



# Media Release

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## **Social media expert encourages palliative care professionals to log on**

Social media is a largely unharnessed, but effective, tool for palliative care clinicians to raise community awareness about palliative care and encourage Australians to advocate for it, a US expert says.

Social media expert Dr Christian Sinclair, an assistant professor of palliative medicine at the University of Kansas Medical School, wants to see more Australian palliative care clinicians employing the power of social.

“People who are passionate about their clinical work often see inequality, with patients not having access to palliative care through lack of knowledge, resources or clinicians.

“The only way to change that is if we help create a better grassroots demand for palliative care. We need to get the public to ask for it. First they need to know what it is and then they will ask, ‘Why don’t I have it’,” he said.

Dr Sinclair is encouraging Australian palliative care professionals to log on as a keynote speaker at the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Palliative Care Conference in Melbourne this week.

Palliative Care Australia CEO Liz Callaghan said employing social media tools is one way to build community awareness of death and dying.

“We only get one chance to help someone die well. Every Australian deserves that right. We need to have the conversations – the tweet chats – to make sure we can advocate for those closest to us to get the palliative care they need,” she said.

Dr Sinclair has worked in hospital and outpatient-based palliative care for 12 years and says people working in palliative care may hesitate about mixing their personal lives and interests with palliative care advocacy, but this was key to sharing information successfully on social media.

“In the first instance people might find you because of your recipes, but then they will also stumble upon your palliative care resources. Just because you started collating information, other people will start following you and you’ve become an influencer,” he added.

Conference information: 13th Australian Palliative Care Conference 2-4 September 2015, Melbourne, Australia. [www.palliativecare.org.au/australian-palliative-care-conference](http://www.palliativecare.org.au/australian-palliative-care-conference).

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