

Friendly care in **familiar surroundings**

The Friendly Society is changing the lives of patients in central Queensland by providing local cancer treatment options

The Friendly Society Private Hospital, located in Bundaberg, has changed the lives of local cancer patients. Prior to the hospital's day oncology unit opening more than 12 months ago, patients would typically have to travel for up to six hours to receive their treatment in

Brisbane. This would mean lengthy stays away from their homes, family and friends, not to mention the added accommodation expenses.

The Friendly Society Private Hospital's Day Oncology Unit is a five-bed unit that provides quality cancer care with visiting medical oncologist Dr Vikram Jain. When Dr Jain is not onsite, he conducts TeleHealth conferencing with patients via a video link.

"This allows us to use the latest technology to further provide continuity of care with patients being virtually able to talk to me any day of the week," Dr Jain said.

Two patients have shared how having a local treatment option has helped them on their road to recovery.

Excellent care

Malcolm MacDonald retired to Agnes Water from Melbourne for a sea change and to experience the Queensland lifestyle.

In December of 2012, Mr MacDonald experienced some stomach cramping. He approached his doctor who ordered a series of tests and was soon after diagnosed with cancer.

"For four to six months I required treatment in Brisbane, but I can now have my ongoing treatment in Bundaberg at the Friendly Society



Private Hospital. As a patient, it is a godsend to be able to be treated within the region without having to travel to Brisbane, which uproots your whole life even more.

"When I first commenced my treatment at the Friendlies I was a little apprehensive because the unit and staff were new to me. I wasn't expecting this level of care in a regional community and yet I would put this facility up with any of the other metropolitan facilities throughout the country, and believe me I have been to several.

"Their approach to each patient is different, and the way they deliver their expertise and knowledge is very professional yet personal. With the introduction of modern technology, such as TeleHealth conferencing, I have peace of mind knowing I have the support of my specialist on hand if I need to ask something I may have forgotten on my treatment days. Dr Jain is so dedicated and has the time to sit down with you and talk to you as a person and not a patient.

"As a cancer patient you have to learn to laugh. You still have to be positive even though you know the road ahead may have some bumps, and having such a facility of this quality really enhances the area and has certainly helped me with my recovery."

"As a patient, it is a godsend to be able to be treated within the region without having to travel to Brisbane"



Reducing stress

"I am a young mum with a family, and being able to be treated at home in Bundaberg rather than having to travel to Brisbane has eased my stress levels and made a huge difference to my recovery.

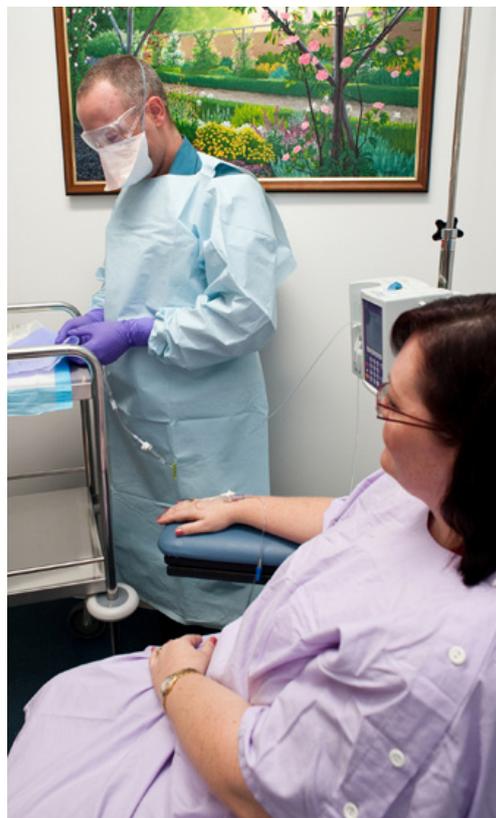
"Recovery is easier if you have the support of family and friends, and being able to go home post treatment to my own bed and familiar surrounds has been extremely helpful.

"Dr Jain and the Day Oncology Unit staff make you feel comfortable and relaxed, and in meeting the other patients you begin to feel like one big family. The treatment goes quickly and everyone looks forward to catching up again at the next session so you stop worrying about the little things.

"I enjoy the TeleHealth conferences I have with Dr Jain as this gives me extra reassurance, and having the opportunity to ask questions about anything from week to week has also helped with my recovery.

"The opportunity to visit the Day Oncology Unit at the Friendlies has been the best possible treatment ever. Travelling on the train (post treatment) is not very nice and sometimes you are really too sick to make that journey back to Bundaberg." PH

By Creina Lister



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