

# SA Palliative Care Community Pharmacy Update

A joint initiative of South Australian Palliative Care Services

The pharmacist commonly provides medicines information to consumers and healthcare professionals. It is important that this information is appropriate to the audience, evidence-based, unbiased, and accurate. This fact sheet examines three smartphone applications relevant to the provision of palliative care.

## Smartphone Technology

Since the release of the first device over a decade ago there have been significant improvements in smartphone technology, resulting in an increase in the number of applications ('Apps') available. This has improved accessibility of information for consumers and healthcare professionals alike. The Australian government has made a number of grants available to support the development of evidence-based, unbiased and accurate Apps to guide general practitioners (GPs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) in a number of palliative care related activities. Clearly, pharmacists can also benefit from these Apps, including: dose recommendations/checking, opioid conversion and information relating to off label use. Each App is available free of charge and can be downloaded from both the iTunes and Google Play online stores.

### palliAGED: [palliAGEDgp app](#)

This supports clinicians who are caring for older palliative patients living at home or in residential care. The App makes use of a framework of care which incorporates three key clinical processes – advance care planning, case conference, and terminal care. The App provides information and resources to support each of these, including prescribing support for common symptoms experienced in the last days of life. Links to the appropriate Pharmaceutical Benefits Schedule (PBS) are provided.

The App can be accessed from a [desktop](#), making it valuable for clinicians in a variety of settings. It is also supported by the [Symptoms and Medicines](#) paged housed on the [palliAGED website](#).

### National Prescribing Service (NPS): [PalliMEDS app](#)

This supports GPs and NPs caring for all adult patients, with palliative care needs and living in the community. The focus is on prescribing in the last days of life. Users can search by symptom or medicine, view dosing considerations, access useful resources, and quickly see which medicines are TGA-approved and PBS listed.

The App provides practical details relating to medicine management at the end of life, use of off-label medicines, medico-legal issues, and carer support.

### Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA): [Opioid Calculator app](#)

The focus of this app is to support the clinician in calculating the conversion between opioids, using the oral Morphine Equivalent Daily Dose (oMEDD). The conversions are based on evidence based ratios. It employs a "traffic light" opioid dose warning system to provide clinical caution. It also offers links to further information and education about safe opioid dosing.

## For more information

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This update is intended to provide practical up to date and factual information relating to pharmacy and medicines management in the setting of Palliative Care and is based on critical review of available evidence. Individual patient circumstances must be considered when applying this information. Please feel free to distribute this update further to interested colleagues.

