
Specialist Palliative Care in Aged Care (SPACE) Project

Initiative Type

Model of Care

Status

Deliver

Added

15 December 2020

Last updated

20 December 2024

URL

<https://clinicaexcellence.qld.gov.au/improvement-exchange/specialist-palliative-care-aged-care-space-project>

Summary

Under the Commonwealth Government's Comprehensive Palliative Care in Aged Care measure, funding has been allocated by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments to provide new and innovative approaches and expansion of existing models to improve palliative and end-of-life care coordination for older people living in residential aged care facilities. Each Hospital and Health

Service (with the exception of Children's Health Queensland) has been allocated funding to improve access to specialist palliative care support in residential aged care facilities. A key aim of the project is to increase the capacity and capability of general practice and aged care staff to deliver care at the end of life.

Key dates

Oct 2020

Jun 2024

Implementation sites

All Hospital and Health Services in Queensland are participating.

Partnerships

Australian Government Department of Health

Key Contacts

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Aim

To enhance equitable access to specialist palliative care for older Queenslanders residing in residential aged care facilities.

Benefits

- Improved access to specialist palliative care for residents with complex end-of-life needs
- Improved capacity and capability of GP and aged care staff to support the needs of residents requiring specialist palliative care
- Increased opportunities for people to die in their place of choice, supported by improved capacity in aged care, care coordination and clinical governance
- Stronger partnerships between government and non-government organisations providing or supporting specialist palliative care in residential aged care facilities
- Streamlined care for residents who require treatment in acute hospital facilities, including admission and discharge processes

Background

The proportion of older Australians dying in residential aged care facilities is increasing. While most end-of-life care in aged care is provided by generalist healthcare workers, specialist palliative care teams support people with life-limiting illnesses with complex care needs by providing direct care and supporting other healthcare workers to deliver care.

Research has found the benefits of specialist palliative involvement in residential aged care facilities leads to benefits including improved symptom management, increased advance care planning, reduced hospital admissions, and an increased number of in-facility deaths.

Solutions Implemented

Each Hospital and Health Service has the autonomy to develop a model of service delivery that is appropriate for their local context, considering factors such as resourcing and geography. Each model must align with a number of core service principles.

Evaluation and Results

The SPACE Evaluation Report: Baseline, can be viewed under **Resources** below.

Lessons Learnt

No lessons in this early stage - this project is in the development phase.

References

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2018). Cause of death patterns and people's use of aged care: a Pathways in Aged Care analysis of 2012–14 death statistics.

KPMG. (2020). Investing to Save –The economics of increased investment in palliative care in Australia.

Cimino, N.M., & McPherson, M.L. Evaluating the impact of palliative or hospice care provided in nursing homes. *Journal of gerontological nursing*, 40(10), 10-4.

Chapman, M., Johnston, N., Lovell, C., Forbat, L., & Liu, W.M. Avoiding costly hospitalisation at end of life: findings from a specialist palliative care pilot in residential care for older adults. *BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care*, 8, 102-109.

Australian Government Department of Health. (2019). Comprehensive Palliative Care in Aged Care Measure.

Further Reading

[Comprehensive Palliative Care in Aged Care measure](#) [Specialist palliative care in aged care](#)

Resources

[SPACE Evaluation report: baseline](#)