

March 2019

Dear Doctor / Practice Manager / Practice Nurse,

### **New Cancer Council Australia bowel cancer screening campaign**

We are delighted to let you know that Cancer Council Australia is launching a new nationwide campaign to increase participation in the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP). This campaign is thanks to \$10 million dollars received from the Federal Government to encourage more Australians to screen.

Bowel cancer is Australia's second biggest cancer killer, yet if detected early, 90 per cent of cases can be successfully treated. The NBCSP is one of Australia's most important public health programs. The program has the potential to prevent 83,800 bowel cancer deaths by 2040 if program participation increases to 60%. In 2016-2017, only 41.3% of eligible Australians participated in the NBCSP.

This campaign will consist of three bursts of mass media activity in 2019. The first burst will go live on **Sunday 3 March** and run for seven weeks. As a result, your practice is likely to receive more enquiries from patients.

We will target Australians aged 50-74 through TV, radio, outdoor, and digital advertising and encourage them to do the at-home test when they receive it in the mail.

You are integral to the success of this campaign and the NBCSP. Evidence shows that a recommendation by a primary health care provider is a key motivator to screen. You can promote participation through:

- Endorsing the program in your practice by displaying brochures and posters;
- Encouraging patients aged 50-74 to do the test by:
  - Undertaking an audit of practice records and sending a letter or SMS to under- screened patients aged 50-74 encouraging participation;
  - Demonstrating how to use the NBCSP kit with eligible patients;
  - Sending a letter or SMS to patients nearing their 50<sup>th</sup> birthday to encourage them to complete the test when they first receive it.

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Guidelines recommend FOBT screening every two years, starting at age 50 and continuing to age 74, for people who are at average risk, or slightly above, for bowel cancer (about 95-98% of the population).

Resources to help GPs support this campaign, including tips for encouraging participation, instructional videos, clinical guidelines and FAQs, are available at <http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au/health-professionals>  
Demonstration NBCSP kits can be ordered by emailing [NBCSP@health.gov.au](mailto:NBCSP@health.gov.au).

Campaign resources and culturally appropriate, in-language materials designed for a range of culturally and linguistically diverse communities are available at [www.bowelcancer.org.au](http://www.bowelcancer.org.au) and [www.cancerscreening.gov.au/translations](http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au/translations)

Thank you for your time, together we can fight Australia's second biggest cancer killer.

Yours sincerely,



Sanchia Aranda  
Chief Executive Officer  
Cancer Council Australia



Professor Jon Emery  
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Chair, Campaign GP Working Group

### **Preventing Cancer • Empowering Patients • Saving Lives**