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## Primary Health Networks join forces for better cancer care



People living with cancer are set to receive better care in their own community, with all Primary Health Networks in Victoria working to increase the use of Optimal Care Pathways (OCPs) for cancer in 2019.

OCPs are national guidelines that outline the best possible cancer care for specific tumour types. This year the focus is on melanoma, head and neck cancers and pancreatic cancer.

The OCPs outline key stages in a patient's cancer journey, from diagnosis to survivorship or end-of-life-care. They also detail the expected optimal care at each stage to ensure everyone diagnosed with cancer gets the best care possible, regardless of where they live or where they get cancer treatment.

Victorian PHNs will be working throughout the year to increase awareness of OCPs, including education and training opportunities around the pathways and providing general practitioners with a suite of melanoma HealthPathways.

Chair of the Victorian and Tasmanian PHN Alliance and North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network CEO Adjunct Associate Professor Christopher Carter said the Optimal Care Pathways are an important way to support GPs to provide the best care for their patients.

"The OCPs provide health professionals with a consistent nationwide approach to specific cancer care that is based on current best practice guidelines and research," A/Prof Carter said.

"GPs may not see cancer patients often, so it's vital that when they do, they can easily access agreed and consistent guidelines and know how and where to refer patients if required."

For more information on the Optimal Care Pathways, visit the VTPHNA website:

<https://vtpdna.org.au/optimal-care-pathways/>

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## ABOUT PHNs

Funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health, PHNs began operation on 1 July 2015 and are responsible for coordinating primary health care and facilitating improved health outcomes in their local community. Melbourne Primary Care Network operates the North Western Melbourne PHN.

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We acknowledge the peoples of the Kulin nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which our work in the community takes place. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

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