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News

Big names meet to talk cancer 04.05.23 AM

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Big names are readying to debate "the true value of oncology" at the Private Cancer Physicians of Australia's (PCPA) 2023 conference over the weekend in Melbourne - just days ahead of the 2023-24 Federal Budget.

The *'Embracing the Challenge: Advancing Cancer Care'* conference will be held at InterContinental hotel, The Rialto, and is sponsored by a range of pharma's including Diamond Sponsor Roche and Gold Sponsors Gilead, Kite, and Servier.

Australia is riding a wave of emerging innovative and ground-breaking diagnostic technologies and cancer treatments, but gaining access to them is a growing concern considering the Federal Government is under pressure to rein in its health spending.

Government backbencher and breast cancer patient, Peta Murphy, will join Shadow Minister for Health and Aged Care, Anne Ruston, industry leaders, cancer experts and patient advocates for the highly anticipated event where they'll be asked to consider: "the true value of oncology and when is the price of access too high?"

More than 170 medical and radiation oncologists, haematologists (consultants and advanced trainees) and cancer nurses, will unpack the latest cancer care developments, from precision medicine and molecular testing, theranostics and CAR T-cell therapy to the importance of prehabilitation and optimising psychosocial and supportive care for patients.

CEO and founder of Rare Cancers Australia, Richard Vines, will argue that more needs to be done to improve access and affordability to these exciting but expensive game-changing developments, such as Comprehensive Genome Profiling, that allows researchers to identify Australians with rare or untreatable cancers and direct them into clinical trials.

In a panel discussion on 'empathy and access - why both matter', delegates will hear the unique perspectives of politician-now-patient, Murphy with her oncologist, Dr Richard de Boer.

This includes the question: "Should oncologists offer the best and latest cancer care treatment, even if they believe it will put their patient under immense financial pressure?"

Joining this important debate will be the CEO of the Breast Cancer Network of Australia, Kirsten Pilatti and Senator Ruston, who will also share her expectations of next week's 2023-2024 Federal Budget.

The PCPA is the peak body for cancer clinicians. President, Christopher Steer, said the conference's central themes of access and affordability were very timely, coming just days before the Government hands down its second Federal Budget.

"Australians with cancer are already struggling with the soaring cost of living and they should not have to choose between their mortgage or rent and a life-saving diagnostic technology or treatment," Steer said.

"We all need to come together and work closely with Government and the biopharmaceutical industry, to find a way over these existing barriers of unacceptable regulatory delays and increasing costs.

"Our patients deserve no less."

Tiffany Walker

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