

# Newsletter

## Volume 6 – June 2011



### Introduction

Whilst we all survived the earthquake, it has not helped the fundraising efforts, as Christchurch people are very preoccupied with other thoughts.

As we are still very keen to raise the balance of the \$7 million we have decided to run corporate functions in the bunker to watch sporting events. We are ready to embark on this as already we have had companies showing interest.

Cyril Smith has kindly donated the funds (\$200,000) to purchase a superficial machine which will make a big difference to the way skin cancers are treated.

The Trust has allocated funds to offer psychosocial and financial support to patients and families, as we continue to make a difference to the way cancer is treated in New Zealand.

**Cilla Glasson**  
Chair, Fundraising Committee

### Update

The introduction of the St George's Cancer Care Centre is proving to have an impact on cancer treatment in New Zealand.

Through our commitment to 'no waiting' and the latest technology for the best treatment of cancer we have made some important advances in recent months despite difficult conditions:

- Our new video conferencing capability starts a new era in facilitating cancer treatment,
- The new superficial radiation treatment machine, introduces an important resource for Christchurch and the South Island,
- The Ministry of Health has changed its policy to also fund Cancer Society accommodation for private cancer patients.

### Psychosocial Support

Kathryn Taylor our Clinical Psychologist has helped a large number of our patients and their partners better cope with the anxiety and distress of a cancer journey (often with a parallel earthquake journey).

We are evolving this essential service and soon hope to measure distress in all our patients so that supportive programmes will be introduced earlier.

**Chris Atkinson**  
Clinical Director

### Video Conferencing

Chris Wynne held his first consultation with a patient in Queenstown, using the new high-definition video conferencing unit in the Cancer Care Centre. The consultation was a success, "fantastic, absolutely wonderful; we have moved into a new era" he says.

The video conferencing equipment allows patients to have their consultations in their hometown without the need to wait or travel to Christchurch.

One unit is located in the Cancer Care Centre, and other units have been installed at the Queenstown Medical Centre, and Manuka Street Hospital Trust in Nelson. There are also plans to install additional units in Invercargill, Blenheim and Timaru.

### Superficial Radiation Treatment

From mid-June superficial radiation treatment will be made available in Christchurch. Previously it has only been available in the South Island from the Dunedin Hospital.

The machine is currently being commissioned by the physics team and is expected to be ready on Wednesday 15 June.

It will be an important resource in Christchurch, and plans have already been made with Christchurch Hospital to use the machine for treating their patients and training Registrars.



The new superficial radiation treatment machine was made possible through the very generous donation of Cyril and Jane Smith. Cyril and Jane visited the Cancer Care Centre to preview the machine with Cilla Glasson (pictured above).

### Brochure and Website Redesign

New Brochures for the Cancer Care Centre have been printed and will be circulated to specialists and GPs throughout the South Island over the next month.

Also the website for the Cancer Care Centre has been redesigned. Check out the website including virtual tour and a linear accelerator demonstration at [www.stgeorgescancercarecentre.org.nz](http://www.stgeorgescancercarecentre.org.nz).

### Free Accommodation for Out of Town Cancer Patients

The Ministry of Health has changed its policy with regards to funding Cancer Society accommodation for private cancer patients.

The Ministry will now fund Cancer Society accommodation for patients undergoing private cancer treatment at St George's Cancer Care Centre.

Previously only Christchurch Hospital patients were entitled to this funding. This is an important step toward the acceptance and inclusion of private cancer treatment services in New Zealand.

## Effect of the February Earthquake

Like many large property holders in Christchurch, St George's Hospital has been battered and bruised by the earthquakes this year. With the exception of the radiation therapy service in the Cancer Care Centre the entire Hospital was closed for 8 days while urgent repairs were carried out and services stabilised. It is great to be able to report that the Hospital has been fully functional since Monday 07 March with the exception of the Maternity service, which was displaced following the evacuation of the Heritage Building. The Heritage Building remains unoccupied due to structural issues.

*Cancer Care Centre Damage:* There was damage to both the chemotherapy treatment area and the radiation treatment area.

The major problem for the Centre was liquefaction and a rising water table. Water poured in through a broken service pipe rising to 10 cm deep in the basement before remedial actions stemmed the flows. For the next three days, pumps worked continuously to drain the facilities. Thanks to a lot of hard work and dedication by the Elekta guys, our staff and the physicists, we were able to treat patients again by Sunday 27 February 2011, five days after the earthquake. It was a miracle. The patients were amazing and just so grateful to be able to continue their treatments so soon after such an event.

## What our Patients are Saying

Our success is measured in many ways and how our patients view the service is extremely important to us. Here are a few quotes from patients following their radiation treatment, which are included in our new brochure:

*"It was the best medical treatment I have ever had. Everyone was so helpful and professional. Always on time"* Andrew P.

*"For the 8 weeks I was there it couldn't have been better. I didn't have to wait. The team was perfect. I have never been to a doctor/hospital where things were so organised. 10 out of 10; the A team"* Barry L.

*"It is an amazing place with amazing people and it is the people that make the place so special"* Bruce C.

## St George's Cancer Institute Newsletters

We trust you find the regular updates on the St George's Cancer Care Centre and the fundraising activities of the St George's Cancer Institute Fundraising Committee interesting.

As previously advised, in an effort to reduce printing costs and improve distribution, you can receive future newsletters via email. If you would like to be added to our email distribution list, **please advise details:**

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your support and interest in the St George's Cancer Care Centre.**

**If you no longer wish to receive future newsletters, please tick (✓) the box and advise your name:**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please complete and return in the self addressed envelope enclosed.**

## DONATION CARD

To support St George's Cancer Care Centre, please fill out the form, including your cheque or credit card details, and post to: **St George's Cancer Institute, Private Bag 4737, Christchurch 8140.**

I will be paying by (tick appropriate)

Visa  MasterCard  Cheque  Internet Banking

Card no \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_

Amount NZ\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Internet banking to St George's Cancer Institute, Account no 06-0801-0643073-00

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mr/Mrs/Miss/other Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**A receipt quoting the St George's Cancer Institute number CC26864 will be posted to the above address.**

The Trust is registered under the Charities Act 2005 No CC26864

Thank you