

Office of the Director General Health Care Services - Cancer Care Pathways Directorate

Structure, Functions and Responsibilities

Functions

This innovative Cancer Care Pathways Directorate has commenced work on aspects of care to offer support, guide and help increase access to care, care coordination and continuity of care for cancer patients. As part of its pathway, aspects of patient needs must be continuously explored as cancer has several implications towards family life, social life and consequently society in general.

Cancer Care spans the whole patient pathway from screening or initial referral for a symptom to cancer diagnosis to treatment followed by survivorship, palliative care or end-of-life and therefore, this requires continuous improvements in patients' experiences and outcomes across the cancer journey. On an organizational level, it aims to illustrate patient flows through the different phases of the cancer pathways for different cancers with the aim of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the current service provision and improve pathways of care. This information shall be made available for policy, decision makers, stakeholders and institutions. Such research initiatives shall provide assistance to the Chief Medical Officer, the Director General (Health Care Services) and the National Cancer Plan working group by contributing the necessary evidence in the formulation of policy and strategy in the area of cancer care.

Aims and Responsibilities

This directorate has commenced work on the following aspects:

- To identify issues, problems, unmet needs and service gaps and recommend initiatives or amendments to procedures or cancer pathways as required towards improving care coordination and continuity of care for cancer patients and their families and to improve quality and timely care;
- To improve communication and networking between various organisations / hospitals / entities / programmes;
- To carry out research and audits to provide evidence regarding timelines for cancer pathways to provide the necessary recommendations and direction for implementing care coordination and other service improvements;
- To improve coordination of palliative patients;
- To develop and improve patient information in the treatment stage and any other information gaps in cancer services;
- To identify survivorship issues and patient needs at post-treatment stage and beyond cancer.
- To identify barriers to screening programmes to increase uptake rates.
- To communicate relevant results and reports from the above initiatives to key stakeholders

Structure

The new Directorate has been established in October 2014 and currently consists of a Director. The Director currently works with employees from various sections, key stakeholders within the Ministry of Health, NGOs and on the ground with patients and their families to better understand unmet needs and service gaps and make the necessary recommendations for such improvements. The Directorate currently has no officers but it is planned to recruit personnel to build the structure of this directorate.

General Description of the Categories of Documents Held

Reports which constitute data pertaining to patient satisfaction, patient needs, timelines of cancer pathways, cancer statistics and patient information booklets.

Description of all manuals and similar types of documents which contain policies, principles or rules or guidelines in accordance with which decisions or recommendations are made in respect of members of the Public:

Cancer Care Pathways policy for data requests does not fall under the FOI Act

Addressing requests in terms of the Freedom of Information Act

Members of the public requesting documents through the FOI Act are to forward such requests to foi-hcs.meh-health@gov.mt.