Caring Communities Program - Project Overview

Organisation: School of Nursing & Rural Health, University of South Australia, Whyalla Campus

Name of Project: Partnering with Rural Communities to Improve Access and Education in Palliative Care

Length of Project: 2 years

Project Summary:

Through a consortium involving the University of South Australia, School of Nursing & Rural Health Whyalla Campus, the Northern and Far Western Regional Health Service and the health services and agencies in Jamestown, Wakefield, Mid North and Eyre Peninsula, we will be undertaking a project to improve community awareness of palliative care, support carers, increase awareness of palliative care services among health professionals and provide educational information sessions for health professionals, community members and carers.

Project Objectives:

The objectives of our project are as follows: promote awareness in palliative care among general communities of Northern and Far Western Region, Jamestown, Wakefield, Mid North and Eyre Peninsula; enhance the knowledge and understanding of health professionals on palliative care; improve the knowledge and skills of caregivers in order to help themselves cope, provide better care for loved ones and work optimally through bereavement and beyond; develop strong partnerships between caregivers and palliative care service providers and other health professionals; provide on-going support to palliative care specialists by way of a moderated electronic discussion group; assist in increasing awareness of palliative care services in the targeted communities; enhance the coordination of care for people at the end-stage of life; develop strategies to sustain support to rural and economically disadvantaged people at the end of their lives; develop a sustainable rural partnership model in palliative care that is transferable across rural communities; and evaluate the activities and interventions undertaken.

Project Activities:

The School, in conjunction with the palliative care teams in the target areas, will be undertaking four main activities. These include: conducting of public information sessions that will provide information on palliative care services; conduct of educational sessions and specialised information sessions for rural medical practitioners and other health care professionals; conduct and sustain focus groups to identify and address specific needs of informal caregivers; and, create and moderate an on-line discussion forum to provide on-going support to palliative care specialists.