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Cancer Australia

Supporting primary care to diagnose cancer early



CNSA Congress 2026 | Concurrent session 16

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Optimal Care Pathways

- ▶ Guides to best practice care across the cancer continuum
- ▶ Embedded as national standards in Australian Cancer Plan
- ▶ Benchmark for quality cancer care
- ▶ Reduce unwarranted variation
- ▶ Improved outcomes and cancer care



National Optimal Care Pathways Framework Summary

Vision

The integration of Optimal Care Pathways (OCPs) into clinical practice as the standard of cancer care, ensuring cultural safety and accessibility throughout the cancer journey, improving equity in cancer care and outcomes for all Australians.

Principles

- Equity
- Future-focused
- Person-centred
- Collaborative



Who is the OCP Framework For?

The National OCP Framework is intended for service planners, policy makers and OCP developers to understand the standards for OCP development and the strategies employed to enhance equitable access to care through OCPs.

Comprehensive Data Capture

- Improved data collection to inform OCP evaluation and drive quality improvements.

Comprehensive Cancer Care

Adherence to OCPs will be a requirement for participation in the Australian Comprehensive Cancer Network (ACCN) ensuring OCPs are embedded into clinical practice across jurisdictions and networks to deliver comprehensive cancer care.



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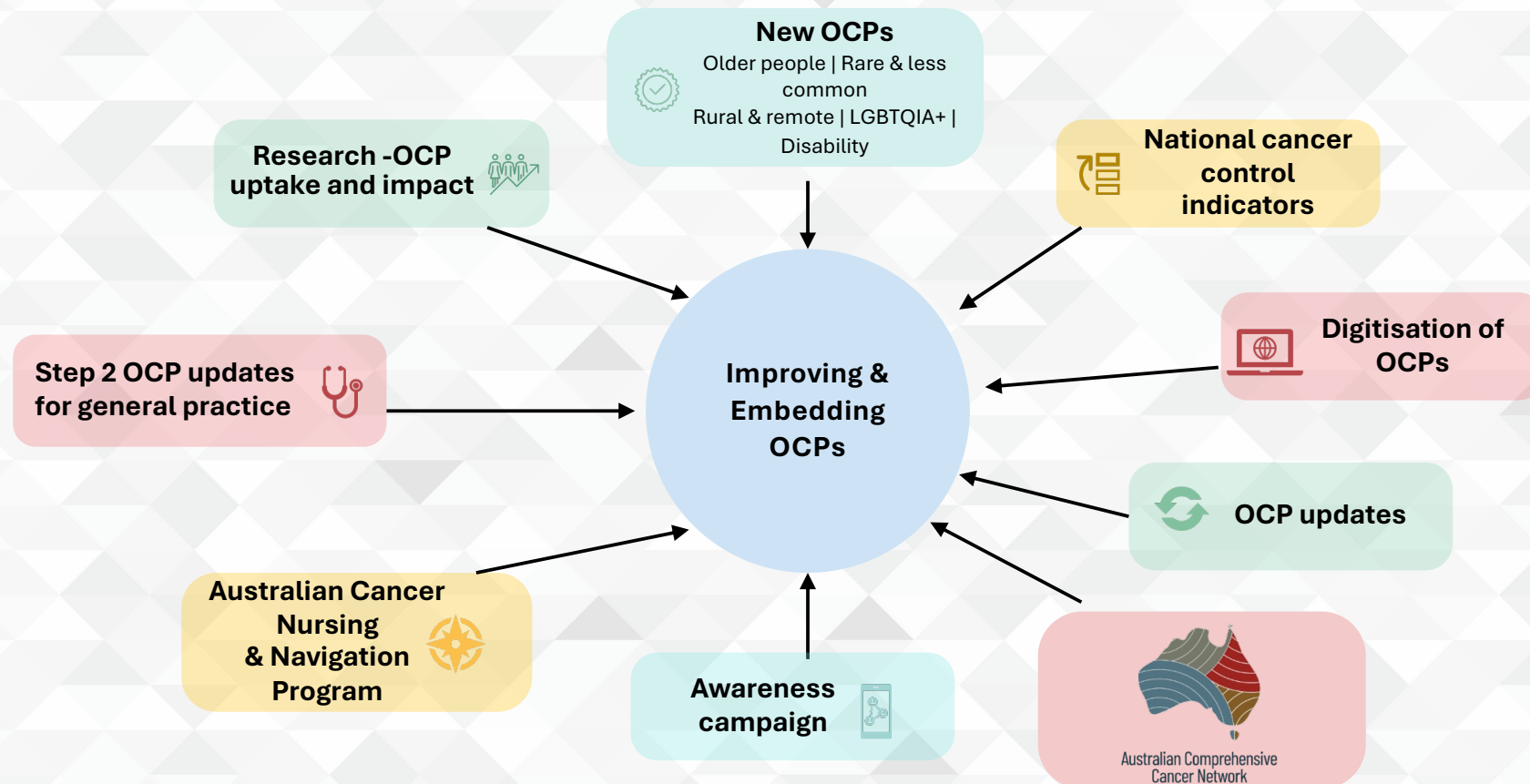
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Activating OCPs across the system



