



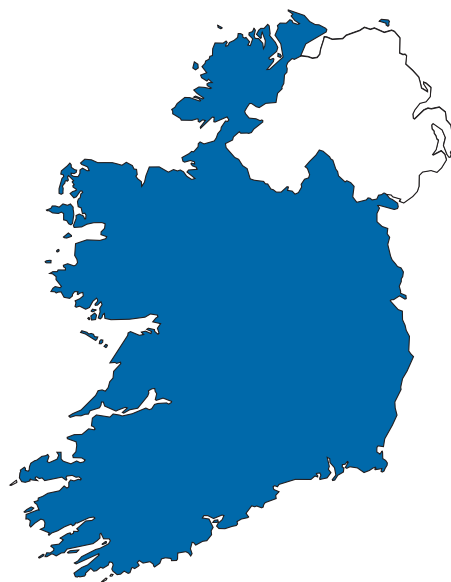
# State of Cancer Services on the Island of Ireland

## IRELAND

In accordance with *A Strategy for Cancer Control in Ireland 2006*, the Health Service Executive (HSE) established a National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) in 2007, appointing Professor Tom Keane as Interim Director in November 2007. The Programme is intended to precipitate significant improvements in cancer prevention, detection, treatment, and survival through a national service, based on evidence and best practice. This involves considerable realignment of cancer services in order to transition a fragmented system of care to one that is consistent with international best practice in cancer control.

Under the NCCP, each of four managed cancer control networks, including two cancer centers within each network, serves a minimum population of 500,000 patients. Cancer diagnostic and surgical services will be provided within these eight centers and chemotherapy will be delivered locally, in accordance with protocols established by the multidisciplinary teams based in the designated center. For additional information on the NCCP, visit [http://hse.ie/eng/Find\\_a\\_Service/National\\_Cancer\\_Control\\_Programme/About\\_NCCP](http://hse.ie/eng/Find_a_Service/National_Cancer_Control_Programme/About_NCCP).

The process of relocating diagnostic and surgical cancer services from non-designated hospitals to designated cancer centers is ongoing. By the end of 2008, 50% of diagnostic and surgical cancer services were provided within the eight cancer centers. It is expected that 80-90% of these services will have been fully transferred to the eight centers by the end of 2009.



## CANCER SCREENING SERVICES

### BreastCheck/The National Breast Screening Programme

BreastCheck, the National Breast Screening Programme, aims to reduce the number

of deaths resulting from breast cancer in Ireland by providing free breast screening to all women aged 50-64. By the end of 2008, BreastCheck was available in most of Ireland's twenty-six counties; BreastCheck will be universally available in Ireland by the end of 2009.

Recently compiled figures indicate that over 75% of women accepted invitations to attend screening appointments in 2007, surpassing the program target of 70%. As a result of this screening program, approximately 400 cancers were detected. When the program is fully launched at the end of 2009, BreastCheck will invite women aged 50-64 for a free mammogram on an area-by-area basis every two years, screening approximately 140,000 women per year.

### CervicalCheck/The National Cervical Screening Programme

CervicalCheck, the National Cervical Screening Programme, provides free Pap smear tests through primary care settings to the 1.1 million women aged 25-60 living in Ireland. The program was initially rolled out on 1 September 2008 and in 2009, approximately 240,000 women will be screened. Women aged 25-44 will be screened every three years and women aged 45-60, every five years.

## NATIONAL CANCER REGISTRY, IRELAND

The National Cancer Registry, Ireland (NCRI) collects high quality data on cancer and promotes the use of this information in reducing cancer incidence and improving survival. NCRI's activities fall into the two main categories of data collection and reporting. This information is used in research programs investigating the causes of cancer, in developing and executing education and information programs, and in planning the national cancer strategy for Ireland. NCRI also provides essential input regarding the formation, implementation, and monitoring of data relating to clinical activities and outcomes under the NCCP.

## HEALTH RESEARCH BOARD

The HRB administers a range of research programs, including cancer clinical trials and cancer research fellowship initiatives, under the Ireland-Northern Ireland-NCI Cancer Consortium.



## IRELAND-NORTHERN IRELAND-NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE CANCER CONSORTIUM

The DoHC and all other stakeholders in Ireland continue to recognize and value the key role played by the Ireland-Northern Ireland-NCI Cancer Consortium in enhancing cancer research, education, and training on the island of Ireland. The Consortium's Irish members wish to express gratitude to public health colleagues in Northern Ireland and at the NCI for the wholehearted cooperation that characterizes and continues to strengthen the Consortium.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

Cancer care is provided to Northern Ireland's population of 1.7 million people through the five Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts. This includes community-based support, treatment in local hospitals, and the Northern Ireland Clinical Cancer Centre (NICC) in Belfast.

