

Lives at risk from cuts to specialist surgery Letters, Sydney Morning Herald, 1 June 2013

I am terribly distressed by the news that surgeon David Morris has been told that he cannot continue to perform his life-saving peritonectomies until the start of the new financial year ("Funds run out for cancer operations", June 1).

Late last year our oldest son's life was threatened by a rare and aggressive cancer that required an urgent peritonectomy. He was referred to Professor Morris and, after a wait of some weeks, was operated upon a week before Christmas. By that time the cancer had spread to other organs, but his life was saved by Professor Morris and his team, the care he received in St George Hospital and by ongoing care from his oncologists following the operation. Let me be blunt. Without the operation, we would have lost a dearly loved son.

The delay in operations by Professor Morris's team is almost certain to cost others their life. It will cause needless and terrible pain to their relatives from losing a loved one because of bureaucratic cost cutting.

Professor Morris heads the only team in Australia which can perform this surgery. Already reduced from three days work a week to two days for cost reasons, Professor Morris is prevented from conducting further lifesaving operations until July - not because there is not a need (the waiting list is growing), but because of "money". This decision is wrong. It is heartless. It must be reversed immediately.

Paul Parramore Sawtell