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OCP Digitisation

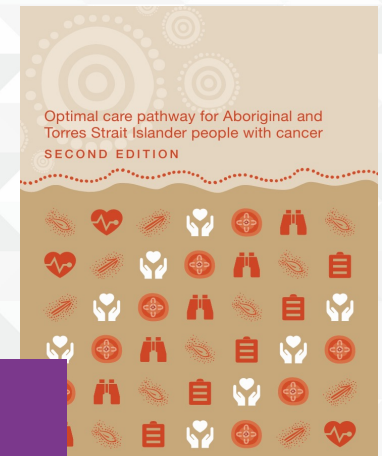
Easily navigate steps
and principles

Layer OCPs for tailored
information

AI to assist navigation

Integrate into existing
health platforms

Launch in **early 2027**



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OCPs - Facilitating earlier diagnosis

Signs and symptoms of cancer

Symptoms



Signs



Test results



Combinations



GP

RISK



Investigations & Referral

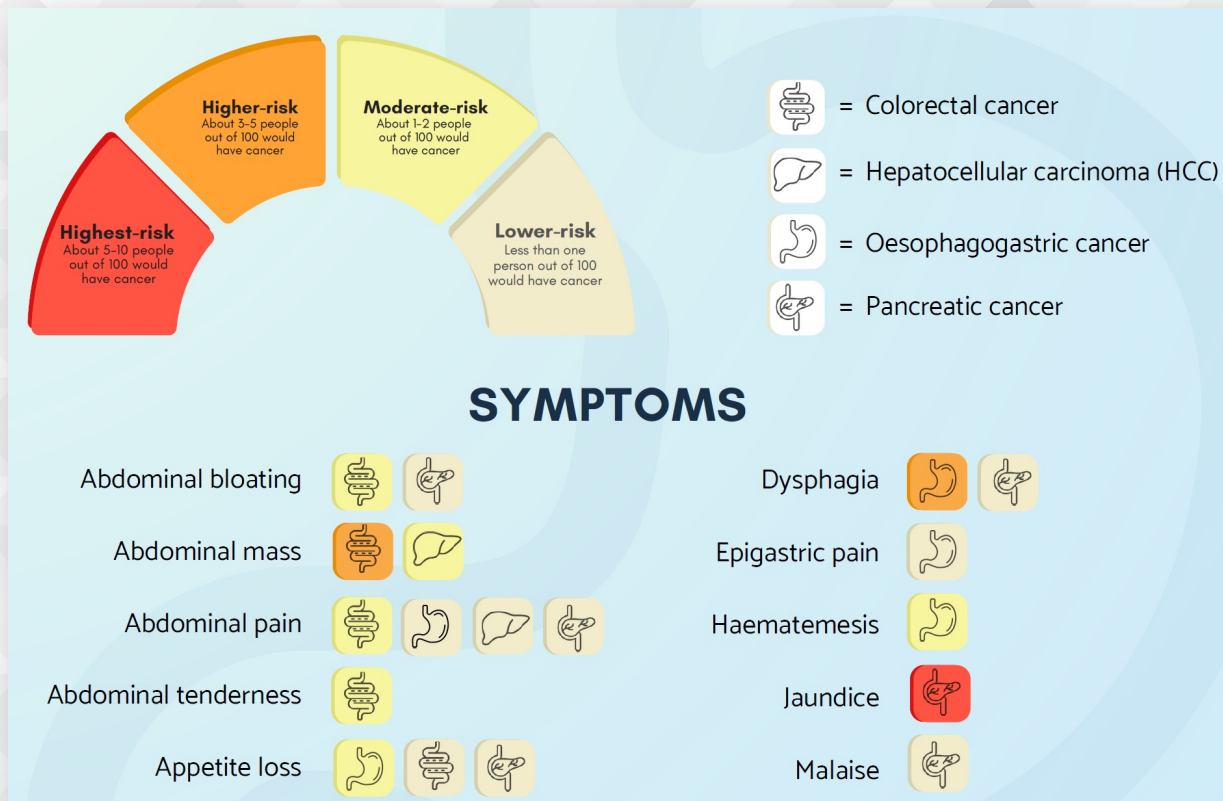
to cancer specialists and health services, including cancer nurses.

