



WA Cancer Plan 2020 – 2025

Implementation Update

November 2021

Background

The WA Cancer Plan 2020-2025 (the Cancer Plan) was launched in February 2020. The Cancer Plan provides direction for the state to achieve a well-coordinated, consumer focused cancer control system and to improve cancer outcomes for Western Australians. [Priorities for implementation](#) were established in December 2020.

This Communiqué provides stakeholders with quarterly updates on initiatives underway to implement the *WA Cancer Plan 2020-2025 Priorities for Implementation* and opportunities for engagement. Please share with interested parties.

Consumer Information, Support, Transitional and Survivorship Care

Underway

2.6.1 Implement a stratified and coordinated approach to meet the information needs of those affected by cancer.

The 'Information Needs for Consumers' project commenced in July 2021. The project is being led by the Cancer and Palliative Care Research and Evaluation Unit (CaPCREU) in collaboration with a Project Working Group (PWG) convened by the Department of Health, Health Networks. CaPCREU and the PWG have continued to meet monthly to progress the program of work, which currently comprises a consumer survey along with desktop and jurisdictional reviews. The reviews are underway and CaPCREU are awaiting ethics approval to disseminate the survey. Dissemination will be via key stakeholders, such as Cancer Council WA, Health Consumers Council WA and Solaris Cancer Care. The expected outcome of this work is to identify recommendations for solution(s) to meet the informational needs for people affected by cancer. Outcomes are expected in April 2022.

5.11.2 Establish an Aboriginal Cancer Nurse Coordinator to coordinate care for Aboriginal people with complex cancer care needs.

Underway

WACPCN CIU will soon recruit for an Aboriginal Clinical Nurse Consultant. The position will be advertised in January 2022 and help to apply for the position is available. Please email the Coordinator of Nursing if you would like to learn more.

WACPCN.CoordinatorofNursing@health.wa.gov.au

Cancer Data

Underway

3.8.1 Develop and roll-out an annual PREMS collection for those affected by cancer using internationally recognised and consumer endorsed measures.

WACPCN CIU recently awarded a contract to the University of Western Australia to deliver a Patient Experience Survey to all patients diagnosed with Cancer in Western Australia in 2019. The survey is currently being disseminated to all eligible patients, with the option to complete online or by return mail. The survey uses the *All.Can* validated tool and findings will be used to better understand the cancer patient journey and inform future planning of cancer services. Any enquiries should be directed to the research team in the first instance angela.ives@uwa.edu.au or WA Cancer Registry wacanreg@healthwa.gov.au.

<https://www.all-can.org/what-we-do/research/patient-survey/>

5.4.1 Develop a timely data collection for cancer stage at diagnosis.

Curtin University staff, including a project coordinator, project officer, and data scientist, have commenced the development and implementation of cancer stage at diagnosis, initially covering breast and colorectal tumour groups. A Project Advisory Group has been proposed and invites to members will be sent imminently. This will be followed by the creation of tumour working groups. Collection and validation of population-based staging at diagnosis is expected to commence in early 2022.

State-wide Governance and Workforce

Underway

2.8.3 Introduce a dedicated genetic-oncology position.

Genetic Services will be commencing a Genetics-Oncology Training position for 2022. The position will be funded via a WACPCN grant, but thereafter it is unclear if funding will be sustainable. Opportunities to explore ongoing sustainable funding options during 2022 to ensure the position can continue will be investigated.

2.9.6 Strengthen the governance and consumer access to centralised state-wide cancer services.

Implementation of State-wide Comprehensive Genomic Profiling (CGP) at PathWest Anatomical Pathology is progressing well. An advisory Committee was established to oversee the implementation and planning of this state-wide project. The project is enabling the continuation of CGP, which commenced in 2017 as part of the '6 Cancers' study, for which funds ran out at the end of the 2019-2020 financial year. The logistics and ethics processes of implementing the 'State-wide CGP' project are now in place and the project has ethics approval for the inclusion of eligible patients from all cancer categories. The project is currently operational at all 6 major hospitals: SCGH, FSH, RPH, PCH and KEMH and St John of God, Subiaco. Work is in progress to expand and accept referrals from all other hospitals.

Comprehensive sequencing has commenced using highly suitable NGS panels. The laboratory and clinical workflows have been established, including specimen processing, bioinformatics and the multidisciplinary Molecular Tumour Board meetings. The purpose of the meetings is to present

complex NGS data and discuss each case in the context of patient management, available treatments and matching clinical trials. There is strong consumer representation and the study group is working with our consumer representatives to replace the current Hospital based consent forms with a uniform, state-wide consent form, as a joint project between the Genomic Strategy group and the Cancer Strategy group.

