



**Support for GPs
providing
palliative care**

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- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 General Practitioner Hub | 6 Communication Starters |
| 2 Pathways and Frameworks | 7 GPs Checklist for a Home Death |
| 3 Symptoms | 8 Following up the Bereaved |
| 4 Psychosocial Complexity and Distress | 9 Resources and Tools |
| 5 Community Centre | 10 Medicare Benefits Schedules |

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Palliative Care Guide for GPs



1 General Practitioner Hub

Whether you have experience with palliative care or not, the people in your care will look to you for help. The [CareSearch General Practitioner Hub](#) is there to help you with evidence-based information and resources fit for practice across the life course.

2 Pathways and Frameworks

There are many ways to deliver best practice palliative care.

To help you find the most appropriate pathway for your community and practice start with [CareSearch's section on pathways and frameworks](#).

3 Symptoms

Many GPs find physical treatment and care for the patient with palliative care needs challenging. For guidance on some of the more worrisome symptoms such as fatigue, loss of appetite, breathing problems, and pain check out the [CareSearch Symptoms section](#).

4 Psychosocial Complexity and Distress

Psychological, social, and existential treatment are key elements of palliative care that GPs often ask for more support with. CareSearch can help with information on [Psychosocial Complexity](#) and [Distress](#).

5 Community Centre

Supporting the person with a life-limiting illness and their carers and family is an integral part of palliative care. GPs can help people to understand what is happening and what to expect by providing them with resources you can all trust. Start with [CareSearch's Patient and Carer booklet](#) or provide [resources in their language](#), and then recommend they explore the [CareSearch Community Centre](#) to learn more when ready.

6 Communication Starters

Effective communication is part of planning care but talking about death and dying can be hard. Find the words to initiate these difficult conversations by downloading the [CareSearch Communication Starters](#) document.

7 GPs Checklist for a Home Death

Where and when death will occur is generally uncertain. But if your patients want to die at home use the [CareSearch Checklist for a Home Death](#) to start preparing everyone.

8 Following up the Bereaved

[Following up the bereaved](#) is critical and, while it often requires little more than simple reassurance, GPs need to know when help is needed. CareSearch has information to help you recognise and respond to the signs.

9 Resources and Tools

Because every death is unique, [CareSearch has a repository of resources and tools](#) for you to access what you need, when you need it.

10 Medicare Benefits Schedules

Providing access to care depends on sustainable practice. [CareSearch has up-to-date lists of Medicare Benefits Schedule items](#) to ensure all eligible members of the team are appropriately supported.

To view more support sheets in this series, visit caresearch.com.au/guidesforGPs



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Palliative Care Guide for GPs - Caring for Rural People



1 Rural and Remote Areas

The [CareSearch rural and remote areas webpage](#) provides a perspective on how palliative care can be undertaken and how to overcome the common barriers faced in rural and remote regions of Australia.

2 Assessing Prognosis

To guide clinical decision-making the [CareSearch assessing prognosis webpage](#) provides access to assessment tools which can aid in determining if a patient's care needs to change.

3 GP Hub

The [CareSearch GP Hub](#) has tools, resources and information to support your care of rural and remote patients with life-limiting illness.

4 Forms, Checklists and Tools

A GP specific set of [forms, checklists and tools](#) have been developed or reproduced by CareSearch/palliAGED to assist you in providing palliative care. These may be downloaded for free.

5 Primary Health Care

The [CareSearch primary health care section](#) provides information on care pathways including referral triggers and strategies for transferring patients, and [MBS items for GPs](#).

6 Conversation Starters

The [CareSearch conversation starters](#) can make talking to patients, carers and families easier and can activate care planning.

7 Resources in your Language

Information in different languages is available on the [CareSearch resources in your language webpage](#) which makes it easier to provide palliative care information to people from diverse backgrounds.

8 Pain management

For reliable evidence-based information on medications for the [management of pain and symptoms](#) and [medications from the PBS Prescriber bag](#).

