

About the Advance Project

What is Advance?

Advance is a free toolkit of screening and assessment tools and a training package, specifically designed to support nurses in Australian general practices to work with general practitioners (GPs) to initiate advance care planning (ACP) and palliative care in everyday general practice.

The Advance Toolkit consists of six screening and assessment tools and a Guide, which indicates how to implement the screening tools in a systematic way in general practice. The toolkit was informed by a literature review of the best available evidence about tools to support palliative care and ACP in general practice, as well as through input from our expert advisory group and feedback from general practice nurses, general practitioners and Carers Australia.

Who is it for?

Only **registered and enrolled nurses** who are currently working in **Australian general practice** are eligible to participate.

What is the aim of Advance?

Advance aims to enable better care outcomes in Australian general practices through:

- enabling earlier consideration and uptake of ACP
- enabling more efficient use of GP and nurse time in providing palliative and supportive care
- enabling more appropriate and timely referrals to specialist palliative care services if required
- increasing confidence and comfort levels for general practice nurses (GPNs) in initiating conversations with patients and their carers about their supportive care needs and ACP.

Why nurses in general practices?

General practices provide ongoing care for a large number of patients with chronic, debilitating and eventually fatal diseases, both malignant and non-malignant conditions. Thus general practices have an essential role in providing palliative care to patients and their families. GPNs play a key role in patient management within general practices. GPNs are already involved in managing patients who are at risk of deteriorating health and dying. Given their ongoing relationship with patients and carers and the level of trust developed, GPNs are ideally placed to help such patients identify their most important symptoms, concerns and priorities they would like addressed by their GP.

The general practice environment enables ACP discussions to start early when a patient is still relatively well. GPNs potentially have an important role in ACP. It is important that GPNs have the appropriate training and education to support whatever role they undertake in delivering ACP in their practice.

What are the benefits of Advance for general practice?

The Advance training package will help general practice nurse(s) to work with GPs to initiate ACP and, where appropriate, palliative care for older and/or chronically ill patients within the practice. This will:

- Help break down some of the barriers to ACP in general practice
- Enable the practice to more efficiently:
 - identify patients who might be at risk of deteriorating and dying
 - assess and address the supportive care needs of patients who might be at risk of deteriorating and dying
 - assess and address the needs of carers of patients who might be at risk of deteriorating and dying
- Help identify patients who might benefit from early referral to specialist palliative care services.

How is the training funded and delivered?

The training is available FREE of charge for nurses working in Australian general practices. Advance is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and will be delivered by a national consortium. There is FREE online training, FREE face-to-face workshops, FREE one-to-one tele-mentoring from an experienced palliative care nurse, reimbursement for completing patient assessments, scholarships for rural nurses and more. The training will count towards GPN 's continuing professional development (CPD) requirements.

How much time will it take a general practice nurse to complete the training and where will the training be delivered?

The online component of the training package will take about two hours in total to complete. There are three modules, covering concepts such as:

- Learning to initiate palliative care and ACP in general practice in a routine and sensitive way;
- Learning how nurse facilitated screening of patients and their carers will support general practices to more efficiently address patients' and carers' needs; and
- Developing skills to use the Advance Project screening and assessment tools.



The online training and The Advance Toolkit resource have been endorsed by the Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA), according to approved quality standards criteria.

The FREE practical workshops will be held on weekday evenings in every capital city of Australia for approximately 3 hours. Scholarships will be made available for GPNs from rural/remote settings to assist with their costs to attend the workshops.

What other opportunities are available as part of Advance?

Participants are encouraged to use the Advance screening and assessment tools in their clinical practice. There are opportunities to participate in the evaluation and quality improvement of the Advance program, including reimbursements to take part in a "clinical audit" of the Advance project patient and carer assessments. Optional in depth ACP workshops will be available for a subset of participants. To enable ongoing implementation, train the trainer workshops will be delivered in every capital city of Australia.

How will we know if the training is useful?

An important element of the project is evaluating whether it is effective. We will be inviting nurses to help us evaluate the project by providing us with feedback and completing surveys.

Like to know more?

For more information please go to our website: www.caresearch.com.au/Advance

Or contact the Advance Project team.

Email: AdvanceProject@hammond.com.au