

**NCI/All Ireland Cancer
Nurses
Working Group
Strategy**

2004-2007



Background

The Ireland/Northern Ireland /National Cancer Institute Consortium on Cancer was established by a memorandum of understanding signed in October 1999. The Consortium wishes to encourage exchange of cancer personnel and scholars between Ireland, Northern Ireland and the National Cancer Institute to promote the most effective preventative and therapeutic strategies in management of cancer care.

Following an initial visit to the NCI by a nursing delegation from the island of Ireland on 2nd-5th January 2001 the establishment of and funding of training options and the establishment of an All Ireland /NCI Cancer Nurses Working Group was recommended.

Participants at this meeting:

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Proposed All Ireland/NCI Nurses Working Group under the Ireland- Northern Ireland – NCI Cancer Consortium

- The Nurses Working Group will be tri-partite
- Recommendations by the Working Group will fit within the health strategies of participating countries.
- U.S will generally participate in meetings primarily via teleconference.
- The Nurses Working Group will report to the Consortium Board of Directors.

Proposed Nurse Training

- Clinical Trials Training
- Pre-doctoral Fellowship
- Clinical Oncology Nurse Training
- Summer Genetics through NINR
- NCI Summer Curriculum in Cancer Prevention

The purpose of the All Ireland/ NCI Nurses Working Group

The purpose of the All Ireland/ NCI Nurses Working Group was to facilitate and assist in implementing educational opportunities for nurses identified under the Consortium.

Objectives:

- 1) To promote an understanding of Consortium activities among nurses and to encourage participation.
- 2) To design and assist in implementing agreed – upon education and research programmes approved by the Board under the Memorandum of Understanding and to address local cancer strategies when necessary and appropriate.
- 3) To identify and make recommendations for future development needs.
- 4) To identify obstacles and to recommend strategies to overcome them.
- 5) To provide “programme content” for general promotion of Consortium activities, including the Web site and newsletter.
- 6) To monitor activities in the nursing arena and report on progress to the Consortium Board.

Membership:

- Chief Nursing Officers of Ireland and Northern Ireland
- 1 nurse manager from each jurisdiction (1 alternate to be designated from each)
- 1 nurse practitioner from each jurisdiction (1 alternate from each)
- 1 representative from each university providing cancer education on the island (currently Queen’s University, University of Ulster, The University of Dublin, Trinity College, University College Dublin)
- 1 nursing research representative from Ireland and Northern Ireland (R&D office and Health Research Board)
- 3 nursing representatives from the U.S that would include expertise in oncology training, clinical trials and research experience.

Meetings:

- The Working Group will select a chair annually, alternating between Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- The chair will host the meeting and provide administration support.
- The group will meet four times per year, scheduling 2 meetings to occur prior to Implementation Group Meetings.

Progress to date:

Meetings

The first meeting of the NCI/All Ireland Cancer Nurses Working Group was held on 21st April 2001 in the Department of Health & Children.

Five other meetings have subsequently taken place and the venue has been alternated between Dublin and Belfast.

Education and research

- 7 Nurses have completed their Clinical Trials training at NCI
- Unfortunately suitable applications for the Cancer Nursing Fellowships have not been found in the past 2 years.
- 4 Nurses have completed the Cancer Prevention Course.
- An Information Day was hosted on 17th May 2002 at St Luke's Hospital, Dublin. This provided an opportunity for nurses to gain insight into the NCI perspective, including cancer prevention, clinical trials, telesynergy, palliative care and to promote the Cancer Nursing Fellowships
- The All Ireland Fatigue Coalition held a major conference in Dublin in 2002.
- In collaboration with NCI the HRB and the R&D office hosted an International Cancer Nursing fellowship Workshop on 26th September 2001, Carrickdale Hotel, Northern Ireland.
- Nursing participants from the Cancer Consortium presented at the "Cancer Care In Ireland" Conference, which was hosted in Belfast in October 2002.
- The Chief Nursing Officers have provided Progress Reports of the Nurses Working Group activities to the NCI implementation group meetings. Some of these meetings are by teleconference.

Palliative Care - Promoting Links

- With the support of the HRB and R&D office, 3 doctors and 5 Nurses attended the State of the Science Palliative Care Conference at NCI in Washington 15-17th July 2002. This was an opportunity to establish links and share ideas regarding the development of palliative care.

Those who attended this conference were:

- Dr Sheila Kelly, Marie Curie Centre, Belfast
- Dr Angela Garvey, Altnagelvin HSS Trust, Northern Ireland
- Toni Lenfesty, Macmillan Nurse, Mater HSS Trust, Belfast
- Eileen Deery, United HSS Trust, Belfast
- Orla Keegan, Irish Hospice Foundation, Dublin
- Hazel Smullen, North-West Hospice, Sligo

- Dr Regina McQuillan, St Francis Hospice, Dublin
 - Reena McDermott, St Francis Hospice, Dublin
 - Patricia O'Brien, Palliative Care Nurse, UCG, Galway
- A Palliative Care Sub-group met on two occasions. This group was dissolved in December 2002 and palliative care representatives from both North and South will be co-opted onto the NCI/All Ireland Cancer Nurses Working Group.
 - The working group have established a template outlining the experience that would be available to NCI nurses both from an educational and a clinical placement perspective. To date, no NCI nurses have availed of this opportunity.

Context

Governments both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are investing in the development and management of cancer services. In order to set this document in context, below are some of the initiatives that have impacted on Cancer Nursing on the island of Ireland.

