

Alfred Health

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Educating patients/carers to perform routine CVAD care: a feasibility project

The Victorian Cancer Plan (VCP) 2020-2024 outlines the need for regionalised delivery of health care and alternative models of care to support this group, as well as improved patient experience and wellbeing.

An objective of the VCP alternative model of care is to "implement a community-based self-management model to enable better care across the optimal care pathway."

Regional patients carry an especially heavy burden when it comes to cancer care from lack of local services, travel costs, and beyond. This is particularly true for patients who require a Central Venous Access Device (CVAD) for treatment and support. These devices require weekly dressing changes and flushing to prevent infection and maintain patency.

For a regional patient whose often main goal is returning home for periods of time; the logistics around the CVAD care can be obstructive.

Through the development and implementation of a new model of care, one that is widely used overseas and in other regions of Australia, this barrier can be mitigated or removed altogether.

With this project Alfred Cancer hopes to improve patient's wellbeing and experience of care with a focus on those patients living in the regions. This will be achieved by facilitating/expediting a patient's return home, reducing travel and associated costs, and allowing for patient's self-management of care.

The health service would also benefit from this new model. Currently there are approximately 40 patient encounters per month in the chemotherapy day unit specifically and solely for CVAD care. If even a fraction of these could be diverted by this model the chair time saved would be significant, assisting in creating capacity for the constant growth in ambulatory cancer care. Additionally, arranging local CVAD care can be a barrier for ward discharges, lengthening admissions. In implementing this project we could potentially eliminate this barrier for a number of patients and reduce length of stay for the organisation.

A long term objective would be to expand this new model of care to include all of Alfred Cancer and export the model to other health services.