



Waikato District Health Board



Media Release – For immediate release

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**Cancer
Society**

Waikato/Bay of Plenty
Division
Cancer Society of New
Zealand Inc.

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Official Opening of Brachytherapy Cancer Treatment Room

A retired Te Awamutu farmer who was the first patient to receive high dose radiation brachytherapy treatment at Waikato Hospital's Oncology Department 17 months ago says he would thoroughly recommend the procedure.

Brian Oyler is one of more than 50 people to receive treatment at the Regional Cancer Centre in Waikato Hospital, utilising brachytherapy equipment bought last year. The treatment was "100 per cent successful," he said.

The equipment was purchased by the Waikato District Health Board, with assistance from a Waikato / Bay of Plenty Cancer Society grant and became the first region in the country to offer this form of high dose radiation treatment.

In particular, men with intermediate and high grade prostate cancer benefit from brachytherapy which delivers radiation treatment into or close to the source of a person's cancer. Other specific cancers can also be treated.

Judy Gould, Cancer Society Chief Executive, says the grant of more than \$365,000 was the society's largest one-off grant to date.

"We were very pleased to be able to assist the Waikato DHB in purchasing this equipment and also in helping to refurbish the patient treatment room.

"It is wonderful to know that people in our region can receive world class cancer treatments."

On Tuesday 31st July, 10.30am, the brachytherapy treatment room will be officially opened with the unveiling of a new plaque on Level 01 of the Lomas Building at the Regional Cancer Centre, Waikato Hospital.

The plaque officially recognises the contribution the Cancer Society has made towards assisting the Waikato District Health Board purchase brachytherapy equipment and to refurbish the treatment bunker room.

A pilot study of 20 patients was done before Mr Oyler's treatment at Waikato Hospital to determine requirements for the service.

Waikato DHB medicine and oncology service manager Neil McKelvie said the Oncology Department treated its first prostate patient on February 9 last year.

Instead of having the usual seven weeks radiation treatment, Mr Oyler had five weeks. His recovery was effortless and he was now able to resume a normal life.

In June 2006, the national forum of District Health Board chief executives agreed that Waikato and Capital and Coast would be the lead DHBs providing high dose radiation brachytherapy services.

Waikato DHB would provide services for the Northland, Auckland, Counties-Manukau, Northland, Waitemata, Bay of Plenty, Lakes and Waikato DHB residents.

Alterations took place on an existing bunker within the Oncology department which allowed patients to receive the full treatment in Oncology outpatient department and remove the need to transfer to the operation theatre for part of the treatment.

To date there has been more than 50 patients treated using the procedure at Waikato Hospital.

The Oncology Department employs 164 people – including 33 medical staff and 60 nurses.

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Editor's Note:

The Waikato/Bay of Plenty Division of the Cancer Society of New Zealand Inc is a non-profit organisation that receives no direct financial support from the Government. We are funded by bequests and donations from the public as well as fundraising activities.

We are committed to minimising the impact of cancer in our communities by providing:

- Quality support services for people affected by cancer
- Education to promote early detection and help reduce the risk of cancer
- Free information and resources on cancer
- Support for research into the causes, prevention, detection and treatment of cancer