



Jillian Skinner
Minister for Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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INCORRECT TREATMENT OF SOUTHERN SYDNEY CANCER PATIENTS

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today announced haematology patients of one doctor at two southern Sydney hospitals received incorrect cancer treatment.

Mrs Skinner said South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) immediately escalated concerns raised about oncologist and haematologist Dr Kiran Phadke's treatment of patients at the Sutherland and St George hospital cancer services.

Internal and external reviews were ordered and the NSW Medical Council and Health Care Complaints Commission were notified.

Dr Phadke has not practised in the hospitals since April 2016 and he was formally suspended from duty in June. His patients were transferred to the care of other doctors.

A complaint was first raised within the cancer service about Dr Phadke's choice of treatment for a blood cancer patient in late April, following revelations about a St Vincent's oncologist who treated patients against protocol.

In response, a detailed review - received by SESLHD on Friday night - found three of Dr Phadke's patients who had been under treatment for as long as 13 years were considered to have been affected by his treatment choice. Of these three patients, two are deceased and one is receiving ongoing treatment from another haematologist.

A further 14 patients' records have been identified and are undergoing external clinical review. While there is less concern about their treatment, their cases will continue to be reviewed by an independent expert.

SESLHD clinicians yesterday contacted all affected patients or their next of kin to advise them of the extensive review and to discuss the support available to them.

A local helpline (1800 875 526) manned by registered nurses has been set up for any patients to raise concerns.

"I am sorry Dr Phadke's patients and their families had this experience and I regret the uncertainty they are enduring at an incredibly emotional and difficult time in their lives," Mrs Skinner said.

"I thank the hospital staff whose courage to come forward uncovered the concerns and led to an investigation. I praise South Eastern Sydney Local Health District for their handling of this matter.

“We are now strengthening oversight to ensure no doctor works in isolation,” she said.

Steps to reassure NSW cancer patients their treatment is sound include:

- The NSW Government will allocate \$6 million over three years to roll out new software that ensures chemotherapy prescribed in electronic prescribing systems delivers evidence-based treatment. This will allow clinical practice to be monitored, with particular emphasis on any changes in the first doses of chemotherapy.
- All public cancer patients who have received treatment over the past five years will be reviewed. Chief Executives of Local Health Districts and Specialty Networks will be required to confirm in writing that patients are being treated in accordance with the appropriate protocols. Chief Executives will also be asked to confirm in writing that all patients are being provided with sufficient information to make informed decisions about their cancer therapies, which would entail their written informed consent. The Cancer Institute NSW will independently review these reports.
- The NSW Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) is continuing its investigation into Dr John Grygiel's clinical practice. If there are patients with concerns about their treatment, they should contact the HCCC.