

Friday 26 October 2012

## Expert panel to look at Helensburgh cancer cases

NSW Health is convening an expert advisory panel to consider any evidence of an unexpected number of cancer cases in Helensburgh and surrounding areas and any risk factors.

Illawarra Public Health Unit Acting Director, Curtis Gregory, said the panel will bring together epidemiological, public health, clinical and environmental specialists.

“Given the significance of this issue and concerns in the community it is vital that all of the findings are thoroughly examined to ensure that they are accurate and evidence-based,” Mr Gregory said.

“The panel will consider past investigations, data collection and review the analysis and findings and to make further recommendations if necessary.

“The expert panel will undertake this review as a priority and together with the Public Health Unit, provide timely advice to the community in the coming weeks.

“With any disease that is rare, the number of cases in a local community will typically be quite small but can vary significantly over time without any common underlying cause.

“We hope the Panel’s investigation will go some way toward addressing community concerns,” he said.

Concerns about cancer cases were first raised in 2008 and since that time the Public Health Unit has monitored the occurrence of leukaemia both in Helensburgh and the broader Illawarra and Shoalhaven community.

In the light of recent concerns, the Public Health Unit is obtaining the most current available Cancer Registry data to include non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma and will continue to monitor this information.

If parents or family members are concerned about an individual’s health or wellbeing they should consult their treating physician and/or oncologist.

The Public Health Unit can be contacted on 4221 6700.

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