



Media Release

2/06/2017

Acknowledgement of need to better resource palliative care welcomed

Recognition by the Productivity Commission of the need to substantially increase the availability of community-based palliative care and better resource aged care services to deliver palliative and end-of-life care was welcomed today by Palliative Care Australia (PCA).

The Productivity Commission today released its latest draft report on *Introducing Competition and Informed User Choice into Human Services: Reforms to Human Services*, which examined competition, user choice and the role of Government stewardship in the areas of health care, end-of-life care, social housing, family and community services and services in remote Indigenous communities.

The report's findings noted a lack of access to community-based palliative care, the need to better resource residential aged care services to meet end-of-life care needs, the need to increase the rate and quality of advanced care planning and the need to continue to improve end-of-life care in acute hospitals.

PCA CEO Liz Callaghan says that PCA supports Productivity Commission's recommendations in relation to end-of-life care.

"We are very pleased that the Productivity Commission has formally acknowledged that few people in Australia are able to access high quality community-based palliative care, and that 'without significant policy reform, tens of thousands will die in a way, and in a place, that does not reflect their values or their choices'," said Ms Liz Callaghan.

"PCA wholeheartedly endorses the Commission's recommendation that State and Territory Governments will need to 'substantially increase the availability of community-based palliative care and while most people would prefer to die at home or in a community setting, it is very important that end-of-life care in the acute hospital setting is also of high quality and patients are supported to share in decision making,'" said Ms Callaghan.

In welcoming the recognition that community-based palliative care services require urgent expansion, Ms Callaghan highlighted the need for workforce issues to be addressed and for an emphasis to be placed on quality, consumer choice, accessibility and affordability.

"It is important that the Commonwealth Government's role in leadership is maintained, and that all levels of Government work to ensure that end-of-life care services are of high quality and accessible to all who require them, regardless of who delivers the service or where consumers are located," said Ms Callaghan.

Ms Callaghan also commended the Productivity Commission for its open acknowledgement that residential aged care services are 'ill-equipped' to meet end-of-life care needs and that more staff are required to lead and coordinate end-of-life care for aged care residents.

"As noted by the Commission, this will require additional funding from the Australian Government and ongoing consumer protection," said Ms Callaghan

"We stand ready to assist all levels of Government in the careful planning and stewardship that the Commission has identified as essential to this expansion."

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