

# The relief of poverty and distress caused by illness and disease

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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Critical need for chemotherapy chairs

Whether it's the growing Gold Coast population or that more people are undergoing cancer treatment, but the need for chemotherapy chairs at the Gold Coast University Hospital has never been more critical.

The highly-specialised chairs cost \$5000 each and Lisa Roberts, Service Director, Cancer, Blood and Palliative Services for Gold Coast Health, says they play a crucial role in cancer treatment.

"When we moved from the old Gold Coast Hospital at Southport in 2013 we only had 11 chairs but in the past five years that number has grown to in excess of 22," Ms Roberts said.

"Previously we couldn't expand due to limited space and many patients had to go to Brisbane for treatment.

"Now we treat about 1600 patients a month through that unit and in those chairs, and that number is only increasing. Our graphs show it is on an upwards trajectory."

The unit now treats about 19,200 a year – a 6 per cent rise on the same time the previous year. And it's a percentage increase that has been reasonably consistent year on year, at times even as high as 10 per cent.

She put the dramatic rise partly down to the increase in the Gold Coast population but also that the hospital was able to offer more tertiary services to patients such as hematology or stem cell transplant, previously undertaken in Brisbane.

"As the population increases our workload goes up," she said. "But it's also that we have expanded the types of services we offer and that patients with cancer are living longer and therefore more likely to need ongoing treatment.

"So being more successful with our treatments impacts on our service. In a sense, we are the victim of our own success."

While called chemotherapy chairs, they are also used for blood transfusions and other medical procedures related to cancer treatment.

Patients may need to sit in the chairs for up to eight hours while they are receiving treatment.

"For this reason the chairs must keep patients as comfortable as possible," Ms Roberts said.

"But they are not just chairs. They are electronic and raise and lower so our nurses are able to interact with the patients, change drips, put cannulas in, etc.

"They are also able to lie flat in case someone needs to be resuscitated if they go into cardiac arrest while undergoing chemo treatment.

"Unfortunately, some of them are quite old, more than 10 years, and deteriorated. They really need replacing. Our wish list is eight new chairs and that's a total of \$40,000 we need to raise. New specialised hi-tech chairs will not only be more comfortable, they will enable us to add so much more value to the service we are able to provide our patients.

"If one of them were to become unusable it would have a significant impact on our ability to deliver our services."

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Gold Coast Hospital Foundation will hold fundraising lunch Care for Cancer to raise much-needed funds for the Cancer Patient Transport Service as well as chemotherapy chairs at the Gold Coast University Hospital. The lunch will be held on March 16 at Palazzo Versace. Tickets are \$110 per person or \$1100 for a table of 10 and can be booked at <http://bit.ly/2n96huS>

Gold Coasters can also donate to the Gold Coast Hospital Foundation by visiting [gchfoundation.org.au/donate/](http://gchfoundation.org.au/donate/).

The Gold Coast Hospital Foundation was established 23 years ago as the official charity for Gold Coast Health, which includes Gold Coast University Hospital and Robina Hospital. The Foundation raises funds to help medical professionals make a difference in the lives of sick and injured children and adults each year, delivering a range of vital programs, medical equipment and research funding. Gold Coast Hospital Foundation helps more than 95,000 each year in the local community.

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**If you would like to organize an interview with Lisa Roberts or Gold Coast Hospital Foundation CEO Kim Sutton, please contact Vanessa Jones on 0421 057 129**