

## STANDARDS

### FOR PROVIDING QUALITY PALLIATIVE CARE FOR ALL AUSTRALIANS

#### How do these standards apply to GPs?

In 2005, Palliative Care Australia (PCA) finalised the **4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Standards** which have been revised following a national review process of the existing 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of *Standards for Palliative Care Provision (1999)*. The revised Standards aim to assist services that provide care to people with life threatening illness to plan for and manage quality. The revised Standards (4<sup>th</sup> edition) were launched in May 2005 by the Minister for Health and Ageing the Hon Mr Tony Abbott with widespread cross sectoral endorsement. For the first time, **the Standards have set out the relationship between primary care providers and specialist palliative care services**. Perhaps more importantly, they provide guidance as to the specific requirements for services that provide care to people living with a life threatening illness. As the leader in primary care, GPs play a role in the quality of service provision.

#### How does this affect care?

The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the PCA Standards moves beyond a simplistic diagnosis basis for determining need, and **focuses on establishing networks of care that allow patients to access appropriate and timely care consistent with their level of need**. The thirteen Standards also recognise and reflect the considerable effort and success that some services/sectors have had in developing and implementing co-ordinated network based approaches to service development and delivery.

#### Who is part of the primary care network?

The vision for palliative care set out in the Standards

includes and is relevant to consumers (patients, families) general practitioners, community nurses, staff of residential care facilities, acute care staff, oncology, and other wards/units/services in the acute care sector, as well as specialist palliative care staff. As such they represent a whole-of-sector approach to ensuring high quality; needs-based care for people with a life threatening illness.

#### Where can I learn more?

These new Standards should be read in conjunction with the recent policy documents:

- *PCA (2005) A Guide to Palliative Care Service Development: a population based approach*
- *PCA (2003) A Guide to Palliative Care Service Development: a planning guide*
- *PCA (2005) Standards & Quality Fact Sheet Series*
- *PCA (2005) Standards & Quality Patients Rights & Responsibilities Brochure*
- *PCA (2005) Palliative Care Quality Resource Guide & Tool Kit containing:*
  - *Palliative Care Service Development*
  - *Using the Standards*
  - *Linking to Accreditation*
  - *Fact Sheets*
  - *Information Guides*
  - *In-service module*
  - *Additional Resources*

These documents can be downloaded from PCA's website: [www.pallcare.org.au](http://www.pallcare.org.au).

