

**CURRENT STATUS ON THE SUBMISSION MADE
BY THE PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP - ACT REGION INC.
TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH IN THE ACT GOVERNMENT
CONCERNING THE APPOINTMENT OF PROSTATE CARE NURSES**

On 9 September 2009 the Prostate Cancer Support Group – ACT Region Inc. made a submission to Ms Katy Gallagher, MLA the Minister for Health in the ACT Government requesting that additional specialist prostate cancer nurses be appointed in the ACT.

At that time there was one prostate/urology nurse co-ordinator in the ACT in comparison to four breast care nurses, despite the incidence of, and mortality from, prostate cancer being 15% greater than for breast cancer.

Additional copies were sent to Mr. Jeremy Hanson, Shadow Minister for Health, ACTACT Legislative Assembly, Ms Amanda Bresnan, ACT Greens Spokesperson for Health, ACT Legislative Assembly and Ms Mary Porter AM, Member, ACT Legislative Assembly and long term supporter of the Group.

On 8 October 2009 the Minister replied indicating that a Cancer Services Plan for ACT Health was being prepared and advising that the submission had been forwarded Ms Lisa McGlynn the Executive Director of Capital and Regional Cancer Service so that the submission could be considered in the ongoing development of the Cancer Services Plan.

She also acknowledged the work of the Support Group, in particular the funding of four nurses to complete a specialist unit concerning the management of prostate cancer.

Ms Bresnan and Ms Porter both initiated contact with the Group and arranged to meet with representatives. They also wrote letters of support to the Minister.

On 7 January 2010 a representative of the Group met with Ms Kristen Connell who was acting as the Executive Director of Capital and Regional Cancer Service. Kristen is the planning officer for the Cancer Services Plan. This was a most cordial meeting and Ms Connell was obviously aware of the content of the submission. Both parties benefited from the interaction.

She indicated that the Cancer Services Plan, which had begun in 2007, and which would be used to guide practice for the next five years, was in its final stages. As part of this process a consultant had been employed to consider the need for additional nurse care co-ordinators. It was likely that a draft for discussion would be released within the next two months and our support group would definitely be consulted.

On 25 May 2010, two members of the Group met with Ms McGlynn, Ms Connell, Ms Narelle Ford, the acting Director of Nursing for Capital Region Cancer Service and

Ms Vivienne Van Dissel the Prostate/Urology Nurse Co-ordinator. This was again a cordial and effective meeting.

Although the Plan had not yet been released for comment considerable additional progress had been made and the consultation process was expected to commence soon.

The Support Group members outlined the most common problems reported by men attending Group meetings and during other interactions. It was stressed that there was a particular need for support during the pre-treatment period. Possible ways in which this issue and other matters of concern could be addressed in the near future were discussed.

Date prepared: 16 June 2010