9 Support for Patients, Carers, and Families

To help patients to stay at home for as long as possible the [Palliative Care Support for Patients, Carers, and Families booklet](#) provides a starting point for understanding palliative care and the support available.

10 Bereavement, Grief, and Loss

Online practical resources to help carers, families and friends with grief and loss are available on the CareSearch [bereavement, grief and loss resources webpage](#).

Dec 22

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Palliative Care Guide for GPs - Caring for Older People



1 Older Australia

General Practitioners have a pivotal role in providing and coordinating palliative care for older patients with life-limiting illness and their families. The [CareSearch Older Australia webpages](#) provide information and resources that families and older people can use.

2 GP Hub

The [GP Hub](#) provides a comprehensive overview of palliative care issues from the GP perspective. It includes tools, resources and information.

3 Multimorbidity

Comorbidity and multimorbidity can be specific concerns when caring for older patients. The [Multimorbidity page on palliAGED](#) provides helpful links and suggestions for practice.

4 Communication

Effective communication is essential for the delivery of high-quality care. However, sometimes communication regarding palliative care can be difficult. The [palliAGED Communication webpage](#) provides a set of key points about communication and phrases that can be used to deliver and discuss prognosis as well as end-of-life issues.

5 Symptoms and Medicines

The [Symptoms and Medicines webpages](#) are a resource to guide evidence-based practice in the care of older people in the last days of their life.

6 Case conference

If considering a case conference to coordinate care, palliAGED has a set of forms that can help organise and document the [case conference](#).

7 MBS Items for GPs

The [CareSearch MBS items for General Practitioners webpage](#) provides a list of MBS items which GPs can use to be paid for the palliative care they provide to patients.

8 Pathways and Frameworks

To help coordinate the care of a patient with a life-limiting illness between health services the [CareSearch Pathways and Frameworks webpage](#) provides examples of care pathways, referral triggers and practical advice on care transitions.

9 Self-Care

It is well recognised that providing palliative care can be challenging, and that it is important that those providing palliative care practise self-care. The [CareSearch Self-care webpage](#) enables you to plan and practise self-care.

10 Ongoing Education

Building expertise in palliative care is easy with several options available through the [CareSearch Ongoing education webpages](#) which provide a wide range of education options.

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Palliative Care Guide for GPs - Families and Carers



1 Patients and Carers

The [CareSearch patient and carers webpages](#) provide practical information and resources to help carers care for someone with a life-limiting illness. You can [order free booklets](#) to provide to carers and families.

2 End of Life Care

If dealing with patients for whom English is a second language, you can provide them with [end-of-life care information in different community languages](#). This can make it easier to patients, families and carers. You should also consider [the need for an interpreter](#).

3 What is Palliative Care

[What is palliative care factsheet](#) can provide information to families and carers on the scope of palliative care.

4 Advance Care Planning

Including carers and families in [advance care planning](#) can provide an opportunity to discuss, plan, and record the patients care preferences.

5 Life-limiting Illness

Provide factsheets on topics that are needed by patients, families and carers such as [Caring for Someone with Life-limiting Illness factsheet](#) or [Managing Life-limiting Illness with Medicines](#).

6 GP Checklist

Many people would prefer to die at home. The involvement of their GP is critical in enabling this for the patient and the family. The [GP Checklist](#) is an interactive checklist that can be downloaded and used to plan for a home death by the GP.

7 Carer Assessment

[Carer assessment](#) can help check their wellbeing in a stressful situation, help them understand what is happening and what is likely to happen, support self-efficacy and coping strategies, and offer timely referral.

8 At the End

[At the end factsheet](#) can prepare the family and carer with what to expect when the patient is dying.

9 Following up the Bereaved

GPs need to consider following up the patient's family following a death. [Following up the bereaved](#) provides useful advice for GPs assisting those who have experienced loss.

10 GP Hub

For more information go to the [GP Hub](#).

Dec 22

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