

Chief Executive's Statement



Cancer Research UK has had a tremendously successful year:

Our ground-breaking research is leading to new ways to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer, saving lives in the UK and throughout the world.

During the year, we initiated a number of new partnerships to help meet our ambitious goals for 2020. We were also instrumental in securing government commitment to a comprehensive Cancer Reform Strategy that will greatly enhance prevention efforts and will transform the treatment and care of cancer patients in the UK.

A year into my role as Chief Executive, I am keen to emphasise the positive impact that our work continues to have on people's lives and how we plan to achieve our vision to beat cancer.

Our ten goals will continue to shape our work over the next decade and beyond. Because the goals are long-term, we may not be able to demonstrate significant progress every year, but whenever it is possible to measure and report progress, we will.

Research to beat cancer

Since our merger in 2002, we have doubled our research spend. Each year we produce a substantial output of world-class research that makes a significant impact on the survival and quality of life of cancer patients. We have opened a new research institute in Cambridge and, in early 2008, the new Cancer Research UK-MRC Gray Institute for Radiation Oncology & Biology was completed to help us improve and refine radiotherapy treatments for cancer patients. We support research into every form of cancer through the work of more than 4,500 scientists, doctors and nurses throughout the UK.

Strategy for success

We are currently finalising a five-year research strategy that we will publish towards the end of 2008. This strategy will help to clarify our scientific direction, providing a framework for decision-making and helping us to prioritise where we should be investing our efforts and resources for maximum impact.

Cancer information

During the year, we drove forward initiatives to help people reduce their risk of cancer. We led the UK's national skin cancer prevention campaign – SunSmart – and funded mobile cancer awareness units to take information and advice on cancer prevention and early detection to some of the UK's most deprived communities. Every month, around a million people used our award-winning CancerHelp UK information website. We are working closely with the NHS and Macmillan Cancer Support to launch 'information prescriptions', which will equip cancer patients with the information they need during their diagnosis and treatment.

Working in partnership

We worked hard with Government and other partners and the National Cancer Director on the Cancer Reform Strategy for England. As a result, the Government will significantly invest in radiotherapy services, speed up the time between cancer symptoms and diagnosis, and ensure that new cancer drugs, wherever possible, are assessed as soon as they are licensed. We are now working with the NHS to deliver the strategy.

In December 2007, we announced plans to work with the Medical Research Council, the Wellcome Trust and University College London to build a world-leading research institute: the UK Centre for Medical Research and Innovation (UKCMRI). The Centre will draw together some of the best scientists in the world to make new breakthroughs in understanding how cancer starts and develops.

Over the next two years, we are planning to establish a network of up to 20 Cancer Research UK Centres. These will be centres of excellence for cancer research in the UK and its application to patient care. They will accelerate developments in cancer research across the country by bringing together the best clinicians and scientists in a particular locality and by reaching out to local communities. This initiative is one of the most important that the Charity will undertake over the next five years and has the potential to transform the landscape of cancer research in the UK, as well as catalysing significant improvements in public health and cancer treatment. The initiative will depend on us working in partnership with universities, NHS Trusts and cancer networks to help deliver our goals, and to achieve the greatest impact in the global fight against cancer.

Together we will beat cancer

None of our achievements, past or future, would be possible without the dedication and commitment of our employees, volunteers and supporters. I would like to thank them most sincerely for their efforts, hard work and generosity in the last year. Together we will beat cancer.

Harpal S Kumar
Chief Executive
30 July 2008