MAIN MESSAGE

What we did

- Trialled various ways to improve the interface between the domiciliary palliative care service and the specialised inpatient Hospice and contributed to the development of educational opportunities for General Practitioners in the community.

What has been learned?

- The transition of patients between inpatient Hospice and community care settings has been improved, and the processes facilitated by changing the way health professionals communicate about the need for admission.
- Flexibility and variation in content and duration of clinical attachments for GPs is desirable to maximise the capacity for some GPs to manage patients in their own practice better, and for others to embark on significant roles with community palliative care providers.
- An unforeseen but welcome outcome was the trialling and implementation of social workers employed in the domiciliary palliative care service to supplement the roles of domiciliary nurses and the Hospice-based social worker.

What is useful to other projects/communities?

- Further work should be undertaken by a variety of palliative care providers to further our understanding of the transitions between community and inpatient palliative care.
- The process of examining the admission and discharge processes has the effect of improving continuity for patients through increased awareness by staff in each setting.
- A structured framework in the form of a written learning guide that identifies the breadth of palliative care topics which a GP may wish to address complements learning opportunities.
- GP learning opportunities need to be flexible in content and duration to allow some of the more suited participants to adopt a more advanced role in community palliative care provision.

What have been the benefits of disseminating information about this project?

- Dissemination of information about this project within the two organisations involved and amongst the GP networks assisted the project.

What needs to happen in order to sustain the key achievements of this project?

- Significant achievements resulting from changes to policy and practice have already been incorporated into routine practice in the two organisations involved.

What resources did you develop and are they available to others?

The Admission Assessment Tool and the Medical Learning Guide are both available in pdf format on request from the Project Manager eleanor.roderick@sjog.org.au.