

Media Release

Breast
Cancer
Network
Australia



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Toolkit to help secondary breast cancer patients navigate palliative care

A new toolkit to help women with a life limiting breast cancer diagnosis to understand and access palliative care will be developed after Palliative Care Australia (PCA) and Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) were awarded an international grant.

The organisations will work together to develop resources specifically aimed at women with secondary breast cancer, a group who often struggle to find support.

They were one group of 20 organisations awarded The Seeding Progress and Resources for the Cancer Community: Metastatic Breast Cancer Challenge by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) grant from Pfizer Inc PCA CEO Liz Callaghan said.

“Secondary breast cancer is largely forgotten – so much of the messaging around breast cancer is based on survival. While that is admirable, we know many women will die from breast cancer and they need support and resources to live the best they can.

“In Australia we have just acknowledged Secondary Breast Cancer Awareness Day (Tuesday 13 October) for the second time, giving voice to those women who are living with secondary breast cancer.”

Ms Callaghan said women with secondary breast cancer can benefit from early palliative care interventions.

“We know women often feel accessing palliative care is giving up. A BCNA survey showed women with breast cancer felt palliative care was just for the very final stages of life. Palliative care has so much more to offer them, but they need help to know when and how to access that care.

“Palliative care is truly patient-centred care with the multidisciplinary team fully focussed on the needs of women and their families helping them live as well as they can,” she said.

A number of resources will be developed, including brochures, digital media and website material so women can have better access to care and are more informed about the stages of their illness.

“We want women with secondary breast cancer to feel empowered to make decisions about accessing palliative care, that palliative care can assist with symptoms such as pain or nausea in order to improve quality of life and help them live well,” said BCNA CEO Christine Nolan.

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