



19 May 2014

Mr Trevor Ruthenburg MP  
Chair, Health and Community Services Committee  
Parliament House  
George St  
Brisbane QLD 4000  
[hcsc@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:hcsc@parliament.qld.gov.au)

### **Cancer Council Queensland Submission to Telehealth Inquiry**

Dear Mr Ruthenburg,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the implementation of telehealth by the Department of Health and Hospital and Health Services, including the Rural Telehealth Service that was announced in the *Blueprint for better healthcare in Queensland*.

Cancer Council Queensland supports the provision of 24 hour access to safe and sustainable telehealth services for rural and remote communities through an enhanced statewide telehealth network.

It is the view of Cancer Council Queensland that telehealth applications have significant potential to improve cancer control in rural and remote communities.

Consistent with the Department of Health's *Cancer Care Services Statewide Health Service Strategy 2014*, we recommend the Department of Health and Hospital and Health Services regularly review referral pathways to include, where possible, the adoption of appropriate shared care models which use telehealth technology in line with guidelines and protocols. It is important that expanded applications of telehealth services are underpinned by a sound clinician education program. Clinician education is essential if Hospital and Health Services wish to enable telehealth-supervised cancer services, such as chemotherapy treatment in rural settings. Equally important, such services must be subject to continual monitoring and evaluation, both for quality and safety reasons and for epidemiological research purposes.

As Queensland's leading independent organisation in cancer control, Cancer Council Queensland provides specialised support services such as psycho-social care to those affected by cancer across all Queensland regions. As such, we would welcome new incentives for collaboration between Hospital and Health Services and non-government organisations to deliver multi-disciplinary care via telehealth pathways. Greater collaboration and integration would assist with self-management and follow-up of cancer survivors, in addition to extending the delivery of preventive, clinical, and supportive care interventions.

Cancer Council Queensland welcomes the commitment of the Department of Health and Hospital and Health Services to the provision of enhanced telehealth services and looks forward to continuing our support of appropriate applications for technological innovation along the cancer care continuum.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Jeff Dunn  
Chief Executive Officer  
Cancer Council Queensland



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