

Comprehensive care

Epworth offers a multidisciplinary approach to ensure individual patients get the best care

Epworth HealthCare's multidisciplinary model of care for cancer patients is built on the understanding that modern treatment of cancer requires the close cooperation of several different types of specialists and active management of the psychological and emotional consequences of cancer diagnosis and treatment.

"Epworth guides cancer patients through diagnosis, medical check-ups and different treatments at various intervals, all with the aim of restoring health, happiness and quality of life. While we know that early detection may eradicate cancer altogether, there is evidence that people are living longer with the disease than in previous decades," said Professor John Catford, Epworth HealthCare's new executive director of Medical Services.

"Epworth's model of care includes personalised support around individual treatment needs and an emphasis on communication with patients and their families."

According to Professor Catford, one of Epworth's strongest weapons in ensuring that the best care is given to all patients has been the establishment of clinical institutes in 11 medical specialties, including the Cancer Services Clinical Institute.

"The institutes have introduced a structured program of clinical audit and peer review for clinicians to scrutinise outcomes and identify further improvements in patient care. The vision is to expand Epworth as a leading teaching and research hospital and to increase the number of academic and clinical professorial appointments along with training, research staff and doctoral students.

"It's been recognized that a multidisciplinary approach is the preferred model for ensuring that individual patients get the very best care. Medical and radiation oncologists treat patients as part of multidisciplinary teams that may include surgical specialists, general physicians, diagnostic experts, nursing and allied health personnel, palliative care, and counselling and support services," Professor Catford said.

The Chairperson of the Cancer Services Clinical Institute, Dr Stephen Vaughan agreed, adding that patients at Epworth may receive surgery, day oncology, radiation oncology, genetic counselling and palliative care, but these are all complemented by access to pastoral care, psychology, cancer education sessions and social work services.

"Pre-admission appointments are also helpful for offering practical information such as where to park when coming for daily treatments or which support group can offer help about life after treatment." 

By Colleen Cogan



Professor John Catford

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