Newsletter 627/2019
Date: 30 August 2019
Distribution: MNCLHD members
Contact: Your HSU Organiser

MNCCI Lineac Replacement Update

Dear Member,

The HSU has received correspondence from MNCCI regarding the upgrade of the linear accelerator (lineac) program at both Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie cancer centres. The attached documents include the project summary as well as the previous update from March 2019.

The HSU encourages members to read through the documents and to contact your respective organisers with any feedback. For Coffs Harbour members, please contact Peter Kelly at peter.kelly@hsu.asn.au; for Port Macquarie members, please contact Michael Kearns at michael.kearns@hsu.asn.au.

In unity,

Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD

Health
Mid North Coast
Local Health District

Office of the Director
Mental Health & Integrated Care

29 August 2019

Attention: M Kearns & P Kelly

Mr G Hayes
Secretary
Health Services Union NSW
Locked Bag 3
AUSTRALIA SQUARE NSW 1215

Via email: secretary@hsu.asn.au

Dear Mr Hayes

As previously advised at the November Mid North Coast Local Health District (MNCLHD) Joint Consultative Committee meeting and subsequently in correspondence of 18 December 2018, the Mid North Coast Cancer Institute (MNCCI) I write to provide you with an update of progress.

We will be commencing Stage 2 of the Linear Accelerator (Linac) Replacement programme in August 2019 having completed Stage 1 in Coffs Harbour. Stage 3 will return to the Coffs Harbour MNCCI campus in line with the indicative timeline which is attached for your reference.

It is proposed that during the replacement period, the MNCCI will, with staff support, maintain patient services to the maximum extent possible, operating extended treatment hours or shift work on the remaining machine, as well as receiving support from the other site i.e. either Coffs Harbour or Port Macquarie MNCCI. It is anticipated that these changes should return promptly to normal working hours once installation is complete.

Consultation with staff is continuing and I would welcome a meeting with the Association as you feel appropriate to discuss stages 2 and 3.

Should you require further information or assistance please contact me on 0417531002 or email Sara.Shaughnessy@health.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely

Sara Shaughnessy
Director Mental Health & Integrated Care

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Mid North Coast Cancer Institute Linear Accelerator Replacement Project

Summary

23 July 2019
REVISION #4

Executive Sponsor: Sara Shaughnessy, Director Mental Health & Integrated Care
Project Lead: Stuart Greenham, Manager, Radiation Therapy
District Service Managers: Tom Shakespeare, Clinical Director
Gillian Harrington Nursing & Service Development
Andrew Kovendy, Director Medical Physics
Service Managers: Kirsty Turnbull (Deputy Chief RT Coffs Harbour)
Matthew Hoffmann (Deputy Chief RT Port Macquarie)
Communications Manager: Lynn Lelean

HR/IR Adviser: Delwyn Kruk Project

Adviser: Chris Chick

Introduction

The capital works programme will be completed in three stages:

Stage 1: Linear Accelerator (Linac) 2 Mid North Coast Cancer Institute (MNCCI), Coffs Harbour Campus

From 1 March 2019 last patient to 1 July 2019, Go Live.

Stage 2: Linac 1 MNCCI, Port Macquarie Campus

From 19 August 2019 last patient to 2 December 2019, Go Live

Stage 3 – Linac 1 MNCCI, Coffs Harbour Campus

From 3 January 2020 to 27 April 2020, Go Live

Linear Accelerators (Linacs) are used to deliver external beam Radiation Therapy to cancer patients. Replacement of current aging Linacs will ensure continued safe, reliable and effective treatment to patients of the MNCLHD. A Linear Accelerator uses microwave technology (similar to that used for radar) to accelerate electrons in a part of the accelerator called the "wave guide," these electrons then collide with a heavy metal target to produce high-energy x-rays. These high energy x-rays are shaped as they exit the machine to conform to the shape of the patient's tumor and the customized beam is directed to the patient's tumor.

Patient safety is very important and is assured in several ways.

