A project funded

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Author: Kath Keating and Project Committee
Project Manager: Jan Wallace and Kath Keating

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Name of service conducting the project: Midlands Multi Purpose Health Centre

Part C. - Executive Summary

2. The title of this project is "Empowering the Southern Midlands Municipality through Integration and Information"

The project aimed to increase the knowledge base of health professionals, key community agencies and the residents of the Southern Midlands Municipality regarding Palliative Care issues, across the continuum of care. To achieve this, specialist Palliative Care Units and Peak Bodies offered to work closely with the Midlands Multi Purpose Health Centre and the community. The main focus of the project was to offer specific education and support to local workers and agencies, which then formed a project working team to develop necessary resources, reflecting local needs. The project focused on active involvement of identified individuals, who worked towards set goals and outcomes and also included support to develop an ongoing Volunteer service.
The volunteers were identified from Community forum, with Hospice eventually training nine volunteers.

Auspice Body and Partnerships

The organization is the State Government, utilising the services of departments within the Department of Health and Human Services and partnerships with The Hospice Care Association and the Local Council.

2. Settings

The setting for this project is the Midlands Municipality a rural community which is 2561 square kilometres, and with 11 minor townships. In the largest town of Oatlands, population 806, within this municipality is a Multi Purpose Health Centre Facility consisting of 24 hour, seven day a week service, ambulance service and community nursing along with other health services either facility or community based.

3. Background

Assumptions for the decision to establish a specific Palliative Care Service where:-

- Oatlands is 85 K from Hobart the base of the Southern Palliative Care and Service & Hospice Facility.

- The Community Nursing Service is Monday to Friday and limited services after hours and weekends.
- The community is not confident to remain at home to die.
- There is an ageing population in a rural farming area.
- There are limited family resources to assist the client and carers.
- The equipment loan scheme is based in Hobart.
- There are very limited transport services.
- The winter weather is inclement with snow and ice.

4 & 5. Project Objectives and Methodology

To enhance the knowledge and skills of locally based (rural) workers, regarding Palliative Care (including acute care, residential and community).

This has been met by all our staff at the Midlands Multi Purpose Health Centre receiving collectively 124 hours of palliative care in-service by the Southern Palliative Care Specialists. In addition to this the registered nurses had received an additional 64 hours of special education on the Oncology Ward and Hospice Whittle Ward at the Royal Hobart Hospital.
This equates in dollar terms to almost $4,512

To promote understanding of the concept of Palliative Care for service providers and members of local communities, including removing the stigma of such services and facilitating informed choices.

The concept of palliative care was promoted to the community by local advertising in newsletters, the radio as well as the community forum. Informed choices can now occur with community member choosing to stay at home to die with the additional knowledge of a 24 hours registered nurse to respond to their needs if a crisis should occur. They also have the option of transport to the Midlands Multi Purpose Health Centre or if necessary to the specialist services in Hobart.

To forge stronger and clearer links with centrally located, specialist Palliative Care units and Peak Body organizations.

There has always been a link between the specialist Palliative Care Service and the local workers. This has now been strengthened by the Palliative Care Nurse being a member of the Steering Committee. She has gained a deeper understanding of the needs, desires and concept of the rural community. Hospice Volunteers have not been an option in the past. We now have 9 local men and women who have completed their Hospice Volunteer training. They will continue to receive support and training through the Hospice Care Association.

To increase the involvement of key community groups and services in an overall, community based Palliative Care model.

This is the most difficult of the objectives to determine if it has been met. The involvement of key community groups such as the Midlands Multi Purpose Health

Centre, Hospice Care Association of Tasmania with the client in their own home will provide a much greater choice for the client and their carer.

To provide a small, locally-based equipment store of care items, to allow a quick response to identified needs

The purchase of suitable home based equipment has been met and will provide the client additional comfort and also safety for the carer.

To develop a model of practice, specifically suited to the local area. This will include a broad-based approach to allow flexibility and tailoring to the specific needs of clients and their carers/family.
The model for the local palliative care service is a three tier approach. The first tier is for the client to establish home based service with the local Community Nurse. The second tier is the after hours availability of a registered nurse at the Multi Purpose Centre to listen and to respond to their needs in a crisis. The third tier is a home visit by the GP service and/or the local ambulance for transport to the Health Centre for assessment or transfer to Specialist services in Hobart.

To enhance equity of access to information regarding PC across the community

Access to information has been provided to the local staff and to the community. This objective is also difficult to determine if it has been met at this stage. Over time and statistics indicating that clients are staying at home longer or there is an increase in the numbers of clients remaining at home to die.

To select, train and coordinate volunteers to provide support to clients in their own homes, specialist units and the local hospital.

The Hospice Care Association has trained 9 local men and women as Hospice Volunteers.

1. Methodology/Description

The target group was the Southern Midlands Municipality. The project established a locally based Palliative Care Service utilising the local resources of available services and establishing a new Hospice Volunteer Service whilst at the same time strengthening the bond with the Specialist Services in the nearest metropolitan area in Hobart.
The service also identified and established a store of equipment for local use as opposed to obtaining equipment for the depleted supplies of the regional equipment scheme. Often equipment was not available or there were delays in delivery plus the additional freight costs.

2. Results

This project had no formal evaluation. The project however has been successful in achieving the set objectives with in the specified time frames.