

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Transition of Care: GP and Community Supports after Cancer Treatment for Adolescents and Young Adults

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This presentation describes the stakeholder engagement process of the Transition of Care: GP and Community Supports after Cancer Treatment project being undertaken by Queensland Youth Cancer Service.

Each year ~1,000 Australians aged 15-25 years are diagnosed with cancer, and around 115 will die from the illness.¹ Young people with cancer experience complex needs during a significant developmental and transitional period. Survivorship may mean lifelong cognitive, physical, mental health & psychosocial burden, impacting education, employment, & reliance on welfare. ² Palliative care needs in this cohort encompass psychosocial and medical concerns unique to the developmental stage, and care of the young person's support network. ³ Queensland's dispersed population presents challenges in providing equitable rural services, with patients living over 2000km from the capital. ⁴

The transition pathway from acute to primary & community care varies across the state, leaving room for young people to fall through the cracks; Many feel abandoned once they leave the familiarity of the hospital setting. ^{2, 3} The Transition of Care: GP and Community Supports after Cancer Treatment project seeks to understand the needs of adolescents and young adults, their health providers and community networks, and empower them with strategies, tools and pathways to support a shift of focus from illness to holistic wellness, post-treatment.

The project engages consumers (eg young people with cancer, bereaved and non-bereaved carers), general practitioners, multidisciplinary oncology teams, and non-government organisations in service development, utilising evidence-based qualitative methodologies. ⁵⁻⁸ The learnings from working with diverse stakeholders are applicable across services & settings, and highlight the importance of understanding a care pathway from all directions, tailoring processes with local expertise, and integrating care beyond traditional medical models. Preliminary directions will be shared alongside strategies and learnings from the process of embedding stakeholders in the development of services.

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