

Under embargo until 25 August

Palliative care should be available for those with Chronic or End Stage Kidney Disease, when and where they need it

Palliative Care Australia and Kidney Health Australia are calling for improved access to palliative care services for patients living with Chronic or End Stage Kidney Disease.

Dr Tim Mathew, National Medical Director Kidney Health Australia, said that after cancer patients, kidney failure patients are the second most frequent users of palliative care services in Australian hospitals.

“Most people on dialysis in Australia are elderly and will die whilst still dialysis dependent,” said Dr Mathew, “Statistics show that approximately 1500 dialysis dependent people die in Australia each year.”

Both organisations believe that palliative care should be available to all people diagnosed with Chronic Kidney Disease or End Stage Kidney Disease, who need and choose it.

“Unfortunately, 35% of all dialysis patients need to withdraw from dialysis each year for a variety of reasons, and they would be advantaged by palliative care support,” said Dr Mathew, “Furthermore, 50% of people with kidney failure in Australia die without commencing dialysis, and these add to the potential number assisted with palliative care.”

In addition to improving access, better education for health professionals and people with Chronic or End Stage Kidney Disease, their families and carers is vital for improving services, said Professor Patsy Yates, president of Palliative Care Australia.

“We need to ensure that there is education and support available on the benefits of a palliative approach for people with Chronic or End Stage Kidney Disease, paying particular attention to the needs of rural and remote patients and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who have higher incidence rates.”

“More accessible information on palliative care and kidney disease, and a focus on developing advance care plans, will ensure that people with Chronic or End Stage Kidney Disease, their families and carers can make informed decisions about their care.”

Palliative Care Australia and Kidney Health Australia will launch a joint position statement, *Palliative Care for Chronic and End-Stage Kidney Disease*, during a Parliamentary Friends of End of Life Care group meeting at Parliament House, Canberra today.

“Palliative care is a valuable part of treatment and support for people with Chronic or End Stage Kidney Disease, providing holistic, and person centred supportive care for the person, their family and carers. We need specific strategies to ensure that everyone who would benefit from palliative care services receive them and enjoy a better quality of life.”

To view the position statement [click here](#).

Kidney Health Australia is a national health care charity with a vision 'to save and improve the lives of Australians affected by kidney disease'. As the national peak body, Kidney Health Australia promotes good kidney health through delivery of programs in education, advocacy, research and support.

Palliative Care Australia is the national peak body established by the collective membership of eight state and territory palliative care organisations and the Australia and New Zealand Society of Palliative Medicine. Together the Palliative Care Australia members network to foster, influence and promote local and national endeavours to realise the vision of quality care for all at the end of life.