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The NSW Rural Cancer Services Review provides a snapshot of cancer services in rural areas and identifies key rural programs for further development over the NSW Cancer Plan 2007 -2010.

The Cancer Institute NSW has invested in rural workforce, supporting additional front line positions in rural NSW, including medical, nursing, psycho-oncology, trainee and cancer service management positions. New initiatives to develop metropolitan–rural links for specialist training positions in rural areas have also been established through the Registrar program.

Improving opportunities for rural health professionals to access cancer training and continuing education remains a priority. In 2007 two Rural Cancer Nursing Education Pilots conducted in rural NSW, provided rural nurses increased opportunities to access face-to-face education in a nearby regional centre.

Additional programs to strengthen care coordination for rural cancer patients have also been established. Funding has been provided for 20 MDTs, piloting approaches to enhance collaboration between metropolitan and rural MDTs. The NSW CanNET project promoting improved care coordination through managed clinical networks in Northern NSW will commence in September 2007.

Recurrent funding support has been provided by the Cancer Institute NSW to improve eligibility and fuel reimbursement for patients in rural and remote NSW under the Isolated Patients Transport and Accommodation Scheme.

The Cancer Institute NSW will continue to develop and evaluate service models to improve cancer outcomes in rural NSW, based on existing evidence of best practice. Initiatives such as reviewing existing outreach models and their sustainability and the rural projects funded under the Health Services Innovation Grants program provide rural cancer services opportunities for innovation and redesign to better meet the needs of rural cancer patients.