



Media Release

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Supporting carers through the development of an innovative app

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) is set to develop an app focused on building a caring community around people with a life-limiting illness thanks to a community grant from nib foundation.

The \$50,000 funding from nib foundation will allow PCA to develop and launch an app that offers a platform for the primary carer of a person with a life-limiting illness to create a community of care with their broader network of family and friends.

The announcement comes during National Carers Week (16-22 October) which recognises the need to provide support and share the load of care for Australia's 2.8 million carers to maintain their own health and wellbeing.

PCA CEO Liz Callaghan, said that many people with a life-limiting illness receive care at home and carers can often experience feelings of isolation depending on the support network they can access.

"Our app will enable the primary carer of a person who is sick to share their specific needs. It may be providing a meal, walking the dog or running an errand for them. It may also be providing care for the sick person while their primary carer attends a meeting, a child's sporting event or takes a break," Ms Callaghan said.

"It will also allow them to identify how they are feeling and whether they would like visitors, and the best time of day to visit.

"Many people have told us that while they would like to help out their friends or family with a serious illness, they don't know how to help," Ms Callaghan said.

Ms Callaghan said the problem is compounded by the fact that many people don't like to ask for help.

"Carers of people with a life limiting illness often find it most helpful is when a family member or friend can perform small practical tasks that they would otherwise need to do themselves. The app will address both issues by providing an easy way to communicate the help that is needed and providing a simple and coordinated channel for family and friends to respond," Ms Callaghan said.

nib foundation Executive Officer, Amy Tribe, said the new app reflects one of the core focuses of the foundation which is to fund programs that provide carers with the additional support and resources they need to improve their own lives.

"Providing the equivalent of \$1.1 billion in unpaid care every week, carers have been identified as facing the lowest levels of wellbeing in society. Their dedication to helping others often leads to significant personal challenges including feelings of isolation, lack of time to maintain personal, physical and mental health, as well as stress and depression," said Ms Tribe.

"We're proud to help PCA support carers of people with a life-limiting illness by facilitating a first of its kind platform that will allow demands of their workload to be shared with family and friends in a structured and coordinated manner," said Ms Tribe.

The app is currently in the development phase, with plans for its launch in 2017.

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