



Cancer Action Team
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Dear Colleague,

Head and Neck Measures for the Manual for Cancer Services

I am writing to let you know that following a period of consultation the Head and Neck Measures are being issued today as part of the Manual for Cancer Services. A copy of the measures can be found in the Cancer Section on the Department of Health web-site www.dh.gov.uk or the CQuINS web-site www.cquins.nhs.uk.

Hard copies of the Head and Neck Measures will be distributed to those who currently hold the Manual for Cancer Services 2004 and separate individual manuals for Head and Neck Measures will be made available upon request within the next few weeks.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking everyone who submitted comments on the draft Head and Neck Measures. Consideration was given to all the comments received and, where appropriate, the measures have been amended to reflect those comments.

It should be noted that further development of the measure concerning audit is taking place in light of work being undertaken in association with the DAHNO National Audit. When this is completed measures may be added to these Head and Neck Measures.

The Purpose of the Manual for Cancer Service 2004

The Manual for Cancer Services is the enabling vehicle for both self and peer review assessment of the quality of Cancer Services. The first national round of peer review visits took place in 2001 and was followed by a detailed evaluation by the Controls Assurance Support Unit (CASU). This recommended Cancer Peer Review should continue and Strategic Health Authorities therefore commissioned this further round of peer review. The Manual has not been centrally imposed.

The Manual for Cancer Services 2004 has been updated to reflect both positive feedback from the 2001 peer review process as well as new Improving Outcomes Guidance that is now available. The purpose of the Manual is to set out measures, which define the characteristics of a good service, based on the recommendations of the NICE Improving Outcomes Guidance and other national guidance. These concentrate on aspects of service most likely to have significant impact on health outcomes. As with NICE IOG, the manual is intended to help those involved in planning, commissioning, organising and providing cancer services to identify gaps in provision; as well as check the appropriateness and quality of existing services.

The measures contained within this manual are applicable to all commissioners and providers of services to NHS patients with cancer throughout England. It is important, therefore, that all networks, organisations and teams read the Head & Neck Measures.

The Department of Health, Cancer Action Team and the Healthcare Commission are actively working together to build a partnership between the Manual, Cancer Peer Review and Healthcare Commission Reviews.

Whilst Peer Review is expected to evolve over time, the Manual provides a ready mechanism by which cancer services will be able to demonstrate that they are meeting the *Standards for Better Health*¹, in particular, in the domains of safety, clinical and cost effectiveness, governance and patient focus.

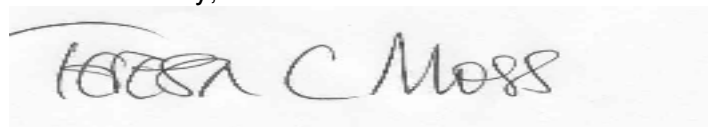
Cancer peer review is described in more detail in the introduction to the Manual. Its principal function is to accelerate the pace of improvement in the quality of cancer services across the whole system of patient care and the patient and carer experience.

It is acknowledged that the Manual continues to relate largely to secondary and tertiary services, except where measures pertain to the role and responsibilities of Primary Care Trusts. Further consideration is being given to the role of primary care in cancer within the context of the GMS contract and how this might be reflected in future revisions.

The zonal peer review teams responsible for organising the peer review process across England are currently working on the visit timetable for Head and Neck measures with each of the Cancer Networks.

I should be grateful for your help in bringing the publication of the Head and Neck Measures to the attention of all those in your organisation who are involved in the commissioning or provision of cancer services.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Teresa C Moss', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Teresa Moss
Director of Cancer Modernisation
National Cancer Action Team

¹ *Standards for Better Health – Health Care Standards for Services under the NHS*. Department of Health. July 2004