

Hi, my name is _____, and I am writing to you regarding my concerns about funding cuts to chemo drugs such as Docetaxel. I am a 37 year old Mum of two young children (6 and 11) and I am fighting stage IV breast cancer.

I am being treated by a private hospital and I am very concerned about the decision to cut funding to vital chemotherapy treatments, this will have a profound effect on families such as my own. I am rather nervous and highly anxious regarding the follow on effect of this cut.

All chemotherapy drugs are made up for each patient on the day of treatment, they are made up individually taking into account each person's weight, age etc. Therefore, treatments cannot be mass produced. The way the drugs are made up is a meticulous process, these drugs are highly toxic. They have to be made in a way that protects both the pharmacist and patient. This process costs money, and it is not something that can take a short cut.

Personally speaking, if this funding is not reinstated and my chemotherapy ward shuts down as a result, this will only impact my situation in a very negative way. I will then have to find myself a spot in our already over run public system. Imagine the blow out in waiting times if our private oncology wards all have to shut down? It will increase our travel time dramatically; we will have to then travel to Monash or Peter Mac. The long travel times will have a negative impact on my own wellbeing and running costs on our vehicle will increase. This will have a domino effect on our life "outside of chemo"; we will be thrust into a situation where our children will require before and after school care. I will also lose my medical team who I have built up a good rapport with over the last two and a half years. I see a private Oncologist, who I literally place my life in his hands, I trust him to do what is necessary to prolong my life as much as possible. Everything will change overnight for me, but not in a good way.

We have paid for private health insurance for about 10 years, we utilise a local private hospital (South Eastern Private) as it is close and I can get a better level of support from my family, friends and of course the team at South Eastern Private oncology ward. Why would I bother paying for private health insurance if for treatment like cancer we are going to be pushed to the public hospitals anyway.

The impact of cancer on an individual and their family is already huge, our whole world is turned upside down. Cancer affects you emotionally, physically and financially, we really don't need the added pressures these cuts will bring. I urge you to go into the pharmacies, see how these drugs are made, come into the ward and meet the people you will be affecting with these cuts. You see a number, come and see a face of the people you will be affecting. Please reconsider this cut to funding, or find another way to fund our private chemo wards. I fear it will have dire consequences otherwise.

Yours sincerely,