

# Supporting High Quality Nutrition Care with a Malnutrition Governance Toolkit

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## Background

Malnutrition is common in patients receiving cancer treatment and is associated with reduced treatment tolerance and increased morbidity and mortality. Results of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Malnutrition in Victorian Cancer Services (VCS) point prevalence study (2012) showed a wide variation amongst participating public health services in providing nutrition care for malnourished patients. Patients from hospitals with strong nutrition governance systems were more likely to receive individualised nutrition care from a dietitian.

## Methods

The DHSS VCS Project Governance Committee identified a need for an information resource and toolkit for health service clinicians and teams with the aim to promote evidence based malnutrition practice, guide system-wide practice improvements to embed hospital quality and safety accreditation standards for nutrition care, and help close the gap in treatment variation. Key local and national stakeholders were identified and working groups involving 27 multidisciplinary clinicians were recruited and surveyed to determine the target audience and content needs. Content was further developed and refined via structured surveys, piloting opportunities and teleconferencing at key time points to ensure stakeholder needs were met.

## Results

Stakeholders remained highly engaged throughout the project, with approximately 80% combined response rates to each consultation round and 100% respondents piloting or applying content of the toolkit and reporting they would use the toolkit in the future at their health service. The toolkit was produced in four chapters, namely; (1) Nutrition governance practices, (2) Key performance indicators for malnutrition care, (3) Identification, prevention and management of cancer malnutrition and (4) Nutrition service delivery models. The toolkit is available via [www.health.vic.gov.au/cancer/cancer-projects](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/cancer/cancer-projects).

## Discussion

Effective nutrition care needs a system-wide, multidisciplinary approach. A collaborative and iterative methodology has enabled the production of a resource to meet the needs of intended users. Further work to support implementation and evaluation of the toolkit is planned.