

Moving Forward & Living Well.

Summer 2016

Issue 11

My appeal this issue is for email addresses.

The aim of this newsletter is more to remind you that we are here and to contact us with any concerns whether they be clinical or emotional.

I am increasingly aware though that our circulation is far too great to post this newsletter out to everyone. So, I ask you please, if you would email Amanda to be added to our circulation list. This also means we can update you on any pertinent issues that may affect you. Addresses are never shared. Of course if you already receive this by email then there is no need to do anything. Amanda's' Email is on the back page of this issue.

In May we were finally granted a substantive position. The community cancer service started 3 years ago. For the first 2 years it was a pilot – one of 7 sites in the East of England. After that initial trial period, our site was the only one to prove that not only was the patient experience so much better but that we saved money through our clinical activity and expertise. Key savings, amongst a wide range of work, was to keep patients out of hospital beds by early clinical interventions at home, we enabled patients to get out of hospital quicker with supported discharges, avoided day cases with home treatments and reduced unnecessary outpatient appointments through self-managed aftercare (which I will explain shortly). Statistics showed that Hunts Community Cancer service saved £5.9 for every £1 spent. This meant that local commissioners supported us for a further year to gain more evidence. Patient satisfaction is clearly evident, but this May, figures showed that we reduced medical oncology contacts by 40%!

As a result our contracts are now substantive and not temporary. We are part of business as usual and as long as we continue to show savings and have satisfied patients we are safe! This in a time of financial crisis is a huge achievement and I thank the team for their hard work and support.

We would encourage you please (cheekily!), if you have experienced a good service, to give feedback on the Hinchingsbrooke hospital Web site -to keep our profile high.

I must also thank the Hunts Community Cancer Network Charity. Without the Charity – particularly Susan - we would not be able to provide the extra nurse training, novel equipment / technology and provide our patients with the evidenced based supportive activities

Every Friday

**Holiday Inn, Brampton
Race Course.**

In the Coffee Lounge

10 am - 12 noon

**New Diagnosis? Having
treatment? Come along &
meet us**

**Relaxing atmosphere,
free yoga session,
confidential &
professional advice.**

**Our next Patient
Conference**

Living with Cancer

2016

Free to patients & carers

**Lunch & refreshments
included**

and educational events. Do visit our web site to learn more and we are always in need of volunteers and fund raisers.

Our innovative approach has not gone unnoticed. Meetings are now afoot to spread our service model to other clinical commissioning groups who see the benefits of adopting our model of cancer care.

Earlier I mentioned self-managed aftercare replacing traditional outpatient clinics. Many of you may have been given the opportunity to participate already. Currently we offer this to patients who have had colorectal cancer treatment, ovarian cancers and low risk breast cancers, but soon shall include prostate cancers.

We know that conventional outpatient follow up is not reliable at picking up cancer recurrence or late effects of cancer and/or its treatment. Issues arise ahead of a scheduled appointment and so patients wait til this point to mention possible signs of recurrence or new symptoms or they happen after an appointment – they certainly don't fit in neatly with appointment slots! Patients may go to their GP instead – who as generalists - may not realise the significance of what's reported or patients have to wait for re referral back into the system. It is not an effective means of discussing concerns either as appointments often feel rushed and impersonal.

So, we follow up these patient groups. Instead of sitting in waiting rooms for long periods feeling anxious, instead of taking time off work or having long travel into hospital, instead of a 5-minute consultation where your mind goes blank and you leave forgetting to ask the questions that were important to you or frequently leaving not actually understanding what was saidinstead.....we phone or visit patients at home at these same 3,6 monthly or yearly key points. We ensure blood tests, scans & tests happen as planned and we follow up on results feeding back those patients with worrying results straight back into clinic or organising further tests to get a more informed view which makes a consultant appointment more informative. Importantly patients can contact us by phone, text or email at any point with any concern and we will initiate tests and investigations appropriately. We can discuss concerns directly with your clinician.

