COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

TO SUPPORT OPTIMAL CANCER CARE PATHWAYS IN PRACTICE, 2016–17

Developed by the National Cancer Expert Reference Group to support the early adoption of the Optimal Cancer Care Pathways
1 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

1.1 PURPOSE

Effective ongoing stakeholder engagement and communication will be essential for successful national adoption of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways.

The purpose of this Communications Strategy is to facilitate awareness, understanding and commitment to early stage (2016–17) adoption of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways in jurisdictions across Australia.

The Communications Strategy is closely aligned with the Framework for Optimal Cancer Care Pathways in Practice and has been developed to support jurisdictions in stakeholder engagement and communications planning to promote adoption of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways over the next 12 months.

OBJECTIVES

The Communications Strategy shares and is designed to facilitate the objectives of the Framework for Optimal Cancer Care Pathways in Practice:

1) **Engage and communicate:** facilitate awareness, understanding and commitment to Optimal Cancer Care Pathways

2) **Collaborate:** facilitate reflection, sharing of knowledge and key lessons

3) **Drive best practice care:** drive continuous improvement of best practice cancer care using data where possible

4) **Monitor and act:** create opportunities to identify and address local variation in cancer care, while developing data collection

WHO THE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY IS FOR

This communication strategy provides guidance and tools for use within jurisdictions. The intended audience includes any individual or team of people responsible for facilitating adoption of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways during the period 2016–17. The strategy may be used at the state/territory level (e.g. by Health Department staff or state advisory committee members), or by staff at regional (e.g. Local Health District staff) or local levels (e.g. individual clinicians and health services).
PRINCIPLES

The following principles guide the approach to stakeholder engagement and communications in this strategy.

1) **Clarity:** make the purpose and benefits of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways clear to all stakeholders by using appropriately tailored messages and methods.

2) **Consistency:** use agreed key messages to build awareness and prevent misunderstanding.

3) **Efficiency and effectiveness:** use existing communications channels and mechanisms known to be effective in reaching target audiences.

4) **Utilisation:** use existing Optimal Cancer Care Pathways resources that are tailored to audiences at system, service and patient levels.

5) **Engagement:** genuinely involve and collaborate with key stakeholders through multiple and two-way communications.

6) **Local champions/leadership:** encourage and enable local innovation and tailoring of strategies.

1.2 BENEFITS

Use of this communications strategy and the accompanying templates and tools will help jurisdictions plan the most effective and efficient approaches to stakeholder engagement and communications.

Stakeholders are more likely to support the early adoption of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways if they receive timely, clear communications and feel meaningfully engaged in the adoption process.

A nationally consistent approach to communications by using consistent key messages and communications channel will maximise national awareness and understanding of, and ultimately commitment of stakeholders to, the Optimal Cancer Care Pathways.
2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

2.1 GUIDANCE

In this strategy, a stakeholder refers to someone who affects, or is affected by, the adoption of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways during 2016–17. Stakeholders include:

- those who will promote adoption of the pathways to ensure best practice and quality improvement (such as hospital CEOs and cancer service directors)
- those who will use the pathways in practice (such as health professionals)
- people who will benefit from them (including patients and other people affected by cancer).

It is important for jurisdictions to involve and consult with key stakeholders to get their ‘buy in’, to facilitate successful early adoption of the Optimal Cancer Care Pathways.

Table 1. Stakeholder Engagement Planning: Steps And Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning steps</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Guidance and supporting tool/resource</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarify purpose</td>
<td>Clearly state the purpose of overall stakeholder engagement and the desired outcomes</td>
<td>Section 2.2: Mapping and Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and analyse stakeholders</td>
<td>Create a list of all relevant stakeholders</td>
<td>Section 2.3: Stakeholder Engagement Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine the appropriate level of engagement for each stakeholder group</td>
<td>Tool: Stakeholder Mapping &amp; Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop engagement plan</td>
<td>For each stakeholder group:</td>
<td>Section 3.0: Communications Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>define purpose of engagement</td>
<td>Tool: Stakeholder Mapping &amp; Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>note what you know about their interests and motivations (&quot;considerations&quot; for engagement)</td>
<td>Resource: Key Messages</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>select appropriate engagement methods and activities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>identify key messages to communicate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a communications plan</td>
<td>Identify existing communications channels and opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create a communications plan</td>
<td>Tool: Communications Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use provided communications resources and collateral to guide communications</td>
<td>Tool: Key Messages</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Sample Resources</td>
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2.2 MAPPING AND ANALYSIS

