



**Jillian Skinner**  
Minister for Health

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Tuesday, 20 September 2016

### **WESTERN NSW CHEMOTHERAPY REPORT RELEASED**

The report into Dr John Grygiel's prescribing of chemotherapy to Western NSW cancer patients has confirmed underdosing in a small number of patients.

The report was released in Orange today by NSW Health Secretary Elizabeth Koff, Health Minister Jillian Skinner and the report author, NSW Chief Cancer Officer David Currow.

Professor Currow reviewed the dosing of Dr Grygiel's Western NSW cancer patients since January 2006. The Sydney-based doctor practised as a 'fly in-fly out' medical oncologist in Orange and Bathurst between 1989 and 2012.

Professor Currow found patients treated with the oral chemotherapy drug capecitabine, which is available through community pharmacies on prescription, meant the Greater Western Area Health Service (now Western NSW Local Health District) did not have access to all of Dr Grygiel's prescribing.

Using the records available to the District at this time, the report found the treatment of 28 of Dr Grygiel's Western NSW patients involved underdosing. However, the effect of this practice on individual patient outcomes cannot be determined.

"I thank Professor Currow for his report. NSW Health has accepted and will implement all 16 recommendations," Mrs Skinner said.

"The NSW Government will allocate \$6 million over three years to roll out new software in public hospitals to ensure chemotherapy prescribed in electronic prescribing systems is delivering evidence-based treatment. This will allow clinical practice to be monitored, with particular emphasis on any changes in the first doses of chemotherapy.

"In addition, \$1.5 million has been allocated to enhance rural cancer services in Western NSW Local Health District," Mrs Skinner said.

Western NSW patients or families who have ongoing concerns about their treatment under Dr Grygiel should contact the local Cancer Inquiry Line on 6369 8808 for a confidential conversation or [WNSWLHD-CancerInquiry@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:WNSWLHD-CancerInquiry@health.nsw.gov.au)

The Western NSW report comes six weeks after the release of Professor Currow's inquiry into head and neck cancer patients treated by Dr Grygiel at St Vincent's Hospital between 2006 and 2015. Following the release of the St Vincent's report, the NSW Government committed to a review of public cancer patient records.

The Western NSW chemotherapy report is available on the NSW Health website at: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/Hospitals/Documents/section-122-wnswlhd-report.pdf](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Hospitals/Documents/section-122-wnswlhd-report.pdf)