

Bid to expand country cancer treatment

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

A new initiative is working to bring access to expanded cancer therapy options to regional South Australia.

This follows a Cancer Council Beat Cancer Project grant supporting a team of clinicians from Country Health SA, Flinders University and the Flinders Medical Centre to aid future clinical cancer tele-[trials](#)

Executive Director of Medical Services at Country Health SA, Dr. Hendrika Meyer, says the initiative is a step in the right direction to improving cancer therapy options for regional patients.

"It is exciting to see our researchers and clinicians from across different areas working together to improve access for regional patients," Dr. Meyer says.

"The potential of having access to clinical trials in regional SA will allow patients to participate in various cancer clinical trials closer to home.

"This will benefit patients by resulting in less travel, less time spent away from family and less financial burden.

"The trials will help us understand more about cancer treatment, and what life is like for those people who are forced to live with cancer."

Cancer Council SA Chief Executive, Mr Lincoln Size, said the Beat Cancer Project is at the forefront of research investment in the state and congratulated Country Health SA and Flinders University on receiving the grant.

"We hope that the grant will allow us to make great inroads in cancer treatment in regional communities and reduce the financial and emotional burden of a cancer diagnosis for regional South Australians," Mr Size said.

"We are looking forward to seeing the project develop over the next four years and achieve positive outcomes.

"We are unbelievably proud of the work we have achieved since the Beat Cancer Project started in 2011 and are committed to working with the State Government, SAHMRI and the universities to continue to invest in

research right here in our state."

Country Health SA oncologist and chief investigator of the new project, Flinders University academic Dr. Dagmara Poprawski, said there are currently no [cancer clinical trials](#) offered outside metropolitan Adelaide.

"The benefits to cancer patients participating in clinical trials are well recognised, particularly the ability to increase patient access to a full suite of therapy options including novel therapies," Dr. Poprawski says.

"While we're at the very early stages of a four year project, we hope the tele-clinical cancer trial model will improve trial participation rates in non-metropolitan areas.

"We will now look at the best way for patients from the South East to be recruited, treated and to attend follow-up visits virtually from Mt Gambier Hospital directly to metropolitan sites like Flinders Medical Centre.

"A tele-trial model will utilise existing services, along with additional resources funded through this application, to establish a regional [cancer](#) clinical trial site in the long term."

The \$280,000 grant, funded by Cancer Council's Beat Cancer program, is led by Flinders University researchers based at Mt Gambier Hospital and the oncology research team at Flinders Centre for Innovation in Cancer (FCIC).

The project team is investigating the use of the tele-trial model at Mt Gambier Hospital to evaluate feasibility, impact on patients' quality of life, cost-effectiveness and to identify issues for future rollout.

"We are very happy to be piloting the model at Mt Gambier Hospital in

partnership with the FCIC. We hope that this research may improve access to clinical trials for people who live outside of metropolitan areas," Dr. Poprawski says.

"Mt Gambier Hospital is well-resourced with a visiting medical oncologist, an oncology nurse practitioner, multiple medical specialist services, a large multidisciplinary group of allied health services, and is well supported by general practitioners in the region."

Since it started in 2011, Cancer Council's Beat Cancer Project has funded more than 200 individual research projects across a range of cancers including bowel, breast and melanoma.

Provided by Flinders University

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