



Media Release

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Access to quality palliative care a high priority

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) welcomes the report from the Productivity Commission that has highlighted the need to recognise the growth in demand and the need to expand palliative care services to the community.

PCA President Professor Patsy Yates says that reform must be supported by accurate data to ensure that there are not unintended consequences.

“The Commission’s report makes clear that there is insufficient data to accurately report the quality and quantity of specialist palliative care in Australia. More needs to be done to measure the quality of care in both community and inpatient settings so decisions about improvements can be made,” Professor Yates said.

“Developing innovative options to support user choice is important, but we must remember that we only die once. We need to ensure that the community are provided with sufficient information about the appropriate services to meet their needs to enable them to make an informed choice.

“We also need to ensure that improvements to competition and choice don’t leave socially disadvantaged or vulnerable people behind,” Professor Yates said.

An important barrier to access raised by the Commission is the divide between public and privately funded palliative care.

“Many private providers do not offer community-based palliative care. More information is needed before decisions are made about contestability into community-based specialist palliative care.

“Reduction in health system costs can be achieved by providing access to high quality palliative care in the community. However, the savings made wouldn’t necessarily be linked to the service providing the care. This means there needs to be careful modelling on the proposed arrangements to ensure that services are provided with sufficient funding to provide effective care, and not just an efficient service,” Professor Yates said.

Palliative Care Australia calls for a national roundtable to provide insight into the issues raised in the Productivity Commission’s Report.

“Most Australians want to die at home, so we need to invest in models care that are flexible and deliver palliative care services in the location they desire,” Professor Yates said.

Palliative Care Australia’s vision is for all Australians to access high quality palliative care.

“We only get one chance to get death right for every Australian. It is important we ensure the health system is set up to deliver care in the setting and environment of patient choice,” Professor Yates said.

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