



## **EXPERTS CALL FOR MORE LUNG CANCER NURSES**

Lung cancer specialist nurses from throughout the UK will call on Government to stand by its commitment to specialist nurses at a meeting in Westminster today (29<sup>th</sup> October). They will lobby politicians to ensure every lung cancer patient has access to a lung cancer nurse.\*

“Lung cancer nurses play a vital role in supporting patients and their families,” says Maria Guerin, chair of the National Lung Cancer Forum for Nurses, which is a member of the United Kingdom Lung Cancer Coalition. “Yet, one in ten lung cancer patients currently do not have access to a specialist nurse.”

Lung cancer kills more than 34,000 people every year.<sup>1</sup> More women die from lung cancer than breast cancer<sup>2</sup> and the disease kills more people than breast cancer, prostate cancer, bladder cancer and leukaemia combined.<sup>3</sup>

“Despite lung cancer being the UK’s biggest cancer killer, there aren’t enough nurses compared to the number of patients diagnosed,” adds Maria Guerin.

According to recent figures, on average, there is one lung cancer nurse in England for every 132 people diagnosed with lung cancer, compared to 82 people per every breast cancer nurse.<sup>4</sup>

“We need an extra 200 lung cancer specialist nurses in the UK to bring specialist nurse provision in line with some of the other major cancers,” says Dame Gill Oliver, chair of the United Kingdom Lung Cancer Coalition (UKLCC), of which the NLCFN is a member.

The UKLCC believes that every lung cancer patient should have access to a lung cancer specialist nurse.

“Currently, access to a lung cancer nurse depends largely on where you live. Some patients will never see one,” adds Dame Gill. “Without access to lung cancer nurses, patients will suffer as they will not have access to the in-depth nursing knowledge, care and support that lung cancer specialist nurses can provide.”

With the help of nurses and other key health professionals, the UKLCC’S vision is to double lung cancer survival during the next seven to ten years and eradicate the huge inequalities that exist in lung cancer care. Currently, UK lung cancer survival is one of the worst in Europe<sup>5</sup> with half of all lung cancer patients dying within six months.<sup>6</sup>

“Lung cancer nurses are a valuable resource and also save NHS trusts money,” adds Maria Guerin.

Indeed, a recent survey undertaken in partnership with the National Lung Cancer Nurses Forum shows lung cancer nurses in England carry out more than a total of 71,000 hours of unpaid overtime every year – saving employing trusts nearly £1.5m per annum.<sup>7</sup>

### **About Lung Cancer**

Over 38,000 people are diagnosed with lung cancer every year,<sup>8</sup> and it accounts for one in six of all cancer cases<sup>9</sup> and one in 20 of all UK deaths.<sup>10</sup> It is reported that four people die from lung cancer in the UK every hour.<sup>1</sup> Despite, being labeled a ‘smoker’s disease’, one in eight of all lung cancer patients have never smoked.<sup>11</sup>

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### **About the UKLCC**

The UK Lung Cancer Coalition (UKLCC) is a powerful coalition of the UK's leading lung cancer experts, charities and healthcare companies. It is the UK's only multi-interest group in lung cancer and it is the first time that all the major charities with an interest in the disease have joined forces to fight lung cancer. The UKLCC is funded by its members, who are bound by a funding a governance policy. The member healthcare companies and charities provide financial grants and grants in kind to achieve the UKLCC stated goals. Details of our members, governance, aims and objectives, can be found at our website at: [www.uklcc.org.uk](http://www.uklcc.org.uk)

#### Note to editors:

Nurses from around the UK will take part in a photo call at College Green, Westminster at 1pm on 29<sup>th</sup> October (the eve of Lung Cancer Awareness Month) in order to highlight their campaign.

For more information about the National Lung Cancer Forum for Nurses and their forthcoming 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference visit [www.nlcfn.org.uk](http://www.nlcfn.org.uk)

\*The Department of Health's Cancer Reform Strategy and Improving Outcomes Guidance, together with NICE, all recommend that every lung cancer patient should have access to a specialist nurse.

#### References:

1. Figures from Cancer Research UK, available at: <http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/cancerstats/types/lung/mortality/>
2. Figures from Cancer Research UK, available at: <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/aboutcancer/statistics/mortality>
3. Figures from Cancer Research UK, available at: <http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/cancerstats/mortality/cancerdeaths/?a=5441>
4. Trevatt P, Petit J, Leary A (2008) Mapping the English cancer clinical nurse specialist workforce. *Cancer Nursing Practice*. Vol 7(3) pp 33-38
5. Verdecchia A, Francisci S, Brenner H, Gatta G, Micheli A, Mangone L, Kunkler I, and the EURO-CARE-4 working group. *Recent cancer survival in Europe: a 2002-02 period analysis of EURO-CARE-4 data*. *Lancet Oncology*. Published online August 21, 2007
6. Cancer Research UK Statistics Dept
7. Leary A, Bell N, Darlison L, Guerin M An analysis of Lung Clinical Nurse Specialist workload and value. *Cancer Nursing Practice*. For publication/in press.
8. Figures from Cancer Research UK, available at: <http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/cancerstats/types/lung/incidence/>
9. Cancer Atlas of UK and Ireland, 2005. Chapter 13, p139
10. [http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/college/ceeu/ceeu\\_lung\\_home.htm](http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/college/ceeu/ceeu_lung_home.htm)
11. Peto, R et al. [Mortality from smoking in developed countries 1950-2000](#) 2004

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