

PCPA invites medical oncologists and cancer nurses to participate in genomics workshop

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Australia's peak body for private cancer specialists will host a workshop for all medical oncologists and cancer nurses to gain a practical immersion into how genomic testing can better refine diagnoses, help predict cancer behaviour and create more effective treatment plans for their patients.

Board member of the Private Cancer Physicians of Australia (PCPA) and workshop Master of Ceremonies, Dr Cameron McLaren, said genomic testing or precision medicine is a powerful tool that unlocks the secrets of a patient's cancer at the genetic level.

"Genomic testing, once a futuristic view of how cancer may be treated, is now transforming cancer care by offering personalised insights for both the patient and those who care for them," said Dr McLaren.

"As importantly as finding new treatments that can help our patients, genomic testing also allows us to choose which treatments will *not* help, so we can avoid subjecting our patients to toxicities of ineffective treatments."

Co-curating the free one-day workshop 'Genomics to Therapeutics' is LifeStrands Genomics.

Medical director Dr Vivek Rathi, is working with ScienceToLife to bring together leading experts in cancer genomics.

Among the speakers will be Associate Professor Lara Lipton, medical oncologist at Cabrini Health, Professor Anthony Gill, medical director of anatomical pathology at the Royal North Shore Hospital and Professor Benhur Amanuel, medical director of PathWest.

"With compelling case studies, our audience will explore the functioning of a clinical genomic laboratory, the contemporary and emerging testing platforms and we will unpack genomic test reports, terminologies and international reporting guidelines," said Dr Rathi.

"Effective clinical service provision in cancer genomics demands a distinctive perspective, integrating medical expertise with cutting edge genomic technologies, to offer treatments tailored to individuals' genetic profiles," said Dr Rathi.

The PCPA workshop aims to provide practical genomic knowledge at a grassroots to semi advanced level, which would help participants in choosing their genomic tests more effectively and wisely, to the benefit of their patients."

More information on the workshop is available [online](#).

Patients welcome funding but challenge Pharmac over eligibility refusal

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Breast Cancer Foundation NZ has welcomed Pharmac's decision to fund breast cancer therapy KISQALI (ribociclib) but expressed disappointment over its failure to widen access criteria.

KISQALI will be funded for hormone-positive advanced breast cancer.

The foundation said during the consultation process, it recommended an amendment to the proposed eligibility criteria so that patients who experience severe and life-threatening side effects on either KISQALI or IBRANCE (palbociclib) can switch to other therapy.

KISQALI and IBRANCE are both CDK4/6 inhibitors.

"Today, Pharmac has refused our recommendation," it said.

The foundation's Adèle Gautier said, "Drugs like this work really well for many, sometimes extending survival by several years, so we're really pleased to have another option. But some patients are forced to stop a drug due to life-threatening side effects, even though it's doing wonders for their cancer.

"We asked Pharmac to scrap its 'one drug per lifetime rule' for this type of drug to allow patients to switch to another one, which would involve no extra cost and no additional patients, but they've declined that. So in that respect, it's falling short and a missed opportunity to do our best for people with advanced breast cancer."