



PRESS RELEASE

Embargo: 00.01hrs Tuesday 27 February 2007

Friday 23 February 2007

Cancer patients should have high quality care wherever treated, say colleges

New guidelines for maintaining the standards of care for cancer patients have been drawn up by the Joint Collegiate Council for Oncology, a joint body of The Royal College of Radiologists and the Royal College of Physicians.

Increasing demand for radiotherapy and chemotherapy services and the reconfiguration of health services mean that in future, cancer services are likely to be given closer to patients' homes. Treatment for NHS patients may be provided outside traditional hospital settings by NHS providers, by independent sector treatment centres and by other providers.

The Joint Collegiate Council for Oncology has set out the standards for the quality of care that cancer patients should expect to receive wherever they are treated. The guidelines stress that all units delivering care to cancer patients should have formal links to one or more cancer centres and participate in the working groups of cancer networks, working in accordance with their policies and guidelines. Further recommendations cover the organisation of services and the provision of care centred on the needs of patients.

Professor Ian Gilmore, President of the Royal College of Physicians said, "The demand for cancer treatment will grow dramatically as the number of elderly patients in our population increases. Devolved radiotherapy and chemotherapy treatment centres, combined with established NHS cancer services, have the potential to widen the range of services available across the country, to bring down waiting times and to make treatment more convenient."

Professor Janet Husband, President of The Royal College of Radiologists, said, "It is vitally important that clear guidelines are produced to ensure that patients receive the highest quality cancer treatment in the correct timeframe, regardless of the setting. Patient safety and the quality of the service they receive should be paramount. This paper builds on previous work done by the Colleges, to set out those guidelines in a clear and unambiguous way, outlining the ways in which all providers can adhere to the very highest standards of care."

Dr Michael Williams, Vice-President of The Royal College of Radiologists, said, "Increasing demands on cancer services mean that we need to look at new ways of treating patients. Moving some care out of hospitals will simplify travel and parking for patients. These standards will help to ensure that, as well as being more convenient, services are of the highest standard and are properly linked into the care pathway."

A full copy of the guidelines is attached and will be available on the RCP and RCR websites from Tuesday 27 February 2007. For further information and to arrange interviews with Dr Williams please contact either RCP PR Manager Linda Cuthbertson on 020 7935 1174 ext.254 or Dan Garbutt, RCR Communications Officer on 020 7299 1138.



The Royal College of Radiologists

Notes to editors

1. The Joint Collegiate Council (JCCO) is made up of members of The Royal College of Radiologists, the Royal College of Physicians, patients and other outside observers.
2. The Royal College of Radiologists has approximately 7000 members and Fellows worldwide representing the disciplines of clinical oncology and clinical radiology. All members and Fellows of the College are registered medical or dental practitioners. The role of the College is to advance the science and practice of radiology and oncology, further public education and promote study and research through setting professional standards of practice.
3. The Royal College of Physicians is a professional membership organisation representing the concerns of over 21,000 Fellows and Collegiate Members worldwide. The College aims to ensure high quality care for patients by promoting the highest standards of medical practice. It sets standards in clinical practice and education and training, conducts assessments and examinations, quality assures external audit programmes, supports doctors in their practice of medicine, and advises the Government, public and the profession on healthcare issues.