WELCOME TO THE AUTUMN RAC HUB NEWS

The RAC Hub News helps those working in aged care facilities stay in touch with what’s happening in residential aged care and in palliative care. It will also keep you up-to-date with any changes in the Residential Aged Care (RAC) Hub.

This edition we are highlighting the Decision Assist Program, a national initiative funded by the Australian Government. Decision Assist aims to build capacity, linkages and access to palliative care and advance care planning services for older people living in Australia by providing support and education to GPs and aged care.

Each edition will also include a case study that shows how the RAC Hub can help in providing palliative care in residential aged care. This month we see how Anna, the Site Manager, and Maureen, the Care Coordinator, find resources to support visiting allied health staff working in their facility.

WHAT’S NEW IN RAC!

Aged care briefings
Commencing 3 March 2015, the Department of Social Services will be holding a series of briefings around the country regarding the 1 July 2015 aged care changes.

Use of aged care services before death
This AIHW bulletin looks at the use of aged care services in the eight years before death for those who died in 2010-11 aged at least 65. Overall, 80% of these people had used aged care in the eight years before death, and three-fifths were aged care clients when they died.

National Palliative Care Service Directory
Maintained by Palliative Care Australia, the National Palliative Care Service Directory includes information about specialist palliative care service providers, state or territory palliative care organisations, and community support agencies.

Guide to Aged Care Law
The Department of Social Services has released their Guide to Aged Care Law. This guide replaces the Residential Care Manual.

WHAT’S NEW ON THE RAC HUB?

Decision Assist resources
CareSearch is a consortium partner for the Decision Assist program. A set of resources has been developed by the CareSearch team to support the Decision Assist Program. They are found on the Decision Assist website and include:

> Specific Needs: This section provides guidance and resources in advance care planning and palliative care delivery for older Australians with specific needs who are living in the community or in aged care facilities.

> Telehealth Resources: The resources provide information on a range of telehealth and e-Health topics relevant to aged care.

REGISTER TO RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER
You can subscribe to this newsletter online at the RAC Hub news page, or email newsletter@caresearch.com.au to subscribe or unsubscribe from the newsletter. To share something, please email caresearch@flinders.edu.au.
Today, Anna, the Site Manager, and Maureen, the Care Coordinator, have been reviewing attendance at the education program. Maureen reports that the palliative care sessions for nurses, care workers and hospitality staff have been well attended and feedback from them has been positive. Anna sees that this is very heartening and they agree to include palliative care regularly as a topic on their facility’s training calendar.

Maureen suggests that the visiting health professionals may also be interested in learning about how to support residents with palliative care needs. She notes that the health providers who visit the facility to provide specialist services to residents are an important part of the team.

Lilac Hills has a number of allied health workers who visit the facility, including two physiotherapists, an occupational therapist, a dietitian, and a speech pathologist.

RAC CASE STUDY: SUPPORTING VISITING SERVICE PROVIDERS

At Lilac Hills Aged Care, the management team has introduced a program to better meet the palliative care needs of the residents. So far the program has included in-service training for all staff directly employed by the service. They have also provided promotional information on the Decision Assist Program and the CareSearch RAC Hub to all staff. There are posters and leaflets in the tea room as well, and brochures have been made available to residents’ families.
However, they have not been included in any activities to promote and support palliative care within the service. They realise that for many of these service providers, palliative care may only be a small part of their practice and that they may appreciate some support and resources.

Maureen and Anna discuss how they can include them in the facility’s palliative care activities. Maureen indicates that she has spoken informally to one or two of them and they seem keen to be involved. Anna suggests a formal meeting with the physiotherapists, OT, dietician and speech pathologist in the near future to share information and to identify concerns in regard to the provision of palliative care at Lilac Hills.

They decide to see what information is available in the RAC Hub on CareSearch to help them prepare. The Visiting Service Providers page provides some details on what helps make visits from other health providers effective. It also highlights that there is an Allied Health Hub in CareSearch.

In the Allied Health Hub, Maureen and Anna find pages about a range of palliative care matters written for allied health workers, including pages on clinical considerations, teamwork and research. They open the page on Multidisciplinary Care and learn that effective multidisciplinary care provides holistic support to patients and their families. They see a free full text article, Ten principles of good interdisciplinary team work, which Anna plans to read in preparation for her upcoming meeting with the allied health staff visiting the facility. They also see that there is an Allied Health Newsletter which is distributed every couple of months, and they look through some of the items. The newsletter includes case studies and links to new resources for Allied Health staff to build their skills and expertise in caring for people with palliative care needs.

Maureen and Anna agree that there are very useful materials that could support their visiting health service providers. They decide to make some information on the CareSearch resources available to their visiting service providers. Maureen completes an order form for some free promotional materials to be sent her. She will distribute them at the meeting with the visiting service providers. She also thinks that it would be very valuable to show these health professionals the CareSearch Allied Health Hub and the CareSearch RAC Hub and bookmarks the two webpages on her computer to show them later.

Maureen and Anna make arrangements to invite their visiting service providers to a short meeting. They see this meeting as an important step in recognising and supporting visiting service providers in contributing to good palliative care in their facility.
What is the project about?
Decision Assist is a multifaceted program funded by the Australian Government, which aims to build capacity, linkages and access to palliative care and advance care planning services for older people living in Australia by providing support and education to general practitioners and aged care staff.

Who is involved?
A consortium of leading national health, aged care, and academic organisations is responsible for the Decision Assist Program. The groups involved are Austin Health, the Australian and New Zealand Society of Palliative Medicine (ANZSPM), Flinders University, Palliative Care Australia (PCA), Queensland University of Technology (QUT), the University of Queensland (UQ), Leading Age Services Australia (LASA), and Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA).

Why is this project important?
Australia’s population is getting older. Quality palliative care and advance care planning can help ensure that older people living at home with a care package or those who are living in residential aged care get the care, dignity and respect they deserve in the final stage of their life. There are a number of activities being delivered. They include:

- Promotion and implementation of strategies to increase linkages between aged care services and palliative care services.
- Peer reviewed guidance on a range of clinical and care issues and links to a range of resources for older Australians with specific needs or from specific populations.
- Information on telehealth resources and a smartphone app is under development.

Information on all the project activities can be found on the Decision Assist website.

How you can get involved
- Sign up for free aged care workshops
- Use the Decision Assist advisory service- ring 1300 668 908 any time to receive specialist advice on all your patient or client palliative care needs or from 8am to 8pm for advance care planning information
- Tell your GPs about the GP education in advance care planning and palliative care
- Make use of the Clinical Guidance and the Specific Needs information on the Decision Assist website
- Sign up for the Project News and/or for Augment: Evidence Updates from Decision Assist

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