

Palliative Care Project News No. 1: April 2004 Knowledge Network

Welcome to the project!

The Palliative Care Knowledge Network Project is looking at what could be included in a Knowledge Network supporting palliative care within Australia and whether it is feasible and cost-effective to develop such a system.

Knowledge Networks have been used elsewhere in Australia and overseas to deliver resources electronically to practitioners and the general community. They also provide awareness for people to seek information and to form connections.

This project is looking specifically at issues around a palliative care Knowledge Network. Flinders University (through its Department of Palliative and Supportive Services) has been contracted by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing to undertake this work. At the end of this project we will have produced materials that will assist the Department in determining whether a Knowledge Network in palliative care is of value to the palliative care community, feasible and cost effective.

The project is due to be completed in December 2004.

Who is involved in the Project?

Professor David Currow is the lead investigator on the project and heads the project team that is based at Flinders University. Jennifer Tieman is the Project Manager.

A Knowledge Network Management Group has been established to oversee the progress of the project.

The membership of the Management Group is as follows:

- Dr Heather Buchan (National Institute of Clinical Studies)
- Mr. Gary Doherty (CSIRO)
- Ms Rita Evans (Department of Health and Ageing)
- Ms Susan Hanson (Palliative Care Inter-Governmental Forum)
- Professor Linda Kristjanson (Edith Cowan University)
- Dr Peter Martin (St Vincent's Health)
- Ms Valerie McKeown (Consumer Health Forum)
- Professor Paddy Phillips (Australian Centre for Evidence Based Practice)
- Dr David Woods (Tasmanian Palliative Care Service)

A representative of Indigenous Australia is still being finalised.

What is being looked at?

The project is carrying out a series of activities to inform some underlying questions including:

- Who would use the Network?
- What resources and topics should be included?
- How would the network relate to existing websites and palliative care resources?
- Who should own such a network and how should it be managed?
- What are the IT requirements of such a network?
- How much would it cost?

What will be produced?

This project is an exploration of the possible concept designs and the issues involved in creating and maintaining a Knowledge Network for Palliative Care.

Two specific reports will be provided:

- (1) Conceptual model outlining key components and functions, stakeholders and partners, proposed implementation approaches and governance / ownership options.
- (2) A business plan describing resource implications, implementation and marketing strategies, IT requirements and financial, sustainability and risk assessments.

Feedback from presentations and organisations

Feedback from organisations and from individuals at presentations of the project has indicated an interest in and support for the project.

There was a strong interest in nearly all areas of resources suggested including clinical resources, community resources, research materials, service tools, education resources and communication platforms and networks.

There appears to be a genuine support for a widely available set of resources that would support practice and the palliative care community more generally.

Examining other website resources

As part of the project we are mapping existing websites and resources that are available online in Australia. We are also looking at existing networks to determine the components, structure and management of such systems. This will ensure that we are aware of what is currently being offered and used. This means that any model that is proposed would not duplicate resources.

We would be delighted to receive information on relevant palliative care resources that are already available

electronically that could be linked to a Knowledge Network.

This review has found that many websites act primarily as a portal, switching users to other information or sites (e.g. library databases). Others create and maintain the resources within their site while other sites include a community of practice and exchange within their network.

Literature review

A literature review has been completed overviewsome of the key directions and developments that have been reported in the literature. The literature review looked at topics relating to networks, knowledge management and communities of practice in relation to Palliative Care.

Keeping in touch with the Project

We will be sending out a monthly newsletter on the project. If you do not want to receive this information, email Jennifer.Tieman@rgh.sa.gov.au and we will remove you from the distribution list.

We would encourage you to get involved in any of the following ways:

- Get project updates at the CareSearch website at www.caresearch.com.au
- Join the email list for newsletters or send comments and ideas to Jennifer.Tieman@rgh.sa.gov.au
- Speak to someone on the Knowledge Network Management Group.
- Complete a feedback survey for the Knowledge Network at www.caresearch.com.au

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