

PRIMARY CARE 10 TOP TIPS

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Key steps in establishing a locally based chemotherapy service

- 1** Identify the problem – largely a perception of patients.
- 2** Make time for discussion about possible solutions with oncologists.
- 3** Prepare a business case for developing the service to the local Health Board.
- 4** Develop protocols, safeguards and policies for dealing with problems and communication channels with the cancer centre.
- 5** Present proposals to the oncology service, detailing the whole patient pathway and highlighting safeguards put in place to ensure patient safety.
- 6** Agree protocols with the oncology service.
- 7** Ensure appropriate training of nurses who are to administer chemotherapy.
- 8** Facilitate the education of the wider health care community on issues such as managing neutropaenic sepsis.
- 9** Keep a focus on implementation, review and fine tuning.
- 10** Plan systematically how you would like to widen the scope of the service once it is established.

The end result is a team providing a locally based chemotherapy administration service, operating as a satellite unit of a cancer centre. Toxicity checks and results of blood tests are communicated to the cancer centre ahead of preparation of chemotherapy preparation, so that waste is minimised, dose reductions are implemented if necessary. Also, patients who require treatments that can only be given in the cancer centre do not make wasted journeys if they are unfit for their planned treatment. The oncologists retain overall clinical responsibility for treatment and prescribe all of the chemotherapy.

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