East Midlands Cancer Alliance

East Midlands Cancer Alliance (EMCA) Cancer Board Briefing Note – 22 May 2023

For the attention of EMCA Board members, Accountable Officers, CEOs, Cancer Managers and Cancer leads in CCGs, ICSs, and Trusts:

The East Midlands Cancer Alliance (EMCA) Board met on 22nd May 2023 via MS Teams to review the work and progress of the partner organisations in EMCA. The meeting was chaired by Richard Mitchell, CEO, University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust. The Board has representation from the five East Midlands ICSs from both commissioning and provider organisations. It also has representatives from specialised commissioning, primary care, public health, Health Education England, Macmillan, and Cancer Research UK (CRUK). The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed contributions from all colleagues.

Quality and Patient Experience

Sandra's story – Sandra shared her experience of being under the care of the palliative care team in a hospice and specifically of the impact of research into fatigue. Fatigue is the second most common symptom that has a detrimental effect on a patient's quality of life. Sandra was invited to take part in the Metvac trial which randomised patients to receive the drug or placebo. The positive impact on what are often considered everyday things, such as writing shopping lists and walking around the block, was shared by Sandra.
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From Sandra: -
'Research is an easy thing to do.'
'If somebody else hadn't done this (*gone into research*) before my chemotherapy – I probably wouldn't be here today.'

Quotes from the Research Team: -
'This is offered at a time when we only get one shot where evidence-based practice can help.'
'Patients want a legacy and have stated - I might not see the benefit but if I can help someone else in the future then I will take part.'

Oncology Patient Experience in the East Midlands – PEP Health presented on using social media analysis to understand the patient experience in East Midlands cancer care. The data analysed was collected over the period 2020 – 2022 and showed an increase in responses in primary care of 22.8% and secondary care of 44.6% from the last report. Patient experience remains consistently positive across most areas of care, except primary care. It was noted that the overall score for cancer comments had remained virtually the same over the last three years whilst it had decreased for other disease areas. Across the East Midlands there is high variation between the highest- and lowest-scoring trust. Breast cancer is the most-mentioned tumour site at 17.5% of cancer comments, with colon being second at 5.5%. It was agreed that an annual update to the Board would be welcomed.

Tumour Site Transformation

Gynaecology One Stop Clinic – presentation given by the Kettering Gynaecology team – Due to a huge increase in 2ww referrals, work had been undertaken with a view to improving the patient pathway and experience, streamlining services, and reducing unnecessary appointments, and improving FDS target compliance. New clinics aligned to signs and symptoms were set up, namely a Post-Menopausal Bleed (PMB) clinic and a Pelvic Mass Clinic, supported by additional rapid access slots and additional colposcopy slots. Daily clinical triage was undertaken which ensured patients were signposted to the correct place in the first instance. This resulted in an improved 2ww target from March 22 of 89.7% to March 23 of 94.4%, whilst the 28-day standard over the same period had improved from 50.8% to 92.5%. MDT efficiency has improved as patients are having scans at their first appointment because they have been triaged. A workforce review, including skills and competencies, is underway, as is further work on PMB clinics to increase capacity, reviewing the criteria on 2ww referral forms and improving the 62-day target.

Operational Performance Improvement

The national picture shows an increase in 62-day backlog due in part to an extra bank holiday and strike action which means there is a higher cumulative backlog than required to remain on-track to hit this year's target. Substantial decreases over the next few weeks are required to get back on track. There had also been a drop in the Faster Diagnosis Standard to 74.2% with further sustained work required to ensure this standard is consistently met by March 2024.

Priority Recovery Tumour Sites: Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) is established across Midland's systems, but further work is required to improve GP uptake and primary care reporting via the Impact and Investment Fund (IIF). The Alliance's Data Analysis team continue to work with systems and Trusts on data collection/reporting.

Teledermatology services are now live to some extent in every Midlands system and Alliances need to confirm timelines for system-wide access to teledermatology for skin cancer referrals (where not already in place).

Prostate and compliance against the Best Practice Timed Pathway: All East Midlands systems have access to mpMRI and West Midlands is set to re-audit access. Local Anaesthetic Transperineal (LAPT) is established across East Midlands. The Alliance's Data analysis team continue to work with systems/trusts on reporting of BPTP milestone data in line with national reporting requirements.

There is recognition for Lincolnshire, which was an outlying Trust for colorectal, with the faster diagnosis standard improved by 10%.

The EMCA Board was asked to ensure data is utilised to support local level improvement.

Specialised Commissioning Update

Invitations for an event to discuss the Robotic Assisted Surgery Strategy on 19th June 2023 to be circulated. Robotic partial prostatectomies to be undertaken at Lincoln and Northampton, but no further centres commissioned for robotic partial nephrectomies. The data collected from the fragile oncology services are being reviewed with a view to discuss mutual aid options.

Cancer Workforce Development

The Board was provided with an updated report regarding workforce. EMCA has multiple programmes underway which support the development of the cancer workforce across the East Midlands, including:

- Clinical Leadership for the five tumour sites with the highest volume of cancer referrals and activity
- EMCA MDT-ROSE Programme workforce support offer
- The Aspirant Nurse Programme – a learning management system for registered nurses and AHPs
- Joint Initiatives with Allied Health Sciences Network and Clinical Research Network
- Care Pathway Navigator/Cancer Support Worker (CSW) Training
- Developing the Oncology Workforce
- Cancer Training and Education Academy

In June, EMCA will establish an East Midlands Cancer Workforce Group to support continuity and coordination of these initiatives.

Consolidation and reflection on investment over the last year will feed into future development. The draft Cancer and Diagnostics Delivery Plan outlines the anticipated requirements for this year and sets out the approach. A retrospective view of investments in 22/23 including education and training opportunities will shape plans for next year.

Policy/Strategy – NHS Landscape

2023/24 EMCA Aggregate Plan and Priorities - The Board was updated on planning priorities with a final Alliance-level plan submitted in April. The plan outlined work with systems and providers to develop and implement action plans to improve Cancer Waiting Times performance, with a focus on achieving the Faster Diagnosis Standard (FDS) and reducing the number of the longest-waiting patients on cancer pathways waiting more than 62 days.

The plan also outlined a clear set of actions and milestones to support early diagnosis workstreams including Primary Care Directed Enhanced Service (DES) delivery. The Treatment and Care aspect of the plan covered treatment variation, personalised care, PSFU and Psychosocial support.

What makes an Effective Cancer Alliance – Self-Assessment Process: The national cancer team had commissioned the Transformation Unit to look at two pieces of work: a report, titled '*What makes an Effective Cancer Alliance'*, and a Cancer Alliance self-assessment. Stakeholders had been invited to take part in the self-assessment and the responses are being combined.

At the same time, NHS England is establishing a new operating model. Those Cancer Alliances hosted by NHSE are asked to establish new hosting arrangements. The Board was asked for its support in the process and with a workshop to be held on 23rd June 2023. The workshop will include EMCA Board members, SROs, ICB leads and regional and national team members, including Dame Cally Palmer.

Items for Information

Cancer Screening Report – Paper G

EMCA Transformation Programme Updates – Enc J

Finance Update 2022/23 – Enc K

Quarterly 22/23 report against delivery – Enc L

For further information please contact:
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Date of next Board Meeting:
17th July 2023 @ 1pm via MS Teams

EMCA ICS leads contact details:

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