Care at End of Life Project

Initiative Type

Service Improvement

Status

Deliver

Added

17 September 2019

Last updated

12 February 2021

URL

https://clinicalexcellence.qld.gov.au/improvement-exchange/care-end-life-project

Summary

The Care at End of Life Project has been established to support a coordinated approach to improving end of life care in Queensland. Clinical Excellence Queensland coordinates this project, in collaboration with Hospital and Health Services, non-government organisations, primary health, consumers and other key stakeholders. This project is aligned to the Statewide strategy for end-of-life care 2015, which is aimed at supporting clinicians dealing with death and dying in the health system,

and in caring for people of all ages as they face the end of their life. For more information, visit Improving care at end of life in Queensland.

Key dates

Mar 2016

Implementation sites

Queensland Public Hospital and Health Services

Partnerships

Statewide Clinical Networks, Consumers, PHN’s, Queensland Ambulance Service, GP’s, Aged Care, Health Law Experts, Academia, Rural and Remote Health, Spiritual Care

Key Contacts

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Aim

To integrate care at the end of life as a core element of health services in Queensland.

Benefits

1. **Knowledge** – knowledge of care at the end of life throughout Queensland public health organisations is expanded and includes awareness of the benefits of advance care planning, the delivery of care at the end of life and the availability of supporting services and resources. Targeted groups include the general public, health professionals and health system managers.
2. **Access** – patients who have or are anticipated to have a shortened life expectancy are routinely identified as early as possible and have access to timely advance care planning and appropriate care at the end of their life.
3. **Quality and Safety** – care at the end of life delivered in Queensland public services consistently responds to the needs of patients throughout their illnesses and meets established clinical safety and quality standards.
4. **Provision** – the strategic capability and configuration of services for care at the end of life in Queensland is strengthened to maximise their delivery and performance, to ensure the Queensland population has access to appropriate services into the future and to ensure available resources are used effectively.

Background

There is national and international recognition of the need to integrate end-of-life care into existing health services and engaging the broader community in supporting those in need of care. Inequitable access to end-of-life care is evident for some populations and is generally based on ethnic and cultural variables. In Australia, inequitable access is prominent in rural and remote communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, as well as non-cancer patients and older people living in residential aged care facilities. Furthermore, identifying deterioration and diagnosing when a patient is/may be moving into the end phase of their life is recognised as complex and challenging for many clinicians. Barriers that contribute to delays in initiating end-of-life care include:

- a disconnect between the aims of modern medicine to cure and the acceptance of death as a likely outcome
- a cultural/societal fear of initiating conversations and discussing death (by both health professionals and the general public)
- impact of health financing mechanisms that do not fund service models such as ‘consultation–liaison’ and ‘shared care’ practices.

To address these issues, Queensland Health developed the Statewide strategy for end-of-life care 2015, with the Care at End of Life Project Team responsible for overall implementation of the

Strategy throughout Queensland, in collaboration with key stakeholders.

Solutions Implemented

Queensland Health's Care at End of Life Project have developed a range of resources in consultation with stakeholders across Queensland.

- Advance care planning
- Care at end of life resources
- Care plans, clinical tools, guidelines and pathways
- Education and training
- Information for patients, carers and families
- Innovation projects

For more information contact the Care at End of Life Project team at CareAtEOL@health.qld.gov.au.

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