

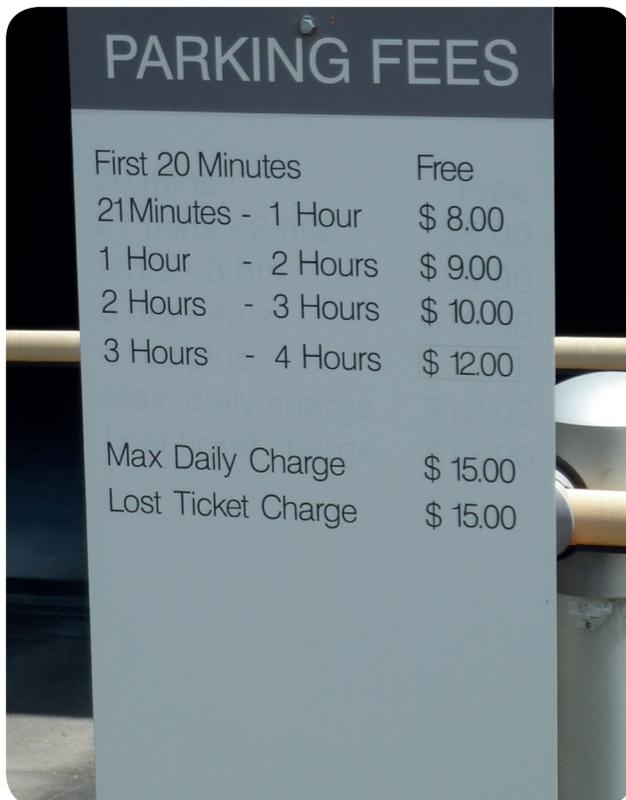
Investigation of parking at Victorian hospitals



Why?

Parking at Victorian cancer treatment centres has been identified as a significant issue for cancer patients, their families and carers.

Cancer Council Victoria investigated parking at hospitals to determine the extent of the problem, costs, availability of subsidies and reimbursements, and information available for cancer patients.



PARKING FEES	
First 20 Minutes	Free
21 Minutes - 1 Hour	\$ 8.00
1 Hour - 2 Hours	\$ 9.00
2 Hours - 3 Hours	\$ 10.00
3 Hours - 4 Hours	\$ 12.00
Max Daily Charge	\$ 15.00
Lost Ticket Charge	\$ 15.00

Who?

53 hospitals participated, with 83% of staff surveyed identifying parking as a known problem. The most frequently reported problems were cost (57%), insufficient spaces (43%) and time-limited, metered street parking (41%).

Cost

Parking at a metropolitan centre for an uncomplicated patient with breast cancer was estimated at over \$1100 for one year. This cost increases when adding additional appointments, changes to treatment, parking fines or extra costs incurred in private independent car parks.

Availability

- Availability of parking was a significant issue even at centres that did not charge for parking, with many carparks full for the majority of the day.
- Lack of available spaces was a clear source of frustration and stress for patients and carers and had the ability to impact on clinical appointments and disruption to treatment.
- Provision of free or dedicated parking bays for cancer patients, or even large car parks, did not equate to available parking for patients.

Information

- There were inconsistencies across, and within, cancer treatment centres in how and what information was provided about parking.
- Only one-in-five centres reportedly provided patients with information about parking schemes prior to the start of treatment.

Impact on health care

- Parking issues have a clear impact on health professionals and disrupt treatment through cancelled, delayed or contracted appointments.
- Clinical staff time is spent on advocacy and administration work for parking fines, and on occasion, staff physically feeding parking meters or moving cars on behalf of patients.
- Unanticipated parking problems result in patients attending appointments alone whilst the accompanying person searches for a carpark. This can result in vital information not being shared with family members and carers.

What can Cancer Council Victoria do?

- Raise the awareness of centres and government to parking as a key issue for cancer patients.
- Provide and make accessible to all cancer treatment centres examples of parking information and subsidy schemes already being effectively used in Victorian centres.
- Consider further research into the opportunity cost to cancer treatment centres from staff undertaking administration and advocacy work on car parking.
- Work with government and private providers to advocate for parking policies that lessen the burden on people affected by cancer.
- Monitor the extent to which Victorian cancer treatment centres respond to the government's directive of developing and publicising formal parking policies, pricing and concessions.

What can hospitals do?

- Consider different levels of health literacy in the preparation of information about car parking.
- Provide patients with a guide to all car parking options available at or near the cancer centre before the patient's first visit.
- Identify who is responsible for providing the information to patients and carers and when this occurs.
- Establish clear eligibility criteria and allocation procedures for discounts, subsidy schemes and re-imbursments, and processes to routinely communicate these to all cancer patients.
- Consider reducing logistical parking problems with initiatives such as having priority parking bays for use by patients and family members that are close to the place of treatment, or shuttle buses from car parking areas to treatment sites.

Feedback from cancer clinicians, and general public to the release of the draft report showed overwhelming support for, and agreement, with the recommendations.

To read the full report visit www.cancervic.org.au/parking



For information and support
call a cancer nurse on 13 11 20
For other languages call 13 14 50
Email askanurse@cancervic.org.au
Visit www.cancervic.org.au