Some usual important health reminders

If you have had upper gastro intestinal surgery, colorectal surgery, pelvic radiation treatment (ovarian, prostate, colorectal) and/or chemotherapy and are experiencing on-going and often life altering issues with your bowels or gastro intestinal tract, such as bloating, excessive flatulence, belching or wind, nausea, pain and often, most distressingly, the need to defecate several times a day, even during the night. These symptoms are not exhaustive and come in any combination. Please contact us to chat through if any of the above sound familiar.

For those readers with a diagnosis of breast, prostate or lung cancer you may not be aware of our on-going campaign. Please ask your nurse or doctor about the signs of spinal cord compression. This often presents itself as new or worsening back pain, tingling, numbness/loss of sensation in legs or arms. Change in bladder or bowel sensation. We will continue to raise awareness about Spinal Cord Compression. This can often be diagnosed later than it could be because patients fail to recognise the symptoms and seek medical advice. **Please visit our website to learn more about the warning signs.**

The drop-in and yoga sessions continue on Friday mornings. These are all aimed at those people who are newly diagnosed and starting out on their treatment, but we are also happy to see those living with cancer and aiming to continue with a full and active life joining us as well.

At long last those of you who live closer to Ramsey than Huntingdon can join our new Yoga class that starts on July 19th. Held on a Tuesday afternoon at the Rainbow Centre – these classes offer an opportunity for evidenced based Hatha Yoga – chair based- great at improving lymphatic and blood circulation, improving breathing techniques and teaching relaxation techniques and many other well documented benefits.

Our very popular exercise class. This class is really delivering. Aimed at those of you who are going through or finished treatment. It looks not only to build up your fitness level in a safe and friendly environment but ticks all the boxes as the emerging evidence gathers pace on how exercise can significantly reduce the statistics of cancer recurrence. All exercises are individually tailored to your personal requirements and takes place in a friendly group with like-minded support. Because of its success we now run 2 classes a week - **just call us and we will give you the details on how to access this class.**

Charity News

Like Gini we are also really excited that Yoga and Drop in are about to arrive in Ramsey. Please go along and show your support at our grand opening 2.30pm on July 19th. Although not on the healthy diet list there will be biscuits.

AGM

June 17th was the date of our AGM and thanks to those people who were able to join us. I know they aren't the most exciting of events but this one was our first as a registered charity. Having externally audited accounts means we can now apply for grant funding to help us deliver our bigger projects.

We really want to encourage more people to become charity members and if you have access to the internet joining could not be easier. Just go to the website www.hccn.org.uk click on the charity. Then click on become a member. What's in it for you? The opportunity to work with the Trustees and the nursing service to shape the direction and future plans of the charity. I really look forward to hearing from you.

Wonderful people continue to support us doing many different fundraising activities. Since our last newsletter we have received a large anonymous donation, and continue to benefit from some amazing individual fundraising activities. Thank you to everyone who helps us.

Jan Davis our newest trustee has been very busy writing up and advertising volunteer vacancies. Please have a look. Again just go to the website and they are all there. If you know someone who might fit one of those roles, please let us know.

Later this week I'll be posting the trustees plans for the new year as well as our meeting dates on the website. If there is anything you want to draw to our attention the email address is below and the phone number 07738 208883.

Regular funding is so important to charities. If you are interested in helping us please look on our website where you will see the many ways that people can support us.

Viv's 100 Club. Reliable income is an important way to help the charity to plan its spending and this Club not only provides us with that regular income it pays out prizes as well. Please help us move from having 30+ members to a full house of 100. For a monthly subscription of just £4.00 you could be a lucky prize winner. 50% of the takings go back out in monthly prizes!

Remember to sign up to the website then we can keep you updated about the wonderful things people do to raise funds for us. www.hccn.org.uk. And if there is an article or story you'd like to share for the benefit of others please send them to me at **susan@hccnthecharity.org**

As ever contact details are on this page for everything that we have talked about.

If you would like to offer your talents or fundraise for us this would also be welcomed.

If you wish to be notified of future events such as the patient conference, then let us know now and we will be sure to contact you nearer the time. Though if you subscribe to our website that information will come to your inbox making your life easier.

Gini and the team

Hunts Community Cancer Network

Call Amanda on 01480 416410

Email: aburridge@nhs.net

www.hccn.org.uk

& facebook

www.healthunlocked (HCCN)

