

PRESS RELEASE
Monday April 24, 2006



NCRI
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Institute

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CANCER TSAR APPOINTED AS CHAIRMAN OF NATIONAL CANCER RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Professor Mike Richards, the national cancer director for England, is the new chairman of the National Cancer Research Institute.

He will take up the post with immediate effect. He takes over from Cancer Research UK's chief executive, Professor Alex Markham, who steps down from his NCRI role after two and a half years as chairman of the Institute.

The NCRI, which is a UK-wide organisation, consists of 19 government and charity partners as well as the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry. The NCRI was set up in 2001 to stimulate its members to develop common plans for cancer research and avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. All the major organisations that fund cancer research are involved. The chair of the NCRI rotates every 2-3 years.

Prof Markham said: "The NCRI has flourished over the last five years and its role has never been more important. Its latest moves include efforts to increase support for research in areas such as cancer prevention, and supportive and palliative care – areas that in the past have suffered from only a trickle of investment. These areas could not be targeted without the strategic analysis and coordination that the NCRI provides."

Prof Richards added: "I am delighted to take on the role of chairman of the NCRI. It has taken tremendous strides forward since it was founded as part of the National Cancer Plan. In particular, the National Cancer Research Network (NCRN) has provided more resources for clinical trials, and means that more patients are participating in important research and getting access to possible new treatments. Also, the annual NCRI Cancer Conference in Birmingham has become the major UK opportunity for cancer research collaboration.
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Prof Richards will now drive the NCRI forward to capitalise on new opportunities, for example in areas such as imaging and the development of new methods of diagnosis.

He added: "To do this we will need to build on the UK's strengths in biology and continue the process of bringing together research across a wide variety of disciplines. In this way we will be able to develop new treatments for cancer and better ways of caring for patients and their families. We also need to ensure the rapid translation of such new discoveries into improvements in the Health Service for the benefit of patients."

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For media enquiries contact Steve Palmer in the press office on 020 7061 8312 or, out of hours, the duty press officer on 07050 264059.

Notes to Editors

The 2006 NCRI Cancer Conference will be held at the ICC, Birmingham, from 8-11 October. Details available at: www.ncri.org.uk/ncriconference/

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) was established in April 2001. It is a partnership between government, the voluntary sector and the private sector, with the primary mission of maximising patient benefit that accrues from cancer research in the UK through coordination of effort and joint planning towards an integrated national strategy for cancer research. www.ncri.org.uk

The NCRI consists of: The Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI); The Association for International Cancer Research; The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Breast Cancer Campaign; Cancer Research UK; Department of Health; Economic and Social Research Council; Leukaemia Research Fund; Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research; Macmillan Cancer Relief; Marie Curie Cancer Care; The Medical Research Council; Northern Ireland Health and Personal Social Services Research & Development Office; Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation; Scottish Executive Health Department; Tenovus; Wales Office of Research and Development for Health & Social Care; Wellcome Trust and Yorkshire Cancer Research.