

Councillor Graham Buford
Chairman, Essex Health Overview
& Scrutiny Committee
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Our Ref: DM/dp

23 December 2009

Dear Graham,

Re: Cancer - 1 Year Survival

I am responding to your letter of 7 December 2009 regarding the performance of South West Essex PCT in relation to Breast and Colorectal Cancer – 1 Year Survival.

I would like to reassure you that <75 cancer mortality rates have been closely monitored by the PCT Board as part of our monthly performance review system. Mortality is reducing over time, however, not as fast as we would wish. Over the past year we have encouraged uptake of bowel cancer screening and the breast screening programme is now meeting the target levels.

From January 2010 the Essex Cancer Network together with the PCTs will be undertaking an investigation of the cancer data to identify cancers by PCT sub regions and GP practices. This should enable us to target our treatment services and preventative services much more efficiently.

Furthermore, from January residents with breast symptoms will be able to access a clinic within the '14 days wait' for suspected cancer patients. We will also be monitoring our contracts carefully and ensuring that providers of cancer treatment services meet target times for treatment and monitoring outcomes of this. We plan to initiate additional educational programmes for primary care practitioners and we are running an awareness campaign for local people to alert them to early signs of potential bowel and breast cancer.

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We believe the above steps will make a real difference over the next eighteen months and envisage that our 1 Year Survival rates from breast and bowel cancer will improve considerably in that time. I wish to reassure you that our under 75 deaths from cancers are reviewed regularly at our Public Board Meetings and at our Corporate Management Team meetings within the PCT.

The PCT will be happy to attend the HO&C and give a more detailed presentation if you feel this would be helpful.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely



Derek Morrison
Chairman
NHS South West Essex

