

# NATIONAL SAFETY AND QUALITY PRIMARY AND COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE STANDARDS

*Submission from Palliative Care Australia*

FEBRUARY 2023



**PalliativeCare**  
AUSTRALIA

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) welcomes the opportunity to provide input on the ***National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards Draft Guide for Healthcare Services*** (the Guide).

PCA congratulates the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care on the Guide, which is comprehensive, clearly set out and covers a wide range of safety and quality issues in providing health care in the primary and community sector. PCA supports regular assessment of the quality and safety of health care provided in the primary and community health sectors. The new Standards and Guide provide the sector with the resources to participate in regular assessment against standards.

PCA supports the Guide's content for primary and community healthcare services and what is required to provide safe and high-quality care for their patients at the end of life. PCA has focused its comments to the information set out under: Section 3. Clinical Safety item 3.24 *Comprehensive care at the end of life pp130-132* (see attachment for tracked comments).

PCA recommends including reference to the PCA [National Palliative Care Standards for All Health Professionals and Aged Care Services](#) in the *Where to go to for information* section. This resource provides health professionals and services operating in the primary and community healthcare sector with a clear and descriptive approach to providing high quality palliative care.

PCA advocates that palliative care be made available from the time of diagnosis of a life-limiting illness. Early access to palliative care improves outcomes for patients, their families and loved ones, and brings efficiencies to the health system by reducing unnecessary visits to emergency departments and hospital admissions. Given most life limiting illnesses will be diagnosed in the primary care sector, these health professionals are in an excellent position to begin discussions about palliative care early, particularly at the time of diagnosis and in the context of providing treatment or management of the illness.

PCA is of the view that the quality and safety of end-of-life care will be improved if palliative care has been integrated as part of the care provided to the patient, their family and loved ones, from diagnosis through to bereavement.

PCA would be pleased to discuss this input further, please contact [policy@palliativecare.org.au](mailto:policy@palliativecare.org.au).