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Australia on the path for broader cancer care navigation support

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MEDIA RELEASE

Australia on the path for broader cancer care navigation support

- In the lead up to World Cancer Day (4 February 2022), All.Can Australia is emphasising the need to shift to broader access for cancer care navigation to support more Australians*
- New research and economic modelling reveal that there may be up to \$46 million in savings to the health system per year by implementing a non-cancer specific, care navigation model to support Australians diagnosed with cancer¹*
- If adopted, the new cancer care navigation model could deliver incalculable benefits to over 150,000 Australians living with cancer²*

1 February 2022, Sydney Australia: In the lead up to World Cancer Day, advocacy group All.Can Australia is encouraging a shift to broader cancer care navigation to ensure more Australians receive support as they navigate the health system following a diagnosis of cancer, regardless of their cancer type.

All.Can Australia has shared details from new research that highlights the potential benefits of establishing Australia's first all-encompassing cancer care navigation model.

The proposed cancer care navigation model is designed to provide guidance to all cancer patients - regardless of cancer type, patient demographic or location – as they traverse the health system.

In partnership with research partner Healthcare Management Advisors (HMA), All.Can Australia has been focusing on cancer care navigation to find sustainable healthcare solutions and address common pain points experienced by patients. According to a survey of Australians with cancer undertaken by All.Can in 2018, patients experience significant confusion and distress when moving through the health system. 1 In contrast, patients with access to cancer navigation, were better able to overcome barriers to care.1

The much-needed focus on cancer care navigation aligns with the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) World Cancer Day theme, "Close the Care Gap", which is about raising awareness of the equity gap that affects many people with cancer and is costing lives.

Research snapshot

HMA's research on behalf of All.Can Australia concluded that a universal cancer care navigation model for all Australians may be able to deliver multiple patient, health system and economic benefits.

- Total service costs for the proposed single model were estimated at \$56 million per year³
- The model⁴ estimated that the proposed cancer care navigation model would generate net annual economic savings of:
 - \$67 million to the health system, through reductions in inpatient care and emergency department presentations
 - \$5 million to workplace productivity by reducing employee absenteeism
 - \$3 million in reduced patient education expenses for not-for-profit organisations
 - \$7 million in reduced transport costs for patients.

The model could generate annualised savings of \$46 million per year or \$900 per patient.⁵

Represents a return on investment of 44% based on the overall service cost.

Professor John Zalcberg – Co-Chair of the All.Can Australia Steering Committee and Head of the Cancer Research Program, Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine School of Public Health at Monash University – a more integrated approach to cancer care navigation would make it easier for those diagnosed with cancer to navigate through Australia's complex health system.

"The efforts to investigate a single model that can benefit all Australians diagnosed with cancer has the potential to transform cancer care delivery. This report helps to take our work to the next step, as now we potentially have a solution to tackle this. While the economic analysis of our research shows strong return on investment, it is the ability to better utilise existing services and create better connectivity that will make a huge difference to patients," said Professor Zalcberg.

Bill Petch – Chief Executive Officer of National Asthma Council Australia and Co-Chair of the All.Can Australia Steering Committee – said the establishment of a new cancer care navigation model can't occur in isolation and needs to factor in existing services.

"Our model has been designed to drive equitable access to cancer services, but an important consideration of our approach has been to make the best use of existing resources to address a critical unmet need," said Mr Petch.

“Patients have long shared their feelings of disempowerment within our current health system. The adoption of a patient-centric and technology-driven navigation model could help address the multitude of unmet needs Australians with cancer face, including inequitable access. Our focus and investments should really be aimed at a singular solution that has potential to meet the needs of all Australians now and in the future.”

All.Can Australia also views the model as an opportunity to utilise emerging technology to drive better connectivity and equitable access in the cancer space. The novel model has the potential to leverage telehealth, emerging artificial intelligence and experienced navigators (both allied and healthcare professionals) already working across the health system.

All.Can Australia plans to leverage the research findings to continue discussion with government and other likeminded organisation to explore piloting and further data collection.

Ends

Issued by Palin Communications on behalf of All.Can Australia. Palin Communications is the secretariat for the Australian All.Can initiative and provides administrative support to the Steering Committee.

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About All.Can

All.Can is an international, multi-stakeholder initiative involving patients, clinical, academic and industry experts, as well as policymakers. All.Can aims to help define better solutions for sustainable cancer care and improve patient outcomes in the future. All.Can is made possible with financial support from Bristol-Myers Squibb (main sponsor), Amgen, MSD and Johnson & Johnson (sponsors) and Varian (contributor), with additional non-financial (in kind) support from Intacare and Goings On.

The All.Can Australia initiative is currently funded by Bristol-Myers Squibb Australia.

None of the content of All.Can discussions or activities is specific or biased to any specific treatment or therapy.

References

1. "Patient insights on cancer care: Opportunities for improving efficiency. Findings from the international All.Can patient survey". Commissioned by the All.Can initiative. Access via <https://www.all-can.org/>
2. Cancer Australia. All cancers in Australia. Available at <https://www.canceraustralia.gov.au/impacted-cancer/what-cancer/cancer-australia-statistics> (accessed January 2021).
3. Based on 2019/20 prices. The direct input cost of a national All.Can CCN service was estimated at \$56 m per annum. This estimate was informed by data provided by Rare Cancers Australia, the Queensland Nurse Navigator Service and the McGrath Foundation, who deliver comparable support services.
4. Based on 2019/20 prices and represents modelled savings generated by an All.Can CCN.
5. Net savings generated by the All.Can CCN model based on the cost of the service and the gross savings generated.

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