

MEDIA RELEASE

HCF members help landmark cancer study reach target of 10,000 participants

Sydney, 10 June 2014 – Australia's largest not-for-profit health insurer, HCF, today revealed that 1,992 of its members had signed up to participate in the NSW CLEAR (Cancer, Lifestyle Evaluation of Risk) study, one of Australia's largest-ever cancer research projects that last month surpassed the key milestone of 10,000 participants.

Launched in 2011, the CLEAR study is a major longitudinal study to glean data and insight into both the lifestyle contributors to cancer disease, and the factors that influence the outcomes of cancer treatment. The study, which is being co-ordinated by the NSW Cancer Council, involves both cancer patients and their healthy spouses or partners, and uses a combination of questionnaires and blood sample analysis.

Since the study commenced three years ago, HCF has been a key partner to the NSW Cancer Council in recruiting participants in the study, with the long-term goal of 10,000 considered critical to the study's success.

An estimated 124,910* new cases of cancer were diagnosed in Australia 2013, and one in two Australians are now expected to be diagnosed with cancer by the age of 85.

Managing Director of HCF, Shaun Larkin, said: "We are delighted to have assisted the Cancer Council reach the important goal of 10,000 recruits and we thank those of our members who have signed on to the CLEAR study.

"This is a landmark study in many ways, and one of the largest of its kind ever undertaken in Australia," Mr Larkin said.

"Over many years we expect CLEAR will generate valuable insights not only into key lifestyle risk factors for cancer, but also the effect that different behaviours among cancer patients and their families can have on treatment outcomes. We look forward to a lengthy and ongoing collaboration with the Cancer Council on the study," he said.

Associate Professor Freddy Sitas, Director, Cancer Research Division, Cancer Council NSW and Principal Investigator of the CLEAR Study, said: "We'd like to thank all the 10,723 people who have joined the CLEAR Study and who are now helping us find the answers to what really causes cancer. Now that we have reached this significant milestone, our initial target, we are taking the opportunity to pause and review the study progress to date. We will evaluate the merits of continuing recruitment while we concentrate on producing outcomes from our valuable data."

"HCF has been an especially important recruitment channel, not only because it is very successful, but also because it has provided a stream of people who have received treatment in the private hospital system. Our other principal recruitment channels have provided us with people in the public hospital system so HCF and its members have significantly improved the overall representation of cancer patients in the NSW CLEAR Study, which should lead to better research outcomes."

- Ends -

* Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2012. Cancer incidence projections: Australia, 2011 to 2020. Cancer Series no. 66. Cat. No. CAN 62. Canberra: AIHW.

For more information, please call 9334 1398 to request a questionnaire, or complete this short questionnaire online at cancercouncil.com.au/joinastudy.

Issued on behalf of HCF by Sefiani Communications Group. Media inquiries to:

Sonia Clarke

Ph: (02) 8920 0700

Mob: 0411 679 496

sclarke@sefiani.com.au

Eva Yao

Ph: (02) 8920 0700

Mob: 0449 899 618

eyao@sefiani.com.au

About HCF

HCF is Australia's largest not-for-profit health insurer, currently covering more than 1.5 million Australians. HCF has exceeded the industry growth rate each year for the past five years, consistently pays back more in benefits from earned contributions than the industry average, and the best no-gap medical coverage in every state of Australia. The financial strength of HCF is supported by its strong capital backing, and the lowest management expenses of the major funds. HCF members benefit from an extensive branch network and access to HCF's expanding network of dental and eyecare centres. HCF Life offers innovative add-on insurance protection for illness and accidents. HCF has been awarded the highest possible five-star rating by financial services ratings agency, Canstar Cannex, in its survey of private health insurance. Visit www.hcf.com.au for more information about HCF.