer last year at the age of 57 said that without Ms Baulman his treatment would have stalled.

"She arranges everything. She took two calls from me last week even though she was on holidays.

"She's helped lift our spirits by spending time with me and my family."

There are 30,000 new cases of cancer diagnosed in NSW every year and 12,000 people die from the disease.

The new State Government plan includes the formation of a new institution called the Cancer Institute NSW and the release of a Discussion Paper to develop a Cancer Plan for 2004-2006.

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