



National Cancer Action Team  
18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Portland House  
Bressenden Place  
London  
SW1E 5RS  
Tel: 0208 282 6315

Gateway Number: 14332

19<sup>th</sup> August 2010

Dear Colleague,

**Draft Acute Oncology– Including Metastatic Spinal Cord Compression–  
Measures for the Manual for Cancer Services**

I am writing to let you know that a draft version of the Acute Oncology Measures are being issued today for a three month consultation (Start Date 19<sup>th</sup> August 2010 Close Date: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2010). A copy of the draft measures can be found in the Cancer Section on the Department of Health web-site [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or the CQuINS web-site [www.cquins.nhs.uk](http://www.cquins.nhs.uk).

It is the intention to add the Acute Oncology Measures to the Manual for Cancer Services.

**The Purpose of the Manual for Cancer Services**

The Manual of Cancer Services is an integral part of the NHS Cancer Reform Strategy (2007). It supports the quality assurance of cancer services and acts as a driver for quality improvement in the commissioning and delivery of cancer services.

Development of the Manual of Cancer Services and the continuation of a revised peer review process, which was implemented at the beginning of 2009, has been supported by the service and agreed by Strategic Health Authorities following a review of all national programmes in 2007. The measures contained within this manual remain an integral part of the review process.

Improving Outcomes Guidance (IOG) on cancer services now covers the vast majority of all cancers. The Manual has been drawn up to incorporate the recommendations contained within such guidance including the new guidelines published by NICE . It identifies the characteristics of service that are likely to

have a significant impact on health outcomes. It is intended that those characteristics should help those involved in planning, commissioning, organising, and providing cancer services to identify gaps in provision and check the appropriateness and quality of existing services. The measures provide a ready specification for the commissioning of cancer services within a given locality.

The National Cancer Peer Review Programme, which is led by the National Cancer Action Team and includes expert clinical and user representation, provides important information about the quality of cancer services across the country and supports the development of leadership, self regulation and governance.

The revised peer review programme has adopted an annual self assessment process supported by a targeted visit programme. This annual process will allow more up to date information to be available to support the commissioning of cancer services and patient choice.

The development of cancer measures is an ongoing process in order to:

- Reflect new NICE guidance and revisions to existing NICE guidance.
- Allow greater influence by users of cancer services and their carers.
- Take account of possible modifications to measures following peer review visits.
- Ensure the scope of measures encompasses the broader implementation of the Cancer Reform Strategy, including actions to support the development of world class commissioning of cancer services and supports the development of leadership and governance.

### **The Draft Acute Oncology Measures**

The draft Acute Oncology measures reflect the recommendations of the National Chemotherapy Advisory Group (NCAG) report 'Chemotherapy services in England: ensuring quality and safety'. The NCAG report recommendations are for the service to take forward as resources allow. The Impact Assessment for the NCAG report can be accessed by clicking on the link below:

[Link to NCAG Report IA](#)

It is acknowledged that there will be variation in the pace of implementation of the NCAG recommendations given current financial constraints and that any reconfiguration will need to take account of the government's vision for locally led NHS service changes. See link below for further information:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/MediaCentre/Pressreleases/DH\\_116290](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/MediaCentre/Pressreleases/DH_116290)

## **The Consultation Process**

It is hoped that you will contribute to this consultation exercise to ensure that the published Acute Oncology Measures are both comprehensive and clear.

The purpose of this consultation is not to reopen the extensive consultation on the guidance, but rather to invite your comments on the contents of the draft measures, for example:

- Is the wording of each quality measure sufficiently clear? Are there instances where there is some ambiguity as to what is required?
- What additional, if any, supplementary guidance on the quality measures is required?
- Are there any important gaps?

To achieve the target of publishing the Acute Oncology Group Measures by the end of 2010 the programme for considering responses and making appropriate amendments has a very short timescale. The receipt of any responses in advance of the three-month deadline would therefore be much appreciated. For the same reason it will not be possible to consider any comments that are received after the deadline, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

A proforma has been provided to assist you in compiling your comments on the contents of either or both of the drafts and this can also be found on the Department of Health web-site or CQuINS web-site.

Any comments on either of the drafts should be submitted by 10<sup>th</sup> November 2010 to:

Any comments on either of the drafts should be submitted by 10<sup>th</sup> November 2010 to:

Zara Gross  
Project Assistant, National Cancer Peer Review  
National Cancer Action Team  
18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Portland House  
Bressenden Place  
London  
SW1E 5RS  
Tel: 02082826315  
Email: zara.gross@ncpr.org.uk

## Criteria for consultation

This consultation follows the 'Government Code of Practice', in particular we aim to:

- formally consult at a stage where there is scope to influence the policy outcome;
- consult for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible;
- be clear about the consultations process in the consultation documents, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals;
- ensure the consultation exercise is designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people it is intended to reach;
- keep the burden of consultation to a minimum to ensure consultations are effective and to obtain consultees' 'buy-in' to the process;
- analyse responses carefully and give clear feedback to participants following the consultation;
- ensure officials running consultations are guided in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they learn from the experience.

The full text of the code of practice is on the Better Regulation website at:

Link to consultation Code of Practice

## Comments on the consultation process itself

If you have concerns or comments which you would like to make relating specifically to the consultation process itself please

contact        Consultations Coordinator  
                  Department of Health  
                  3E48, Quarry House  
                  Leeds  
                  LS2 7UE

e-mail         consultations.co-ordinator@dh.gsi.gov.uk

**Please do not send consultation responses to this address.**

## Confidentiality of information

We manage the information you provide in response to this consultation in accordance with the Department of Health's **Information Charter**.

Information we receive, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in most circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

### **Summary of the consultation**

A summary of the response to this consultation will be made available before or alongside any further action, such as laying legislation before Parliament, and will be placed on the Consultations website at:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Responsestoconsultations/index.htm>

We look forward to receiving your comments.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Parsons". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'S'.

Stephen Parsons  
Director  
National Cancer Action Team