Before treatment is delivered to the patient, a treatment plan is developed and approved by the Radiation Oncologist in collaboration with the Radiation Therapist and Medical Physicist. The plan under goes multiple checks before treatment is given and quality-assurance procedures are performed to ensure that the treatment will be delivered as planned.

Quality assurance of the linear accelerator is critical. There are several systems built into the accelerator so that it deliver the dose the Radiation Oncologist has prescribed. Each morning before patients are treated, the Radiation Therapist performs checks on the machine to make sure that the radiation intensity is uniform across the beam and that it is working properly. In addition, the medical physicist conducts more detailed monthly and annual checks of the Linear Accelerator.

The linear accelerator sits in a room with thick concrete walls so that the high-energy x-rays are shielded and no one outside of the room is exposed to the x-rays. The Radiation Therapist must turn on the accelerator from outside the treatment room. Because the accelerator only emits radiation when it is actually turned on, the risk of accidental exposure is extremely low.

Timeframe (Indicative)

The following is a living document and should be considered to be an indicative draft Timeframe. This Timeline will be updated regularly and the latest version can be obtained from the Project Officer.

Function	Project Update	Deliverables	
Staff Consultation	November 2018 to end project	Consultation on project design, operational arrangements, education As needed	
Union Consultation	November 2018 to end project	Feedback on Capital Works, staffing arrangements, Work Health & Safety As needed	
Operational Arrangements	October 2018 – to end project	Project Plan Designed and Delivered Education designed and delivered Work through rostering and how patients will be supported Ensure commissioned Linacs operating correctly through internal and external commissioning checks Consider future options for service provision.	
Function	Stage 1 CH2	Stage 2 PB1	Stage 3 CH1
Linac Removal week	4 March 2019	19th August 2019	3 January 2020
Building works commence to clear space and ceiling	11 March 2019 4/4 Update: Carpet laid Linac console area joinery complete Audio-visual system installed.	19-21st August 2019 24/7 Update: Builder early access negotiated with Elekta. 26 August 2019 Main building works commence.	13 January 2020
Linac Delivery	16 March 2019	07 September 2019	1 February 2020
Installation	18 March to 17 April 2019 4/4 Update: Preliminary Radiation Survey Pre CAT work undertaken with vendor. Linac parts installed Beam on- basic functionality. Initial calibrations tasks complete.	09 September 2019 to 03 October 2019	3 February to 6 March 2020
Building works to restore building	18 April to 3 May 2019	N/A	N/A
Physics Commissioning (including independent testing)	6 May to 14 June 2019	28 October to 22 November 2019	12 March to 17 April 2020

Function	Project Update	Deliverables	
Education	17 June to 28 June 2019	21 -25th October and 25th – 29th November (Training split into 2 individual weeks)	20 April to 29 April 2020
Go Live	1 July 2019	2 December 2019	27 April 2020
Capital Works Project Completed			

Objectives

No.	Communication Objectives
1	To facilitate a seamless transition for consumers and staff from existing services through a capital works and change programme into new and refurbished facilities and changed models of care with new services.
2	To keep consumers , carers, staff and key partners, including referring clinicians and other Local Health Districts informed of progress and provide re-assurance of the quality and quantity of services to be provided and transitioned seamlessly.
3	To assist with understanding and build confidence in the changed working and clinical environment.
4	To empower consumers to be active participants in their health journey to wellness.
5	To support a resilient and professional workforce inspired to provide quality services to consumers and their carers.

Key Benefits

The Linac Replacement project will:	
1	Enhance existing capabilities providing a contemporary, high quality, evidence based cancer care service to our patients.
2	Provide an updated infrastructure platform for staff to support the development and delivery of advanced techniques and work practice.
3	Continue to deliver culturally appropriate services to meet the health needs of Aboriginal people
4	Deliver contemporary health care facilities that meet Australasian Health Facility Guidelines and support sustainable, safe, quality health care service delivery into the future
5	Continue to support education and training of the Cancer Services workforce, and workforce recruitment and retention strategies