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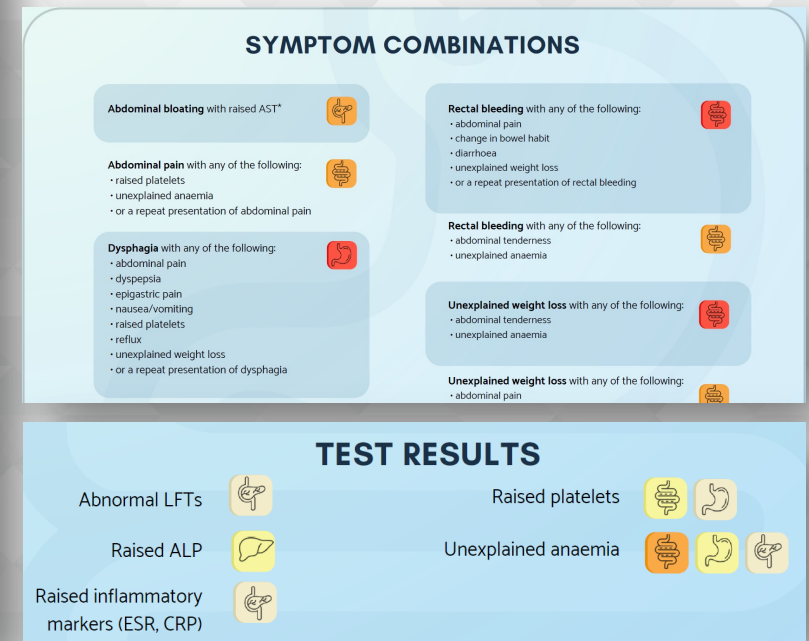


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Symptom-based guide



Supporting cancer diagnosis for upper GI cancers



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OCPs - Facilitating earlier diagnosis



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Next steps

Publication mid 2026



Announcements at:



Australian Comprehensive
Cancer Network



Future opportunities:

- Embed into clinical workflows
- Education programs
- Webinars and awareness campaigns
- Digitisation of OCPs

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Nurses and OCPs



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Step 1: Prevention & early detection

Step 2: Presentation, initial investigations & referral

Step 3: Diagnosis, staging & treatment planning

Step 4: Treatment

Step 5: Follow-up care after treatment & recovery

Step 6: Managing recurrent, residual or metastatic disease

Step 7: End-of-life care



Patient-centred care Safe and quality care Multidisciplinary care Supportive care Care coordination Communication Research & clinical trials

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