



Sydney
Children's
Hospitals
Foundation

Making an impact that lasts a lifetime

Sporting Chance Cancer Foundation
**The Mark Taylor Outreach
Program**





Our gratitude

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Sporting Chance Cancer Foundation for your steadfast support of children, young people, and their families battling cancer in rural and regional New South Wales (NSW), Australia.

The Mark Taylor Outreach Program has been a pillar of specialised care since its inception. Covering an expansive area of approximately 800,000 square kilometers, the program enables Clinical Nurse Consultants and Clinical Nurse Specialists to provide vital education and medical care directly in patients' communities. This approach has been transformative, offering families the opportunity to receive expert care close to home, alleviating the burden of long-distance travel, and providing a sense of normalcy during challenging times.

By addressing the significant gaps in cancer care services for families in remote and regional areas of NSW, the program ensures that patients receive continuous education, emotional support, and specialized care. This not only enhances patient well-being but also significantly improves the quality of life for both the children and their families.

Our sincerest thanks to the unwavering commitment of the Sporting Chance Cancer Foundation. By embracing a family-centered approach and a shared care model, the program allows children to remain at home with their loved ones while still receiving the critical care they need. This reduces hospital visits, eases the strain on families, and enables them to focus on what matters most—being together.

Your partnership with the Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation and The Cancer Centre for Children at the Children's Hospital at Westmead has been crucial in upholding the highest standards of care across NSW. Your generosity ensures that all children, regardless of where they live, have access to safe, effective, and compassionate care.

We are profoundly grateful for Sporting Chance's commitment and the extraordinary generosity of its supporters. Your dedication has made a lasting impact, making comprehensive cancer care accessible and life-changing, improving the lives of children and young people battling cancer and supporting their families every step of the way. Thank you for being an essential part of our mission.





Introduction

We have been fortunate to have the Regional/Rural Clinical Nurse Consultant role since 2005, when The Mark Taylor Outreach Program was launched at The Children's Hospital at Westmead, marking the beginning of an inspiring 19-year journey. The program's impact was further enhanced by the introduction of the Clinical Nurse Specialist role, which provided additional support to our efforts.

Together, the Regional/Rural Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC) and Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS2) work closely with patients, families, and medical staff across New South Wales. Their collaborative efforts ensure that children from regional and rural areas can receive expert care closer to home, reducing the need for long-distance travel and minimizing the disruption to family life.

Before the Mark Taylor Outreach Program was established, children in regional and rural settings diagnosed with cancer or requiring palliative care faced significant challenges in accessing expert oncology nursing support outside of Sydney. This often meant that families had to spend extended periods in Sydney for treatment and recovery, far from the comfort of their homes, loved ones, and support networks. The program has alleviated these burdens, reducing feelings of isolation and easing the additional pressures placed on families.

Moreover, The Mark Taylor Outreach Program also supports metropolitan families by enabling the Clinical Nurse Specialist to provide care and treatment in the home, ensuring comprehensive support for all families, regardless of their location.

Key achievements

COVID presented the regional/rural service with numerous challenges but opportunity in equal measure. The most critical achievement over that period was the ability to adapt the service quickly to continue to meet the needs of the patients and families but also continue the critical support for regional/Rural health facilities and colleagues. Many of those changes remain in place today supporting a flexible and adaptable service.

- Introduced different platforms to maintain communication with families, patients and local medical teams -Facetime, Zoom, Pexip.
- Adapted education programs for nursing staff in regional hospitals using virtual platforms and creative interactive approaches such as SIMs for administration of certain medications and chemotherapies, central venous line education, procedure and policy, in-services, family and multidisciplinary team meetings via virtual platforms.

- PICNIC Box strategy (2023) was an initiative recognising that some families living in extremely remote areas would still face challenges presenting to regional centres in a timely manner, due to geographical considerations, limited ability to commence antibiotic treatment within 60 minutes and limited medical cover after hours. The PICNIC Box initiative has enabled a rapid treatment approach whilst the patient is in transit to a regional centre. Ultimately, supporting the patient to return home to family during the final stages of treatment or palliation.
- The ability to enable our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients and families to have time back on Country. This has had a profound impact on these families as it has allowed them to culturally reconnect to Country, which in turn helps to heal their Spirit. This remains a high priority for the Regional/Rural service and continues to be achieved through the collaborative approach with SCHN's Aboriginal Health Worker for Palliative Care and Chronic and Complex Needs.
- Extended capabilities in regional facilities including the administration of chemotherapy and immunotherapy to oncology and bone marrow transplant patients in Armidale, Tamworth, Inverell, and Mudgee. Achieved through education, frameworks for accreditation and support for the regional facilities.
- Western NSW CNC Network – set up a community of practice, every 2 months for senior nurses in the regional area to discuss practice changes, new and existing patients as well as educational and collaborative opportunities.
- Development of memorandums of understanding with regional centres to clarify what can be achieved closer to home, what supports are required and in place and the responsibilities of each service in supporting the patient and family. This is an ongoing body of work.
- Continuing the reconnection to primary health support through engaging GP's local to the patient's regional area. This re-engagement enables vaccination and reviews to be conducted closer to home, again with key support through the Outreach Program.



Transforming care by bringing support closer to home

The Mark Taylor Outreach Program has been pivotal in providing care, treatment and support closer to home for oncology patients and their families. The significant impact of this was deeply evident during COVID and remains critical today especially during periods of high patient demand such as winter and high infectious periods. The most profound difference with the Mark Taylor Outreach Program is the ability to keep oncology patients closer to home with their families and maintain a level of normality throughout the extended treatment, maintenance, and surveillance periods. The benefits for the family are far reaching and include financial, social and maintenance of relationships.

