

****MEDIA OPPORTUNITY** TODAY 22 May 2009 at 12Noon
Gold Coast Hospital Southport - Please advise attendance.**

22 May 2009

Gold Coast recruits key positions to grow cancer services

Gold Coast Health's cancer outpatient services have expanded to support growing demand by the Gold Coast community.

Gold Coast Health Acting Chief Executive Officer Dr John Gerrard said that the successful recruitment of two additional full-time medical oncologists will help to deliver comprehensive cancer services to the Gold Coast community.

"Medical oncologists Dr Jasotha Sanmugarajah and Dr Andrew Hill have now joined the Gold Coast Cancer Services team," Dr Gerrard said.

"They join three full-time haematologists and two palliative care specialists, as well as a full complement of specialist cancer care nurses," he said.

"Historically, medical specialties such as Oncology are extremely difficult to recruit to; the community is very fortunate to have Dr Sanmugarajah and Dr Hill on board."

In March this year, Gold Coast Health increased the size of its cancer clinic from two consulting rooms to seven, when it moved into leased premises located at Pacific Private, directly opposite Gold Coast Hospital.

Expanded services have contributed to a 30 per cent increase in cancer outpatient presentations this month compared to the same period last year.

Cancer outpatients are used to oversee the diagnosis and management of patients with solid tumours such as breast and bowel cancer, as well as blood disorders such as leukaemia and lymphoma.

Director of Haematology and Oncology Dr Jeremy Wellwood said the recruitment of key medical positions and the expanded space has enabled the cancer service to grow and develop.

"The expansion and relocation improves our ability to provide a quality, comprehensive service for our patients including greater access," Dr Wellwood said.

"Our services currently include day chemotherapy, specialist outpatient cancer clinics and inpatient cancer wards for both general cancer and palliative care patients. There is also a broad range of cancer support services such as cancer coordinators to better support the patients' cancer journey," he said.

"Radiation clinics have now commenced on the Gold Coast although radiation treatment for public patients is provided in Brisbane. The service will be available locally when the Gold Coast University Hospital at Parklands opens.

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“Public patients on the Gold Coast can be reassured that they will be given the best care available through Gold Coast Hospital.”

Cancer treatment and research is a major focus of the new Gold Coast University Hospital due to open in 2012.

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Definitions:

- **Cancer:** An abnormal growth of cells which tend to proliferate in an uncontrolled way and, in some cases, to metastasize (spread).
- **Oncology:** The field of medicine devoted to cancer.
- **Medical Oncology:** The treatment of cancer with medicine, including chemotherapy.
- **Haematology:** The diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of diseases of the blood and bone marrow as well as of the immunologic, hemostatic (blood clotting) and vascular systems.
- **Chemotherapy:** drug therapy for cancer. Also called "chemo" for short.
- **Radiation therapy:** The use of high-energy rays to damage cancer cells and stop them from growing and dividing. Like surgery, radiation oncology is essentially a local treatment; it affects cancer cells only in the treated area.

Definitions from <http://www.medicinenet.com>