Many different organisations, groups and individuals might be interested in or affected by the adoption of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways. Identifying the key stakeholders is fundamental to the overall success of the stakeholder engagement and communications strategy.

To start, create a list of all the potentially relevant stakeholders. Use the stakeholder mapping and analysis tool and list of potential stakeholders to facilitate this.

Consider stakeholders at the three different levels of influence and/or impact:

- the health system level
- health services level
- patient level.

Given the large number of potential stakeholders, it is generally necessary to consider similar stakeholders together in stakeholder groups such as “health professional groups” or “local consumer organisations” (see Figure 1).

Jurisdictions can engage with state-level branches of national organisations (e.g. state/territory cancer councils) with confidence that the National Cancer Expert Reference Group will be engaging with relevant national level stakeholder groups regarding the adoption of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways.

While it is important to be as open and inclusive in communications as possible, timelines and resource constraints may mean that jurisdictions have to be more selective and target engagement. Stakeholder groups will vary in their interest, significance, relevance and/or impact in relation to the desired outcomes.

Stakeholder analysis involves deciding the most appropriate level of engagement or participation for each stakeholder group (see Table 2). The appropriate level is generally determined by:

- the purpose of engagement
- interests and influence of key stakeholder groups.

Use the stakeholder mapping and analysis tool to assess and record the appropriate level of engagement for each identified group.
Table 2. Range Of Stakeholder Engagement\(^1\) Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of engagement</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Activity examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inform</td>
<td>Inform stakeholders about the Optimal Cancer Care Pathways.</td>
<td>Announcements, email, websites, fact sheets, newsletters, education programs, meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult</td>
<td>Actively seek opinions, advice and/or feedback from stakeholders to inform outcomes of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways.</td>
<td>Public meetings, comment processes, focus groups, surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve</td>
<td>Work directly with stakeholders to obtain insight and knowledge and understand needs and concerns.</td>
<td>Workshops, panels, taskforces, working groups, reference groups, steering groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate</td>
<td>Stakeholders are actively involved as partners in design, planning, development and decision-making.</td>
<td>Consensus building forums, advisory committees, clinical networks, formal partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empower</td>
<td>Stakeholders initiate and/or lead activities, and make final decisions.</td>
<td>Committees, participatory governance, communities of practice</td>
</tr>
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**TOOLS AND RESOURCES**

Tool: Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis

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\(^1\) The levels of engagement are from the spectrum developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2): www.iap2.org
Figure 1. Overview of Key Stakeholders for National Adoption of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways
2.3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The stakeholder mapping and analysis tool provides a structure to plan and capture actions to engage with key stakeholder groups identified using the guidance in Section 2.2.

The stakeholder engagement plan can be used to detail:

- **the purpose** of engagement with each stakeholder group/organisation or individual
- **considerations** for engagement, and
- **potential engagement methods or activities.**

The approach to stakeholder engagement will depend on jurisdictional priorities, cancer services context and approaches to continuous improvement during the early stage adoption of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways.

With most stakeholder groups, the purposes of engagement are likely to include:

- increasing stakeholder awareness of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways
- increasing stakeholder understanding of the use and benefits of the Optimal Cancer Care Pathways
- encouraging stakeholders to align existing clinical practice with the pathways.

