



Media Release

7 October 2016

World Hospice and Palliative Care Day

World Hospice and Palliative Care Day tomorrow (8 October 2016) highlights the need for increased access to pain relief at the end of life across the globe, says Palliative Care Australia (PCA) CEO Liz Callaghan.

Ms Callaghan said the theme for 2016 'Living and Dying in Pain – It doesn't have to happen' will shine a spotlight on populations who cannot access adequate pain relief at the end of their lives.

"Around the world, 75% of people cannot access the controlled medicines they need to treat moderate to severe pain. This may result in people living and dying in treatable, but uncontrolled pain.

"While Australia has one of the best health care systems in the world with good access to opioid medication, there are still vulnerable groups who do not easily access palliative care."

Ms Callaghan said there were a number of groups who did not easily access care, and appropriateness of care was also an issue – particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

"For Aboriginal people dying 'on country' can be very important, as is telling the story of their life. They should have access to culturally appropriate care at the end of life that will help them to manage the symptoms of their illness so they can continue to live their lives well in their place of choice," Ms Callaghan said.

"Australian children can access some great palliative care services, but this is mostly offered in the cities. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people often avoid health care for fear of discrimination. Homeless people are not always identified as needing palliative care. Yet all of these Australians have the right to die well, all Australians do."

Ms Callaghan said days like tomorrow provide an opportunity to remind Australians to 'have the talk' about their end of life wishes.

"We know that people who talk to their loved ones about what they want at the end of life, are more likely to receive the care they desire.

"PCA's [Dying to Talk Discussion Starter](#) can help people reflect on their end-of-life care wishes and give them tips on how to talk to their loved ones," Ms Callaghan said.

Find out more about World Hospice and Palliative Care Day at <http://www.thewhpc.org/about>

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