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Dear Ms Anderson,

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) thanks Cancer Australia for the opportunity to provide feedback on its short list of key metastatic breast cancer practices as part of the development of the *Cancer Australia Statement – Influencing best practice in metastatic breast cancer*.

The RACGP's response covers the following:

1. The important role of the GP in multidisciplinary teams
2. The welfare of patients diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer
3. Appropriate and inappropriate practices
4. Recommendations for improving the document format.

#### **1. The important role of the GP in multidisciplinary teams**

The practice statements regarding the important role of the multidisciplinary team, and the importance of communicating with patients, are crucial. GPs are an integral part of a multidisciplinary team in the care of patients with metastatic breast cancer. As such the GP, rather than the oncologist or breast care nurse, could be a patient's preferred key contact person. The current wording of 'a key contact person' is therefore welcomed and important.

#### **2. The welfare of patients diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer**

Patient access to professional psychological support should be included as a separate best practice statement. These needs are often overlooked and some patients require intensive psychological therapy, which can be expensive and difficult to access. Therefore, a particular focus on this area would help bring attention to, and address these challenges.

#### **3. Appropriate and inappropriate practices**

These statements clearly highlight and provide useful information that will assist doctors, patients and families in determining how to best proceed with a patient's care.

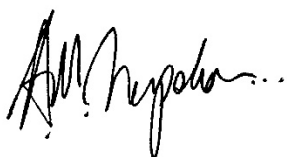
#### **4. Recommendations for improving the document format**

- 4.1 The references provide additional resources for doctors and for patients. Therefore, the RACGP recommends including a clear publication date on the final Cancer Australia Statement, given the rapidly changing information in the area.
- 4.2 It is not clear if the practices that will be included in the final Cancer Australia Statement are considered to be a minimal standard, or aspirational towards the highest standard of care. The RACGP recommends that this is clarified.

4.3 Some practice statements are more like clinical guideline recommendations. A conversion to the [Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation](#) (GRADE) approach could be considered for future updates of the Statement. This methodology is now increasingly adopted for clinical guidelines.

The RACGP thanks Cancer Australia again for the opportunity to comment. If you have any further queries please contact Mr Stephan Groombridge, Manager, eHealth and Quality Care on (03) 8669-0544 or at [stephan.groombridge@racgp.org.au](mailto:stephan.groombridge@racgp.org.au)

Yours sincerely



**Dr Harry Nespolon**  
President