The stakeholder engagement plan enables jurisdictions to identify more specific purposes that can be tailored to stakeholder groups. For example, the purpose of engaging General Practitioners may be to encourage them to refer newly-diagnosed patients to the patient ‘what to expect’ versions of the Optimal Cancer Care Pathways.

**Considerations** for engagement include information about the stakeholder/s’ known interests, motivations, expectations or concerns, or other factors that might influence the engagement approach or methods. For example, consider key influencers within the group.

As described in Table 2, the selection of engagement methods or activities will be guided by the level of participation required for the stakeholder group. Engagement methods should be tailored to the role and potential impact of the stakeholder group in achieving the desired outcomes. The choice of activities also depends on timelines, budget and capacity, and the benefits and limitations of different methods.

**TOOLS AND RESOURCES**

**Tool:** Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis
3 COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Effective stakeholder communication involves reaching a wide range of stakeholder groups with the right messages at the right time.

A communications plan can help jurisdictions develop a strategic approach to communications and promotional activities to increase key stakeholders’ understanding and use of the Optimal Cancer Care Pathways. It should reflect the jurisdictional priorities and timelines for early stage adoption of the pathways and consider the key audiences and communications priorities at each stage.

3.2 KEY MESSAGES

All jurisdictions have committed to working towards adoption of the nationally endorsed Optimal Cancer Care Pathways. Nationally consistent and clear communications will be essential. Using the agreed key messages will provide this clarity and consistency and maximise stakeholders’ awareness and understanding of, and ultimately commitment to, the Optimal Cancer Care Pathways.

Simple, clear and timely communication using key messages will minimise the risk of individuals or groups feeling disengaged or having different understandings or expectations about the Optimal Cancer Care Pathways or about the early stage adoption process and timelines.

A set of key messages has been approved by the National Cancer Expert Reference Group for jurisdictional use. The messages are grouped by topic so they can be mapped to stakeholder groups in the communications planning tool.

3.3 CHANNELS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Once the priority stakeholders (groups and individuals) have been agreed to, the next step is to identify potential communications channels and activities to engage and inform them.

Use existing communications channels and methods known to reach stakeholder groups wherever possible.

Consider monitoring the reach of communications and perceptions of stakeholders, which can determine the effectiveness of communications.
3.4 COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The communications planning tool provided includes example ‘stages’ of early adoption to highlight the different priority stakeholders and key messages to be communicated at each stage.

Table 3. Communication Focus at Each Stage of Adoption of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of adoption</th>
<th>Communication focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Focus on ensuring access to Optimal Cancer Care Pathways and raising awareness of their purpose and intended use. Focus on engaging with key stakeholder groups that can facilitate or promote the use of the pathways (e.g. health service/hospital administrators, quality assurance teams).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very early stage adoption</td>
<td>Raise awareness with all stakeholders about the availability of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways and how to use them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Build commitment to and use of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways by promoting the benefits (case studies from early adopters). Target communications to cancer clinicians and nurses, GPs and other healthcare professionals, and cancer consumer and support groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing promotion</td>
<td>Continuously promote the benefits of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways to cancer clinicians and nurses, GPs and other healthcare professionals, and cancer consumer and support groups. Communicate progress and share learnings about optimal use and uptake of Optimal Cancer Care Pathways.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 SAMPLE RESOURCES

Sample communications resources have been developed to support jurisdictions in communicating with stakeholders about the Optimal Cancer Care Pathways. Use of the resources is encouraged as they are appropriately branded and incorporate key messages.

BRANDING AND PRESENTATION

Optimal Cancer Care Pathways resources feature the logos of the national organisations that have endorsed them, Cancer Australia and Cancer Council Australia. No other logos or brands may be added.

To ensure national consistency and quality, no changes may be made to the wording, design or presentation of the Optimal Cancer Care Pathways.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Tool: Communications Planning

Resource: Key Messages

Resource: Sample Communication Briefs
Resource: Factsheet
Resource: Frequently Asked Questions
Resource: Optimal Cancer Care Pathways Presentation