

Online e-learning supportive care training package



Supportive care is an umbrella term used to refer to services that may be required by people with cancer, their family and carers. Supportive care in cancer refers to the five domains of physical, social, information, spiritual and psychological needs. Supportive care issues are a concern for many people whose health is suboptimal.

In 2011 the Supportive Cancer Care Victoria (SCCV) project developed a framework that provides a strategic approach to capacity building for health services in meeting the supportive care needs of people affected by cancer across Victoria. The Framework articulates the competencies required of the workforce to provide optimal supportive care. It is hoped that the Framework can assist Integrated Cancer Services (ICS), health services and service providers to engage in changes required to improve the provision of evidence-based supportive care for people affected by cancer and promote consistency across the state.

Before the completion of the SCCV project, there was no standard training available to health professionals in supportive care, screening and referral pathways. It is recognised that health professionals will require access to ongoing professional development opportunities that enable them to develop a level of supportive care competence required to meet the changing needs of the populations they serve.

Feedback from SMICS member health services chemotherapy day units where training in supportive care, screening and referral was carried out face to face found that this is not a consistent or efficient approach for providing optimal training to the workforce in order to meet the supportive care needs of people affected by cancer across the SMICS region.

SMICS has subsequently developed an on-line e-learning supportive care training package which has incorporated the SCCV competency framework. This training package will educate staff on screening patients for supportive care needs and appropriate referral to assist their needs. As the roll out of the screening tool is already well established within all chemotherapy day centres in the SMICS region, the next roll out phase will be inpatient units. SMICS will pilot this training package on the Peninsula Health e-learning platform and then continue to implement the package in other member health services.

The SMICS Supportive Care Cancer Service Improvement Coordinator (CSIC) has met with the SCCV project lead and other ICS health services to review their existing e-learning supportive care training packages. The CSIC has also met with experts in education delivery at both university level and local hospital education departments to explore opportunities for online training development.

The e-learning supportive care training module includes competency based quizzes and relevant supportive care resources such as communication skills educational videos. This work is currently being reviewed by an affiliated university and feedback from SMICS consumer group is being sought.

The e-learning supportive care training package will 'go live' at Peninsula Health in July 2012 and evaluation will include a user pre and post training questionnaire.