

THANK YOU

SPORTING CHANCE CANCER FOUNDATION

In Victoria, a state with almost seven million people and the most densely populated state in Australia, there's a special organisation that supports essential services in regional areas for children and adolescents dealing with cancer, and their families.

That organisation, Sporting Chance Cancer Foundation (SCCF), has been supporting the RCH Foundation for over fifteen years, contributing just over \$100,000 annually and \$1.6 million in total.

This long term commitment has had a significant and lasting impact by supporting the hospital's Regional Outreach and Shared Care Program, a statewide program that is facilitated by the Victorian Paediatric Integrated Cancer Service (PICS).

Rob Hines, the Victorian Director of the SCCF shared, "For regional families, travelling is such a big strain on not just the child with cancer, but also the parents and siblings. When we look at our reports and see the number of kids that are able to stay home and receive care, that's the greatest single measure of success."

"Cancer is a very tough time – and it's hard for people to be over the moon about things. But it is very gratifying when you see someone who has every right to be hating the world, give you a smile," Rob added.

The Regional Outreach and Shared Care Program ensures that kids all around Victoria have access to vital cancer care services.

The program offers practical assistance such as remote clinics and telehealth appointments, making it easier for patients, no matter where they live, to get the care they need.

Chris Williams is the Bob Skilton Regional Outreach Nurse at the RCH, a role funded by SCCF. With the help of other PICS staff in the regional program based at the RCH, Chris has been the face of the program on the road, ensuring families dealing with cancer in regional Victoria have access to essential services.

"The main goal of the program has always been 'care as close to home as possible, when it is safe to do so'. The program has helped regional health services build what would otherwise be a demanding paediatric medical sub-speciality into a standard of care for supportive cancer care and low-complexity chemotherapy," shared Chris.

"The ongoing philanthropic support over the years has helped me reinforce relationships across Victoria and support effective communication and teaching. The funding has provided sustainability and a constant in the regional health services' ability to support care – which is incredibly important in an area such as paediatric oncology, as it is always changing."

Reflecting on the vital role played by the Regional Outreach and Shared Care Program in supporting children, adolescents and families living with cancer, Chris is excited about the program's promising future, particularly in light of SCCF's support.

"One of the areas we are focusing on is the period of cancer surveillance in children, which can often be for up to five years or more, and how we can enable paediatricians to provide more of this locally with the support of the program and the cancer services.

"We are also in discussions around how we can increase capacity of Barwon Health Geelong as they move towards building a new and larger paediatric precinct. There is also consideration of where and how we could support families from Tasmania. All this, of course, is incredibly hard to achieve without the ongoing support of SCCF to help plan and build greater capacity," said Chris.

"The question of, 'How long did it take you to get here?', should be asked more often. At the end of the day, care of the child belongs with the family and staying close to your community."



Chris Williams, the Bob Skilton Regional Outreach Nurse, and Rob Hines, the Victorian Director of the SCCF