Residents in Ayrshire targeted by ‘coughing’ bus shelter

Detect Cancer Early campaign urges people with a persistent cough to see their GP

Scotland’s first ‘coughing’ bus shelter, created as part of an innovative campaign to raise awareness of a key sign of lung cancer, is making its flagship appearance in Ayrshire today (Thursday 5 March 2015).

Residents waiting on a bus at Sandgate in the heart of Ayr’s town centre will hear a man coughing on and off before a woman is heard urging people to visit the doctor if they, or someone they know, has had a cough for three weeks or more.

It’s the first time in Scotland that a ‘coughing’ bus shelter has been used to relay an important health message. The message is supported by an image of a man coughing with Detect Cancer Early’s campaign strapline - ‘Don’t get scared, get checked’.

Dr Hugh Brown, NHS Ayrshire &Arran’s Primary Care Cancer Lead, said: “One reason patients are often diagnosed late is that they are unaware of the symptoms of lung cancer. The ‘coughing’ bus shelter is therefore a great opportunity to explain to people the potential significance of a cough, reaching them, when they’re least expecting it.

“I hope this makes a huge impression and helps get the message across to people in Ayrshire that it’s important if you, or someone you know, has had a cough for three weeks or more, it’s time to get it checked out. It’s probably nothing to worry about, but it could be a sign of lung cancer.”

Although lung cancer is one of the most common cancers in Scotland, more people than ever are surviving – 1,300 more a year compared to 25 years ago. And with recent statistics showing that Scots are almost 20 times more likely to survive lung cancer if it’s diagnosed at an early stage, a key message being promoted as part of the Scottish Government’s Detect Cancer Early campaign is that lung cancer can be successfully treated if detected at an early stage.

Dr Brown added: “The disease can develop slowly over a number of years and often causes no pain. It is much more treatable than it used to be but being switched on to the symptoms and acting quickly to have them checked by a GP are crucial – you won’t be wasting anyone’s time.”

Case study
Farouk Dangor, 62, Girvan in Ayrshire

Farouk is now cancer-free six years on and is advising anyone to visit their GP if they are worried about a persistent cough, or a change in their cough.
In April 2008, Farouk went to his GP after having a cough for a while. His GP gave him antibiotics but when the cough wouldn’t go away, Farouk was referred for an x-ray.

When the x-ray results came back, Farouk was stunned to learn he had to return to the hospital for a biopsy.

Farouk said: “I thought the x-ray was a run of the mill health check and was absolutely stunned when the doctor told me to come back at the end of the week for a biopsy. Before the tests, I didn’t think it was that serious. I just remember being in a complete daze.”

Farouk was told he had lung cancer in June 2008 and the surgery to remove part of his lung went ahead later that same month.

“We didn’t tell my youngest daughter Hannaa but she knew something was wrong. I went in for surgery, where they removed the upper left lobe of my lungs. She had just finished school for the summer holidays so she would come up every day with my wife to see me, that was a great support.”

The removal of the tumour meant Farouk didn’t have to undergo any chemotherapy or radiotherapy, and he got the all-clear from cancer in June 2013. Unfortunately he wasn’t able to continue with his driving school but keeps fit and healthy.

Farouk added: “The good thing is that I’m still here, more than six years later. I do some volunteering and I try and keep active. My breathing is sometimes laborious but that can all depend on the lovely Scottish weather we have. But as I said, I’m here and there was no better feeling than getting the all-clear.”

Ends

Bus stop location: Sandgate, beside Levano’s Barber Shop and Ayr Goldsmiths.

For further information, contact Julie Watt at Consolidated PR on 0131 240 6420.

Notes to editors

- The five year survival rate for those diagnosed at an early stage (1 and 2) is almost 20 times higher than for those diagnosed at a late stage (4). Reference: Scottish Cancer Registry, ISD, extracted September 2014, based on patients diagnosed in 2005-2007.

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- Scottish Government’s ground-breaking Detect Cancer Early programme, aims to increase the proportion of people who are diagnosed in the early stages of breast, bowel and lung cancer by 25 per cent by the end of 2015.
• Death rates from cancer in Scotland have fallen by 11.4 per cent over the last ten years, according to new figures released on 28th October by ISD Scotland.

• Information on deaths from cancer in Scotland, covering the years 1988-2013 for each main type of cancer can be found at: http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Cancer/Publications/index.asp#1314

• Information on the campaign and the Detect Cancer Early campaign can be found at www.getcheckedeary.org

• To tweet about the campaign use the hashtag #getcheckedeary on twitter. Or find out more through facebook at www.facebook.com/DetectCancerEarly