Northern Ireland

- A Cancer Network in Northern Ireland is being developed. User involvement is a key theme. Macmillan will be empowering users to facilitate their maximum participation.
- A new Patient Information and Support Centre will be opened. It will provide information throughout the cancer journey and will be a signposting service linking people to information about cancer prevention, screening, treatment, survivorship, financial advice and to relevant charities and services.
- Northern Ireland Cancer Nursing Research Forum (NICNRF) is working to develop on cancer-nursing research and has produced a strategy for future work. This Strategic Framework for Cancer Nursing Research is due to be launched in November 2003. (Appendix 1)
- A sub-group of this forum is made up of cancer nurse researchers who have achieved or are working towards a PhD.
- One of the aims of this forum is to help develop those who will be eligible to apply for PhDs in the future. The group are confident that the links they have established between education, R&D and practice will enable them to succeed.
- A strategic framework for cancer nursing research is to be launched at the Cancer Nursing Conference in November, which is being held jointly by Belfast City Hospital Trust and the University of Ulster under the auspices of NICNRF.

Republic of Ireland

- The National Cancer Strategy 1996 is currently under review and is due for publication in 2003.
- A Nursing sub-group of the National Cancer Forum has recently been formed to look at a strategy for the future of cancer nursing in the Republic.

- A Paediatric Palliative Care Needs Assessment is underway and due for publication early 2004
- The Development of Radiation Oncology Services in Ireland Report was published in October 2003 and has implications for how and where cancer services are delivered.
- Report of the National Advisory Committee on Palliative Care was published in 2001 and is in the process of being implemented.
- The Research Strategy for Nursing and Midwifery in Ireland was launched in January 2003 initiatives for research and development in cancer/palliative care will build on this foundation. (Appendix 2)

Summary

The new all-Ireland clinical trials cooperative group (AICG) brings together those involved in cancer research and care throughout Ireland and Northern Ireland in a new organisational arrangement, based on the proven US cancer clinical trials model. It offers an opportunity to increase the amount of clinical trial activity undertaken on the island of Ireland, in cooperation with colleagues in the US, the UK and the rest of Europe.

The group was formed under the auspices of the Ireland – Northern Ireland – National Cancer Institute Cancer Consortium, and is made up of nine participating centres in Ireland, the Northern Ireland Cancer Centre, a headquarters function in Dublin and a statistical and data management function in Belfast. It is an important demonstration of the impact of the Consortium in developing new and dynamic ways of organising cancer research and hence improving care for cancer patients. Health Research Board in Dublin and the Research & Development (R&D) Office in Belfast jointly fund the initiative.

This paper sets out a range of proposals/recommendations which need to be discussed and agreed as a means of designing and developing a strategy for the future direction of the NCI/All Ireland Cancer Nurses Working Group. This action plan once agreed, needs to be set within a time frame that is both achievable and realistic.

ACTION PLAN

In essence we seek to create an action plan to ensure that the future direction and efforts of the NCI/All Ireland Cancer Nurses Working Group best meets the needs of people affected by cancer and the nursing staff who work in this field including those working with children and adolescents.

AIMS

The overall aims of this strategy are to contribute to:

1. Workforce development of nurses to participate in the clinical trials programmes.
2. Developing and building capacity for cancer and palliative care nursing research and development.
3. Identifying educational opportunities across the island of Ireland and the USA.
4. Building networks and databases to enhance communication and information sharing.

ACTION NO. 1

Workforce development of research nurses to support the clinical trials programme

Objectives

- Identify with service planners opportunities to establish clinical trials research nurses posts
- Develop and refine the research nurses clinical trials training to meet service needs

Measures of success

- Clinical trials research nurses appointed according to service plans
- Clinical trials research nurses have access to appropriate preparation for posts and ongoing professional development
- Positive evaluation from participants in clinical trials training initiatives

ACTION NO.2

Developing and building capacity for cancer and palliative care nursing research and development.

Objectives

- To identify a programme of nursing research in cancer/palliative care within the context of clinical trials which would provide capacity building from Masters to Post doctoral level
- To increase success rate for nurses working in cancer and palliative care to access research funding opportunities

- To promote cancer and palliative nursing research beyond the remit of clinical trials identifying opportunities to build partnerships

Measures of success

- Administration and management of a programme of research for cancer nursing within the context of clinical trials
- Increased awareness of opportunities
- Individuals assisted in developing applications
- Increase in the number of successful applicants receiving funding from a range of sources for cancer and palliative care nursing projects
- Evidence of partnerships in active research projects within and beyond the clinical trials arena

ACTION NO.3

To identify educational opportunities across the island of Ireland and the USA.

Objectives

- To enhance the use of telesynergy by nurses for education purposes
- To encourage tripartite learning -NCI/All Ireland.
- To identify learning opportunities on the island of Ireland and through the NCI in the US, agreeing the expectations on the participants to disseminate the learning
- Evaluation of the impact of education

Measures of success

- Time frame
- Clinical trials module established at QUB
- Cancer Prevention programme participants to link with Kathy Rowe at QUB to determine dissemination of learning

ACTION NO.4

To build networks and databases

Objectives

- To develop a network of Clinical Trials Research Nurses linked to ICORG
- To use telesynergy to network with each other and NCI
- To participate in telesynergy user groups
- To develop an all Ireland database of nurse researchers in cancer /palliative care
- To link research projects into established nursing research databases
- To disseminate information from the NCI/ All Ireland Cancer Nurses Working Group

Measures of success

- A page or section in the Cancer consortium newsletter, via NCMN (Republic of Ireland) and via CNO Newsletter (Northern Ireland))

- To initiate links with cancer nurses internationally outside the field of clinical trials (e.g. explore links with other cancer organisations such as Sloan Kettering or establish links with the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) at the National Institute of Health)
- Agreed communication strategy including circulation of Consortium newsletter, website, posters and conference presentations

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