2.9.8 Seek accreditation of genomic sequencing panel tests for profiling of cancer patients.

A validation study for a new 33 gene panel has been completed and was recently assessed by an assessor from National Accreditation Testing Authority (NATA). Outcome of the NATA assessment and subsequent endorsement is awaited. The panel will be used for routine biomarker testing and for follow up analysis of variants detected by CGP, when required. The panel includes genes that are covered by Medicare items as well as biomarkers that are not yet covered by Medicare. It will build on the scope of the previous accredited 26 gene panel. Furthermore, NGS optimisation and validation of a large, 170 gene panel, has been completed and work is in progress to summarise and complete the validation of the laboratory test to submit to NATA in due course.

Multidisciplinary Teams and Optimal Care Pathways

Underway

5.3.1 Purchase and roll-out across WA health system providers, a fit for purpose multidisciplinary team (MDT) meeting software system to better coordinate and facilitate cancer MDT meetings.

The Department of Health's Cancer Multidisciplinary Activity Program (CanMAP) is progressing through the Discovery Phase, involving a detailed examination of WA's requirements and specifications. The team have enlisted Dr Annette McWilliams as the Senior Clinical User to work alongside subject matter experts and the QLD Cancer Control Analysis Team (QCCAT) during this phase of the procurement. Post Discovery, the Evaluation Panel will meet to assess QCCAT's offering, anticipated to be early in the new year. A successful evaluation will lead to award and the implementation of a state-wide, fit for purpose MDM software solution.

2.9.1 Develop framework for referral for molecular testing for public oncology patients.

The implementation framework for referral of cases for CGP has been adjusted to reflect referrals based on emerging biomarkers and priority of testing of tumours that do not have associated Medicare funding. As a result, tumours such as mesothelioma, gynaecological, urothelial cancers, upper gastrointestinal tumours (oesophageal, gastric, pancreas, biliary tree and small bowel), rare cancers, triple negative breast cancer and metastatic castrate resistant prostate cancer have been selected for the first round of CGP testing. Furthermore, criteria for case referral to genetic services for handling potential germline variants detected as a result of the comprehensive genomic profiling have been set. A protocol and an algorithm based on national as well as international guidelines have been put in place through combined efforts of PathWest Anatomical Pathology and Genetic Services Western Australia.

Other News

Accredited Cancer Australia online learning modules for best practice breast cancer care.

Cancer Australia has released a suite of six breast cancer online learning modules for primary care health professionals to improve knowledge about contemporary, best practice breast cancer care.

Through an engaging and user-friendly learning experience, the modules present the latest information on breast cancer diagnosis and management, encouraging health professionals to implement evidence-based practices when caring for people affected by breast cancer across the cancer care continuum. Each course is accredited with 1 educational activity hour for continuing professional development.

To access the courses, visit: <https://www.cancerlearning.gov.au/topics/breast-cancer>

[WA Department of Health staff publish research paper on rare cancers.](#)

In July 2021, staff from the WA Department of Health published a descriptive study in the journal *BMC Cancer* investigating the epidemiology of rare, less common, and common cancers in WA (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8265087/>). This was the first study of its kind to define a list of clinically distinct cancers in WA according to rarity, which was based on incidence rates derived from WA Cancer Registry data for 2013-2017. Cancers were defined as rare (< 6), less common (6–12), or common (> 12) based on their crude incidence rate per 100,000 people per year. The study identified that rare cancers make up 21.5% (95% CI: 57.3-59.1%) of all cancer diagnoses in WA. It also found that rare cancer patients experience a poorer five-year survival rate of 58.2% compared to patients diagnosed with common cancers who had a five-year survival rate of 87.8% (95% CI: 87.3-88.3%). Together, rare and less common cancers represent 48.4% of all cancer diagnoses in WA. These data clearly demonstrate the significant collective impact these cancers have on Western Australians and highlight rare and less common cancers as an area for ongoing attention from the WA health system. The recent appointment of a Rare and Less Common Cancer Nurse Coordinator in the North Metropolitan Health Service demonstrates the commitment of the health system to support rare and less common cancer patients.

If you would like to include information in this Communiqué regarding your initiatives to implement the *WA Cancer Plan 2020-2025 Priorities for Implementation*, please contact the WA Department of Health's Cancer Network via email to cancernetwork@health.wa.gov.au.

Contributors to this edition include the Department of Health's Cancer Network, WACPCN CIU, WA Cancer Registry, PathWest, Department of Health's CanMap team and Department of Health's Office of Population Health Genomics unit.

Further Information

Please visit the WA Cancer Plan website:

https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/U_Z/WA-Cancer-Plan

If you no longer want to receive this Communiqué please advise via [email](#)

Want to help improve health services in WA? [Subscribe to Health Networks!](#)