

New South Wales  
**Cancer Patient Satisfaction Survey 2007**  
Interim Results, June 2008

Gaynor Heading, Nadine A Mallock, Sue Sinclair, James F Bishop

*In collaboration with NSW Health, IPSOS Australia Pty Ltd and NRC + Picker*

Cancer Institute NSW catalogue number:  
CR-2008-1

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication data:

New South Wales Cancer Patient Satisfaction Survey 2007,  
Interim Report.

State Health Publication number SHPN (CI) 080122

ISBN 978-1-74187-314-6

Key words: cancer, patient satisfaction, inpatients, outpatients.

Suggested citation:

Heading G, Mallock N, Sinclair S, Bishop J. New South Wales  
Cancer Patient Satisfaction Survey 2007, Interim Report.  
Sydney: Cancer Institute NSW, June 2008.

Cancer Institute NSW  
Level 1, Biomedical Building  
Australian Technology Park  
EVELEIGH NSW 2015  
PO Box 41

Alexandria NSW 1435

Telephone (02) 8374 5600

Facsimile (02) 8374 5700

E-mail [information@cancerinstitute.org.au](mailto:information@cancerinstitute.org.au)

Homepage [www.cancerinstitute.org.au](http://www.cancerinstitute.org.au)

Copyright © Cancer Institute NSW June 2008.

This work is copyright. It may be reproduced in whole or part for study or training purposes subject to the inclusion of acknowledgement of the source. It may not be reproduced for commercial usage or sale. Reproduction for purposes other than those indicated above requires written permission from the Cancer Institute NSW.

# Contents

Foreword from the Minister	1
Chief Cancer Officer's report	2
Chapter One: Executive Summary	3
Chapter Two: Methodology	13
Chapter Three: Cancer Inpatient Results	17
Chapter Four: Cancer Outpatients Results	45

## Foreword from the Minister

Cancer is one of the major diseases our community faces. The NSW Government remains committed to improving cancer care. The *NSW Cancer Plan 2007–2010* is tangible evidence of this commitment and a blueprint for action to improve cancer results.

Cancer results in NSW are good and comparable to the best results around the world. This outcome reflects the dedication of cancer health professionals throughout NSW and the patient's willingness to undergo often difficult cancer treatment to get the best result. However, what is the patient experience of cancer treatment and how can it be further improved?

An objective of the Cancer Institute NSW as dictated in its Act is to improve the quality of life of those affected by cancer. The *New South Wales Cancer Patient Satisfaction Survey 2007* allows us to measure the experience of cancer patients and to obtain their opinion in their own words.

Overall the results are good with high a satisfaction level for their care overall. The cancer outpatient results in NSW benchmark well with Canada. As hoped, the Survey also allows us to be quite specific about where further improvement is needed.

The Survey provides us with good direction for our new work in the on-going development of cancer services.

I commend this report to you.

**Hon. Verity Firth MP**

Minister for Climate Change and the Environment

Minister for Women

Minister for Science and Medical Research

Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)



## Chief Cancer Officer's report

Cancer is the major burden of disease in our community, and the major cause of premature deaths.<sup>i,ii</sup> The Cancer Institute NSW predicts that there will be around 30 per cent more cancer cases in the next decade compared to the last.<sup>iii</sup> Such a major health problem in our community will require new models of care and new services developed that match closely to patient needs.

Cancer is a devastating diagnosis for the individual involved but also for their family, carers and friends. There is an immediate need to seek and obtain the best medical advice and support at this difficult time. The bottom line is to increase the chances of returning to normal life as soon as possible.

Cancer services in NSW produce good cancer outcomes with the chances of surviving cancer similar to the USA and Canada and superior to the UK.<sup>iv</sup> However, the length of life lived after a cancer diagnosis is not the only measure. The experience of those undergoing treatment and their quality of life are also important considerations.

This report, the *New South Wales Cancer Patient Satisfaction Survey 2007*, for the first time measures the patient's experience directly and identifies what they rated highly and where more effort is needed. This information will allow service development to be better aligned to patients' needs and expectations.

Overall the results show a high level of satisfaction by cancer inpatients with over 90% rating services excellent, very good or good. Similarly, more than 97% of cancer outpatients also rated services highly.

Courtesy of staff, team work and confidence in treating doctors were all rated highly by patients. Patients felt they were treated with dignity and respect in the great majority of cases.

The report also showed areas that need further development. Patients reported the need for more professional help in coping with their anxieties about cancer and its treatment. They wanted more information about how their illness and the treatment would affect them as they attempted to resume their lives at home.

The cancer outpatient results were compared to results from the same survey given to Canadian cancer outpatients. Overall the results were very similar with NSW patients rating some important issues higher or lower than Canadian patients.

The Cancer Institute NSW plans to work with NSW Health to repeat the survey annually. It will now facilitate the wide dissemination of these results and so encourage change and improvement in cancer care. This survey provides another method to improve our ability to listen to patients and their families and respond to the needs of our cancer patients. It offers real hope of being able to better provide a high quality of cancer care in the future.

### **Professor Jim F Bishop**

Chief Cancer Officer

CEO Cancer Institute NSW

Professor of Cancer Medicine, the University of Sydney

- i. Begg S, Voss T, Barker B, Stevenson C, Stanley L, Lopez AD, 2007. The Burden of disease and injury in Australia. PHE 82, Canberra: AIHW.
- ii. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2006. Australia's Health 2006 AIHW cat. No. AHS73. Canberra: AIHW.
- iii. Tracey E, Baker D, Chen W, Stavrou E, Bishop J. Cancer in NSW: Incidence, Mortality and Prevalence Report 2005. Sydney: Cancer Institute NSW, November 2007
- iv. Tracey E, Barraclough H, Chen W, Baker D, Roder D, Jelfs P, Bishop J. Survival from Cancer in NSW: 1980 to 2003. Sydney: Cancer Institute NSW, August 2007.