



Australian Clinical Trials Alliance

Media release

Australian Clinical Trials Alliance welcomes Government commitment to get clinical trials back on track

Tuesday 19 February 2013

The Australian Clinical Trials Alliance welcomes this week's announcement by the Federal Government of reforms to foster clinical trials research, ensuring Australia retains its position as a leader in clinical research and drug development.

Interim Chair of the Australian Clinical Trials Alliance and medical oncologist, Professor John Zalcborg OAM, says, although Australia continues to produce very high quality clinical research, investment is increasingly being redirected to other countries.

Professor Zalcborg says barriers such as delays in approval due to non-standardised ethics review and regulatory requirements and difficulties recruiting patients due to outmoded systems and infrastructure, coupled with the rising costs of trials as a result of the high Australian dollar, means biopharmaceutical companies and academic institutions are looking past Australia to cheaper options overseas.

'Clinical trials have wide-ranging benefits, most importantly to people with life-threatening and chronic illness. They are fundamental to cost effective and high quality clinical practice improvement and innovation which is why my colleagues and I welcome the initiatives put forward by the Australian Government to make us once again competitive at a cost and systems level.'

Professor John Simes, Senior Principal Research Fellow, founding director of the NHMRC Clinical Trials Centre and member of the Australian Clinical Trials Alliance, says the Federal Government investment of \$9.9 million over 5 years will significantly enhance our capacity to fulfil many of the remaining recommendations of the Clinical Trials Action Group (CTAG) report, released in 2011.

'Clinical trials in Australia are often coordinated in the academic sector by virtual networks of clinical investigators. While the quality of their work is high-quality, an increasing number of barriers in the "system" have seen our reputation as a preferred destination for trials diminish.'

Professor Simes says the announcement is an important step in improving the efficiencies of clinical trials in Australia and underscores the importance of clinical trials research in improving clinical practice and health outcomes in Australia.

– ends –

About the Australian Clinical Trials Alliance

The Australian Clinical Trials Alliance (ACTA) is a newly formed alliance created to promote cost-effective healthcare in Australia through the use of investigator-led clinical trials research that generates the evidence to support decision-making by health practitioners, policy makers and consumers.

Aims of the Australian Clinical Trials Alliance

- Build greater and sustainable capacity in investigator-initiated clinical trials including networks, trial centres, trial professionals and expertise.
- Provide an advisory and advocacy role for ACTA in shaping future health care and health care research in Australia (including streamlining & simplifying clinical trial processes)
- Provide a forum for all medical disciplines to share ideas, develop more standardised and streamline systems for clinical trials and common education and training opportunities

Vision of the Australian Clinical Trials Alliance

- A healthcare system that delivers high quality and cost-effective care through the systematic generation and application of evidence derived from clinical research.
- The best evidence to inform optimal health care is based on well conducted controlled trials of the effect of interventions on clinically relevant outcomes
- That clinical research, through both clinical trials and registries, occurs as a routine, integral, and universal component of healthcare delivery.
- There is widespread appreciation and support by consumers, health practitioners, and policy-makers for the critical importance of clinical research in Australia to improve policy and practice at all levels from hospital to the community.
- Information collected via registries can guide the planning and conduct of trials, identify variations in practice and outcomes and measure appropriate use of evidence-based health care.
- Patients who require treatment for which there is clinical equipoise have the opportunity to participate in high quality clinical trials.

Members of ACTA

Professor Fran Boyle AM
Professor Alan Cass
Professor Derek Chew
Professor Geoff Donnan AO
Professor Mark Harris
A/Professor Ross Haslam
A/Professor Carmel Hawley

Professor Tony Keech
Professor John McNeil AM
Professor Paul Myles
Professor John Simes
Professor Steve Webb
Adj/A/Professor Nik Zeps
Professor John Zalcberg OAM

Enquiries

Please direct enquiries to: Professor John Zalcberg OAM – Chief Medical Officer & Executive Director, Cancer Services, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, East Melbourne. Ph (03) 9656 1749; Fax (03) 9656 1091; Email John.Zalcberg@petermac.org