



Indigenous Cancer Support Group an exciting initiative

A new Indigenous cancer support group has been hailed as an exciting initiative for Aboriginal cancer patients.

The "Our Community, Our Cancer" support group, a joint initiative of Derbarl Yerrigan and Cancer Council Western Australia will meet twice a month from March 12 and will provide a safe, 'culturally friendly' environment to help participants feel they are not alone on their cancer journey.

Chief Executive Officer, Derbarl Yerrigan Health Services, Barbara Henry said that with the growing increase in cancer diagnosis for Aboriginal people, it was unlikely there would be Aboriginal family today that had not been affected by either the loss of a loved one due to cancer or a family member living with cancer.

"The Derbarl Yerrigan Board of Directors are strong supporters of this important community initiative," she said.

Cancer Council WA Director of Cancer Information and Support Services, Sandy McKiernan said the support group will aim to assist people affected by cancer, to cope with diagnosis and treatment, to increase their knowledge about cancer and to learn how to live with cancer and as a cancer survivor.

Two specially trained Aboriginal co-facilitators will be part of the team co-ordinating the support group along with clinical nurse Ted Dowling.

The group will include a free onsite health clinic which can offer health checks to group participants and carers, individual 'yarning' sessions and access to counsellors and allied health staff.

Art therapy sessions will also be offered to give participants the opportunity to engage in a different activity and appeal to those who aren't ready to 'yarn' about cancer.

"We believe this group is the best way of meeting the needs of the Indigenous community, particularly for those who are experiencing difficulties as a result of a cancer diagnosis, whether their own or a relatives," said Mr Dowling.

The group is suitable for Indigenous people who are currently undergoing treatment for their cancer diagnosis. Family members and carers are encouraged and welcomed to attend. The group is free of charge and lunch and transport will also be provided.

Further information is available from Simone Rowles at Cancer Council on 08 9382 9328 srowles@cancerwa.asn.au or Margarete or Dulcie at Derbarl Yerrigan on 9421 3888.

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