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MEDIA RELEASE

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Cancer survivorship - a challenging time

The issues relating to cancer and survivorship were discussed by health professionals, cancer survivors and NGO representatives at a national forum held at Massey University recently.

One of the major topics of the forum, organised by the Cancer Society and the Central Cancer Network, was the level of care people receive after their treatment, which can be quite different to their treatment and support as a patient.

Patients receive excellent support and care but once their cancer treatment has been completed successfully, often there is no ongoing programme or referral put in place.

“Many cancer survivors find this a difficult period with worries about what the future holds, concern about whether the disease will reoccur and often matters around simply readjusting to life after cancer,” said Roger Twentyman, Manager of the Society’s Manawatu Centre. “There are organisations, such as the Cancer Society, which are geared up to support people practically and emotionally throughout their cancer experience. The trouble is people are not being referred to or made aware of our services.”

“We know of people in this situation. Indeed, Phil Kerslake author of the widely read book *Life, Happiness & Cancer*, which relates his experiences over years of cancer treatment and recovery, said that offering a structured and meaningful programme of support would have made his life very much easier, particularly during the period immediately post treatment.”

The forum agreed that support in the form of a ‘Care Plan’ covering the transition period should be introduced as best practice across the country. This would give assurance and support for the many people affected by the cancer experience. The Cancer Society and the Cancer Control Network, will advocate for change to see the introduction of mandatory care planning for all cancer survivors.

For further information
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