The Mark Taylor Outreach Program also provides crucial support for the oncology metro nursing service, enabling the Metro Clinical Nurse Specialist to deliver care and treatment in the home, supporting families through the complexities of managing a child with cancer and other ongoing family commitments. Care in the home provides a significant benefit for the child through being able to remain in a comfortable and familiar environment and often supports the continuation of usual activities of daily life such as schoolwork and maintaining family and friend relationships. The delivery of care in the home also positively impacts on the families by decreasing the number of visits required to the hospital and oncology ambulatory service.

Another key benefit the program has provided is the professional upskilling and development of clinical nursing expertise in the regional centres enabling the local health facilities to deliver safe and effective care for oncology patients for example managing fever neutropenia, administration of certain treatments – chemotherapy and blood products.





What is the best part of your job?

There are two specific standouts.

Assisting two young regional patients to obtain their wish of travel. These roles were critical in organising the medical and health considerations, contacts, and acute plans around the world to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the patient and family during their travels.

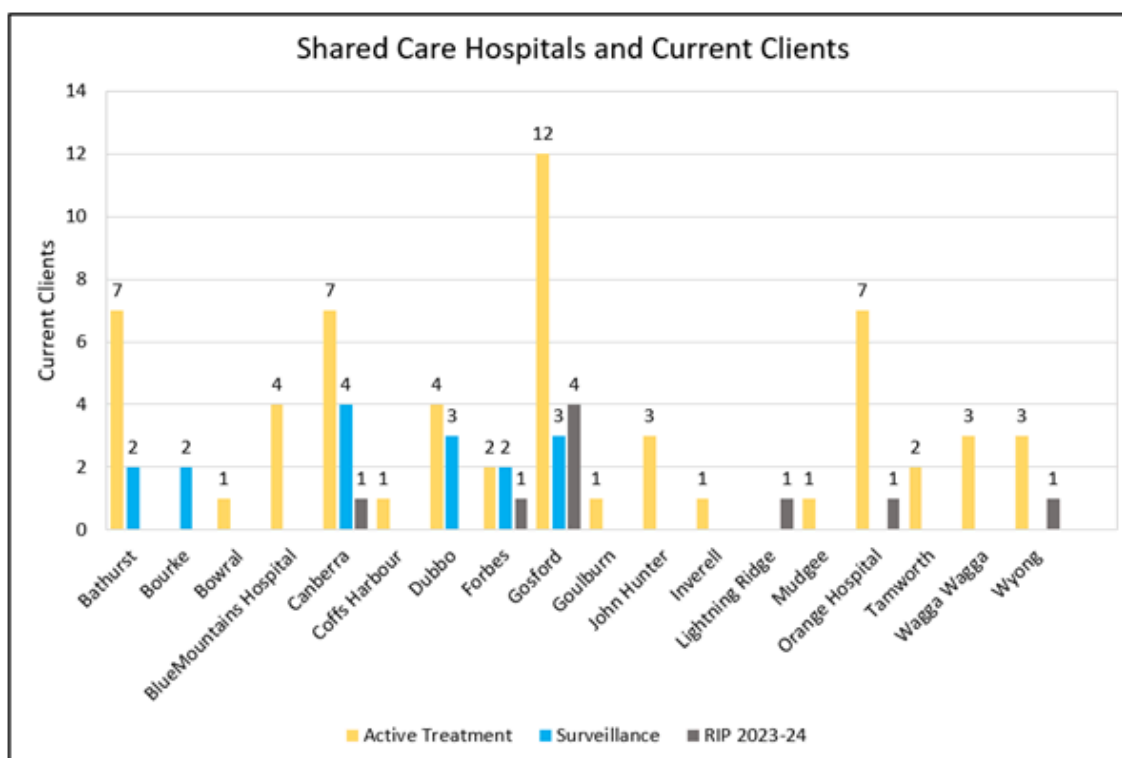
“.... shall we get you home?” is the most profound gift we can give any family, and this program enables these roles to say this over and over again to families isolated in Sydney whilst their child receives oncology treatment and follow up.

Message of Impact

The Mark Taylor Outreach service is centred around empowerment – empowerment of the patient and family to regain some level of control and normality through a period of uncertainty. We strive to make their lives just that little bit better and more manageable throughout their treatment and beyond. This also enables the empowerment of rural and regional centres to develop their staff and capabilities, supporting a skilled and expert workforce.



Map of Connected Hospitals





Looking ahead

The sky is the limit for the Mark Taylor Outreach Program, however, some key areas that require further development include:

- Collaboration between The Children's Hospital at Westmead and Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick oncology centres to further develop community care pathways.
- The ongoing development of shared care models and 'memorandums of understanding' with regional centres to clarify what can be achieved closer to home, supporting with the regional and rural hospitals, with standards of practice guidelines and goals.
- Commencing quality improvement projects over the next 12 months looking at chemotherapy accreditation as well as re-establishing and updating our Shared Care Resource Manual.
- The Mark Taylor Outreach Program is hoping to develop the 'Link Nurse' system, which applies a similar process to the United Kingdom, in which paediatric nurses from regional and rural hospitals become Link Nurses (UK = Paediatric Oncology Outreach Nurses POONs). This will support a sustainable model seeking to further embed the oncology nursing expertise into the local regional centres enhancing the delivery of safe and quality cancer care.
- This would see a greater collaboration between the clinical staff in both regional wards and emergency departments, through a shared knowledge, professional development opportunities and frameworks as well as consistent standards of practice.



The Mark Taylor Outreach Program Team
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Thank you Sporting Chance Cancer Foundation

**Together, we can go
all in for kids' health**