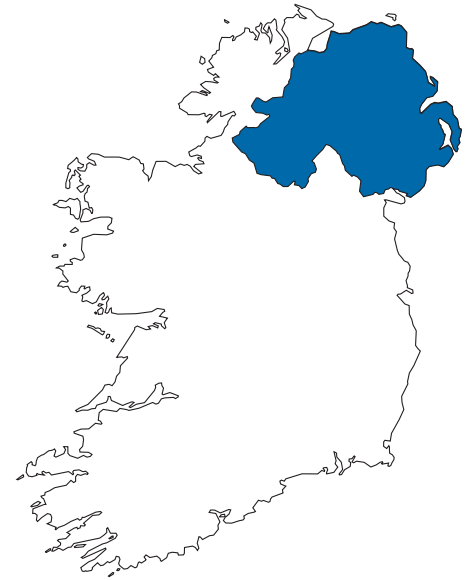
## CANCER ACCESS TARGETS

The HSC of Northern Ireland selected the following targets for action in 2008-2009:

- Beginning April 2008, all urgent breast cancer referrals must wait no longer than fourteen days from the date of referral to establish a first appointment with a breast cancer specialist. By March 2009, all urgent breast cancer referrals, from both general and other practitioners, will be seen within fourteen days.
- Beginning April 2008, at least 98% of all patients commenced their first definitive treatment for cancer no later than thirty-one days after the date on which the course of treatment was determined.
- Beginning April 2008, at least 75% of all patients began definitive treatment for cancer no longer than sixty-two days after the date of their initial general practitioner referral, increasing to 95% by March 2009.

These targets continue to reflect cancer standards elsewhere in the United Kingdom (U.K.) and provide a benchmark for comparing patient access to prompt, accurate cancer diagnosis and treatment in Northern Ireland against performance throughout the National Health Service (NHS). In 2008, all Northern Ireland hospitals met the breast cancer target and recent figures indicate that hospitals will

likely achieve the other targets, as well. Validated figures for 2008 performance will be available in April 2009.



## CANCER SCREENING PROGRAMS

Cancer screening programs in Northern Ireland include the following:

- Breast cancer screening is offered to women aged 50-64 and will be extended to include women up to age 70, beginning March 2009. From 2005 through 2008, approximately 75.6% of women invited for breast screening attended their screening appointments.
- Cervical cancer screening is offered to women between the ages of 20-65. Approximately 73.5% of women invited for cervical cancer screening attended their screening appointments from 2003 through 2008.
- Colorectal cancer screening will be offered to men and women between the ages of 60-69, beginning December 2009.

## CANCER SERVICE FRAMEWORK

The DHSSPS has introduced a program aimed at facilitating the development of a range of service frameworks that will

establish evidence-based, quantifiable standards for health and social care. The program connects a wide range of health care stakeholders and representatives from all aspects of the health service, including service users and caregivers.

The Northern Ireland Cancer Network (NiCaN) is leading the charge on developing a cancer service framework for cancer prevention, treatment, and care. This framework will entrench standards for the prevention, treatment, care, rehabilitation, and palliative care services provided to individuals and communities at greater risk of developing cancer. The cancer service framework will also set standards for improving the patient experience, promoting the quality of health, and providing palliative/end-of-life care services, as well as specific standards for:

- Breast cancer
- Central nervous system cancer
- Child and youth cancer
- Colorectal cancer
- Skin cancer
- Endocrine cancer
- Gynecological cancer
- Hematological cancer
- Head and neck cancer
- Lung cancer
- Sarcoma
- Upper gastrointestinal cancer
- Urological cancer

It is anticipated that the draft service framework will be issued for consultation in 2009.

## **NORTHERN IRELAND CANCER NETWORK**

During 2008, NiCaN experienced a number of significant developments. In addition to spearheading development of the cancer service framework, NiCaN partnered with the DHSSPS and an array of public health

colleagues to prepare for introducing the new colorectal screening program for men and women between the ages of 60-69 by December 2009.

In October 2008, the Upper Gastrointestinal (UGI) Network hosted a regional workshop to discuss the development of an integrated patient-centered UGI service for Northern Ireland. A report recommending the centralization of surgery within the Belfast Trust and outlining cancer unit service standards was submitted to service commissioners in 2008. A decision on this report is expected in early 2009.



NiCaN's Supportive and Palliative Care Network developed a regional model for palliative care during 2008. This model will provide a basis for delivery of the *Priorities for Action 2009-10* palliative care targets. Additionally, the group developed a report entitled *Educational Framework for Generalist and Specialist Palliative Care*, which is expected to help guide service development in the palliative care area.

The Network's new Web site, <http://www.cancerni.net>, was launched in October 2008. With over 1,000 pages of cancer information and resources, the new Web site serves as a single portal, providing a wide range of medical, service, and clinical trials information for patients and public health professionals in Northern Ireland. NiCaN has also developed patient information pathways for breast, lung, urological, and colorectal cancers, with additional pathways to follow in 2009.

NiCaN successfully invested in a development program for Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) representatives, as a way of building confidence and skill sets in contributing to service planning and evaluation. The PPI Forum hopes to establish a patient audit panel in 2009-2010. The Forum will train patient representatives as peer reviewers for multidisciplinary teams, which are also being led by NiCaN.

## **NICE GUIDANCE**

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) disseminates evidence-based guidance on a range of issues. During 2008, NICE guidance was endorsed as applicable in Northern Ireland on a number of cancer therapy standards, including the following:

- Rituximab for the treatment of relapsed or refractory Stage III or Stage IV follicular non-Hodgkins lymphoma.
- Pemetrexed for the treatment of non-small cell lung cancer.
- Pemetrexed disodium for the treatment of malignant pleural mesothelioma.
- Bortezomib monotherapy for the treatment of multiple myeloma.
- Carmustine implants and temozolomide for the treatment of glioma.