LOCAL PALLIATIVE CARE GRANTS PROGRAM – ROUND 1

Name of project: Optimising transition care through targeted assessment and information exchange.

Organisation: Sydney West Cancer Network – Sydney West Area Health Service

Westmead Hospital

PO Box 533

WESTMEAD NSW 2145

Duration of the Project: October 2006 – April 2007

Project Summary: Development, implementation and evaluation of information and tools (Transition Pathways) to support palliative care clinicians, patients and their families in facilitating discharge home.

Activities:

To undertake a systemic needs assessment of palliative care support services in Sydney West Area Health Service in both government and non-government sectors:

- undertake a retrospective audit and follow-up of 50 clients discharged to the community;
- develop a Transition Pathway to support clinicians, patients and their families in facilitating discharge;
- develop both a Patient and health Professional version of the Transition pathway;
- implement the Transition pathway in 200 consecutive clients discharged from hospitals in Western Sydney;
- undertake process and outcome evaluation of the Transition Pathway using both qualitative and quantitative methods; and
- develop quality indicator to monitor the success of transition to home.

Results

Baseline data item generation were developed and pilot testing of the Clinician Pathway was accomplished. The pathway was well received by clinical staff.

Participants reported better access – greater emphasis on and understanding of discharge procedures resulting in more timely referrals.

Resources produced

Patient and Health Professional Transition Pathway documentation.

Comment

The project has had a positive impact on patients referred to palliative care. However, the implementation of pathways has had a limited benefit. Palliative care patients have complex care needs that are partially addressed by a pathway. The care delivered to palliative care patients needs to be as individualized as each patient.