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MEDIA STATEMENT

MERCYASCOT AND SOUTHERN CROSS HOSPITALS TO DEVELOP NEW ZEALAND'S FIRST PRIVATE RADIOTHERAPY CENTRE IN AUCKLAND

MercyAscot and Southern Cross Hospitals have jointly announced that they will develop New Zealand's first private radiotherapy centre in Auckland to provide a private 'close to home' treatment option for cancer patients.

"Patients and their families have told us they want the option of receiving immediate treatment privately from their choice of specialist. They say they would prefer to be close to their family and support network during such a difficult time," says MercyAscot spokesperson Dr Richard Fisher.

He says the new centre, which will take about a year to build, will complement existing public services with a private option.

"We are delighted that Southern Cross Hospitals is involved in this project with us. Its experience in the health sector complements ours and will be invaluable as we develop the service," comments Dr Fisher.

He says the new 1,000 sq m, two-level, purpose-built facility will replace an existing building on the northern side of MercyAscot's Mountain Road, Epsom site.

"The new radiotherapy centre will house one linear accelerator (radiotherapy machine) initially and will be a state-of-the-art facility equal to anything in the Southern Hemisphere," he comments.

Dr Fisher says the organisation will provide radiotherapy services to the highest international standards from some of New Zealand's top specialists.

"The new centre will offer attractive, comfortable surroundings with the convenience of theatres, radiology, pre and post-operative care, a pharmacy and essential amenities all in one place," he explains.

Centrally located in Epsom, the new facility will have good access to motorways, parking, public transport, accommodation and other services.

"We will ensure the facility works well for patients and employees and fits in well with the local environment," he adds.

Dr Fisher says further details of the new radiotherapy centre are available on the centre's website www.radiotherapy.co.nz