

# SA Palliative Care Community Pharmacy Update

A joint initiative of SA Palliative Care Services and Ambulatory & Primary Health

South Australia is in the process of implementing the Palliative Care Services Plan 2009 to 2016 to expand and reshape services, improving palliative care across SA.

## SA palliative care providers

All health professionals can advocate for and contribute to palliative care.

### Generalist Providers

Generalist healthcare professionals (e.g. general practitioners, community nurses) provide the majority of palliative care in SA. These providers may undertake an ongoing, occasional or lead role in the support of palliative care patients depending on the circumstances, their capacity and level of patient need. Community pharmacies play an essential role in supporting generalist health providers and improving medicines management for patients with palliative care needs.

### Specialist Providers

Specialist palliative care providers have a primary focus on palliative care and directly provide care to patients with complex physical, emotional, spiritual and social care needs that exceed the capacity of the generalist provider in either primary or acute care settings. Specialist providers also provide support to generalist providers caring for palliative care patients. There are three specialist services across northern, central and southern Adelaide with partnerships that reach across SA.

### Advanced Practice Pharmacists

Each specialist service includes an Advanced Practice Pharmacist to enhance the quality use of medicines in palliative care. One of their key roles is to support generalist palliative care providers by:

- > developing educational resources and training programs
- > supporting improved medicines management and addressing issues regarding access to medicines

## Who receives palliative care?

While palliative care always ends in death, the starting point of care varies

Patients may make the transition to palliative care upon being diagnosed with an incurable illness (e.g. motor neurone disease). For others palliative care is triggered by subtle clinical changes, an event, a revision of prognosis, or a simple recognition that death is coming. In some circumstances palliative care can last for years, and in others only days or hours.

## Useful resources

Each month community pharmacy palliative care updates will provide information on medicine use in palliative care and list useful resources.

Future issues will cover topics such as:

- > End of life care
- > Subcutaneous administration
- > Opioid dosing regimens
- > Alternative uses for antipsychotics

## General resources and reading

- > Palliative Care Services Plan 2009-2016
- > PBS palliative care schedule
- > Therapeutic Guidelines, Palliative Care version 3, 2010
- > [www.caresearch.com.au](http://www.caresearch.com.au)

## 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.

