

Attention Elton Humphery,
Secretariat,
Senate Community Affairs References Committee.

Inquiry into Gynaecological Cancer in Australia.
held at King Edward Memorial Hospital, Subiaco W.A. on Friday 4th August
2006

Dear Elton, Thank you for the Hansard transcript of the Inquiry held on 4th
August. I am sorry to have not replied sooner, due to illness.

CORRECTION : There is one on page CA 31. where I mentioned 'Princess
Margaret' referring to that Hospital for Children, and the CHAIR asked "I take it
that is Princess Margaret Hospital?" my reply should have been "Yes, the
children's hospital".

There were a number of interjections at the time, and if I was not audible, and
went on to say something about our women's hospital, I apologise. It simply
does not make sense as it stands.

EXPLANATION : In fact I had intended to say further to that, (and was a bit
thrown by the interjections to lose my thread of thought) that Menopause is not
the 'flavour of the month' at any time for Volunteers, those few who come here to
help, come out of self interest in the main, and once they have sorted out what
they wanted to know, they move on. Menopause does not attract volunteer
health professionals for the same reason. Those who haven't reached
Menopause prefer to ignore it, and those who have taken up and acted on the
available information at Menopause, want to leave it behind, as well, unless they
see a way to begin making money out of the association with the Group. A
number of Psychology new graduates think they could counsel women, but they
have little or no knowledge of Menopause, and women basically need to know a
lot about it and how it affects them personally when they phone.

My Committee consists now, and has done for the past eight years, of my own
friends, there to support me, so that we could keep the Group going. They too
want to finish, now, as they are all my age. I have advertised, called for
interested women at our Public Meetings, put leaflets around the Hospital, and
tried many other ways to find women for the Rooms, or for the Committee. I feel
that the Lymphoedema Association and I have much in common in this respect.

(Robyn Collins allusion to the Volunteers in the Foundation Coffee Shop is totally
opposite, as an example of the availability of Volunteers. The coffee shop has a
paid Manageress to begin with, and most women volunteer to help out in school
canteens, and find it easy to move on to work in the coffee shop, and at times
which suit them.)

What I had hoped for. from KEMH was a commitment to carry on the function of the Group ie. paying a health professional/Nurse Practitioner to answer the phone and post out information to menopausal women.

Menopause after Breast Cancer is just one part of the whole area of Menopause, as important as it is, (and it is wonderful to be involved with this multidisciplinary team). There are also many women who are afraid of Breast Cancer because they have one family member who has had Breast Cancer. They ring me, not the MSAC Clinic, with their fears which are often unfounded, (see comments by Helen Zorbas, director of the National Breast Cancer Centre, as recently as 24th August 2006). I have often taken calls from women with many other conditions, who haven't seen a doctor, when I have had to advise them to do so, to exclude the possibility of a breast or gynaec cancer or other serious conditions.

The Senate Committee may be interested to hear that as a result of our last Public Meeting, held in April, on "Menopause Symptoms After Breast and other Cancers" at which Professor Christobel Saunders and Dr. Lucy Williams (a Gynaecologist associated with the MSAC and the Menopause Clinics) were the Guest Speakers, I sent out a Global email Statewide, and have had 40 or more requests for copies of it on DVD or Video. That is a bit overwhelming for us to deal with, but it highlights the need for information by Health Professionals both in the Rural and the Metropolitan areas, to be able to assist their patients. We will enclose pamphlets on the MSAC Clinic and on Rural Breast Nurses, as well as a few others related to Breast Cancer, when we post the DVDs out.

This is not a King Edward Hospital initiative, but they, in the person of the Medical Photographer, and his paid time, have assisted me to carry this out.

All of the above is pertinent to the Inquiry, and if accepted could perhaps be taken as a Supplementary submission. I am only sorry that my ill health has prevented me from sending it in sooner.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne McCall, R.N.

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