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SPECIALIST CANCER NURSES CAN IMPROVE PATIENT CARE AND SAVE MONEY

Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs) improve efficiency, reduce emergency patient admissions and can lead to thousands of pounds of savings for Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), says a publication from the National Cancer Action Team and Macmillan Cancer Support.

Released today, [Excellence in Cancer Care: The Contribution of the Clinical Nurse Specialist](#), is a resource for NHS managers and employers to support them in redesigning services. It shows that CNSs reduce inefficiency, drive innovation and improve the quality of cancer care. In contrast, patients whose care is unplanned and uncoordinated are more likely to need emergency care.

The number of emergency admissions for cancer increased by 47% in the past eight years¹. The unique nature of Clinical Nurse Specialists' interventions and their vital role as a key worker, means that they can quickly identify emerging issues and avoid emergency admissions.

An economic modeling analysis by Macmillan Cancer Support in 2009, focusing on the role of the CNS, suggested that service improvements along the cancer

pathway could release about 10% of cancer expenditure in the Manchester area.² If this was extrapolated to a national level it could produce significant benefits.

Launching the report, Dame Christine Beasley, Chief Nursing Officer (England) Department of Health said:

"This publication reinforces my long held view that Clinical Nurse Specialists can improve the safety, effectiveness, experience and productivity of care. Cancer can place an unforgiving strain on both people and their families. By giving them the best possible care and support, CNSs can and do make a huge difference."

Ciaran Deváne, Macmillan Cancer Support Chief Executive said:

"Although we know that Clinical Nurse Specialists improve patient care, there is still evidence that CNSs are being diverted to general ward duties and admin tasks. This is not a good use of their time or NHS resources. Not only do cancer patients deserve better, the research suggests PCTs could save money by designing their services around the coordination, communication and information CNSs provide. It's a win win and we want to help commissioners see the value of putting these services in place."

Dr Peter Carter, RCN Chief Executive & General Secretary, said:

"Today's report adds to the growing dossier of evidence showing the value of specialist nurses. These posts save millions of pounds from health budgets through reduced complications, fewer hospital re-admissions and the expert long term management of conditions. They also provide many patients and families with a lifeline which no other service can offer. Patients who have survived cancer have already been through incredible physical and mental upheaval. While it is good news many people now survive cancer, patients will continue to need access to expert care, in some cases for the rest of their lives. In cancer

care, specialist nurses play a vital role in offering advice and support at all stages of treatment.”

Excellence in Cancer Care: The Contribution of the Clinical Nurse Specialist is available to download: www.macmillan.org.uk/commissioners

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For further information and interview requests, please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

¹ NHS Improvement Transforming Care for Cancer Inpatients - Spreading the Winning Principles and Good Practice: July 2009

² Macmillan Cancer Support, Demonstrating the economic value of co-ordinated cancer services. An examination of resource utilisation in Manchester , March 2010. The study related only to breast and lung patients admitted through the two week wait system in one health economy.

About Macmillan Cancer Support

Macmillan Cancer Support improves the lives of people affected by cancer, providing practical, medical, emotional and financial support. Working alongside people affected by cancer, Macmillan works to improve cancer care. One in three of us will get cancer. Two million of us are living with it. If you are affected by cancer Macmillan can help.

Call the Macmillan Support Line on 0808 808 00 00, Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm. Calls are free, including from mobiles or visit www.macmillan.org.uk