



Media Release

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Role of PHN's in coordinating end-of-life care boosted

The announcement of \$8.3 million in extra funding for Primary Health Networks to coordinate the care of people at the end of life will benefit terminally ill people says Palliative Care Australia (PCA) CEO Liz Callaghan.

“There are many health care professionals, including palliative care experts, working on the ground to ensure the end of life is as comfortable and positive as possible for all Australians. However, it can be challenging for those receiving care and their families to navigate the care system to ensure they receive the right care in the location of their choice,” Ms Callaghan said.

The plan announced in today's Federal Budget will see an expression of interest opened for Primary Health Networks (PHN) to coordinate the care of people at the end of life.

“People at the end of their lives need extra support from a wide range of health services to be able to die in the place of their choice. We know that 70 per cent of Australians would like to die at home, but nationally only 14 per cent do.

“People who wish to die at home need care from a range of people including palliative care specialists, general practitioners, community nurses and nurse practitioners, community pharmacists, allied health professionals, personal carers as well as social support for themselves and their loved ones. They may also require special equipment such as beds, chairs and showering aids to make them more comfortable and enable their carers to support them safely.

“The last thing a person approaching the end of their life and their family needs is having to spend many hours contacting different health and support services to coordinate their care. If PHN's are able to fill this role, it will enable families to spend more time with each other and maximise the effectiveness of palliative care services for people at home,” Ms Callaghan said.

The PHN's will also be able to collect and use data to inform future improvements in the end-of-life care sector.

“There is currently a data gap in the home palliative care sector as services are funded and delivered by a range of health and community organisations. The ability for the PHN's to bridge this divide is welcome and could complement the existing National Standards Assessment Program and the Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration to better plan for services into the future,” Ms Callaghan said.

PCA welcomes the additional \$3 million allocated to the Tasmanian Government to support health professionals in caring for patients with terminal illnesses and to enhance community awareness about end-of-life issues.

PCA also welcomes the investment in cancer screening, research, and support services as well as the establishment of the Medicare Guarantee Fund which secures the future of the MBS and PBS which are the cornerstone of the health system.

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Media contact: Grace Keyworth – 0422 040 576

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