

Alfred Health SURC wins runner-up in the Chair of the Board Awards

Congratulations to the team at Alfred Health for being awarded runner-up in the Chair of the Board Awards for their entry 'Alfred Cancer - Implementation of Symptom and Urgent Review Clinics'

Nursing Services Manager Ellen Heywood describes the impact the project will have on patients: Patients undergoing systemic anti-cancer treatment (SACT) are at significant risk of experiencing adverse events as a consequence of their treatment. Symptom and Urgent Review Clinics (SURC) for patients receiving SACT have been demonstrated to promote early detection and self-management of toxicities through education and support. The SURC pilot has been successful in providing streamlined access to specialist nursing services for patients undergoing cancer treatment, through a triage service which aims to negate cancer patients presenting to the Emergency Department (ED), by fast track assessment, evaluation and treatment of patients experiencing toxicities from their cancer and its associated treatments. This is either achieved over the phone or the patient attending the SURC clinic located within the Haematology/Oncology Centre – South Block.

Improvements in the provision of care and support for cancer patients throughout their treatment journey is another benefit of SURC. Patients have self-reported improved psychosocial outcomes by way of improved coordination of care. This is achieved through the patient experiencing comprehensive and individualised information from a central source, with extensive knowledge on cancer, the management of sub-optimal toxicities and follow up care.

Alfred Cancer received funding in September 2020 from the Southern Melbourne Integrated Cancer Service to pilot SURC for a 12-month period.

A consolidated team effort was required to successfully deliver this project. A SURC Project Working Group was established to provide multidisciplinary direction for the project and ensure the delivery of project outcomes in the designated timeframes. The working group involved key clinicians working outside of cancer to provide differing perspectives and also how the model best integrated with vital departments including the ED.

This involved frequent meetings and communication around the model of care and how best to adapt the service to meet the needs of patients and the organisation.

The key objective of the Working Group was to develop systems and measures to improve performance, and to ensure high standards of patient safety and quality were maintained. Each working group member was dedicated in ensuring the project was successful and able to be sustainable beyond the 12 month pilot.



L-R Ellen Heywood (Nursing Services Manager), Eleanor Edwards (SURC Nurse), Elli Foley (Cellular Therapies ANUM), Mark Shackleton (Director of Medical Oncology), Rohan Laging (Deputy Director Emergency Services)