

# MEDIA RELEASE



**Palliative  
Care  
Australia**

## Palliative Care Australia Inc.

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## **Medicare Locals – an opportunity to provide seamless palliative care services for all Australians**

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) welcomes the announcement of the first 19 Medicare Locals and commends the Government for taking this key step in its National Health Reform agenda. The new Medicare Locals are an opportunity for palliative care to be integrated into the broader health system and to provide seamless, quality care for people at the end of their life.

“We know that the current experience of end of life care in Australia is disparate and inconsistent. We cannot, in good faith, promise all Australians access to care that is customised to their preferences and reliably delivers good pain and symptom control,” said Dr Scott Blackwell, President of PCA.

“The inability to manage preventable pain in the home or in residential aged care facilities, combined with difficulties in accessing medication and community care services, contribute to the current overloading of hospital services.”

PCA recognises that Medicare Locals have the potential to play a vital role in enhancing primary care to offer a team based range of services including general practice, allied health and nursing supports, with referral pathways to and from specialist services, to ensure that they can provide well coordinated multidisciplinary care to meet the needs of people.

“Our health care system can do better, and from our perspective, Medicare Locals are a critical aspect of the health reform agenda, creating the opportunity to enable people with terminal conditions to have seamless access to quality health services,” said Dr Blackwell.

PCA calls for improved funding and planning of community care, and expanded workforce education to ensure that needs-based care determined by patient preferences, is delivered.

“Whilst we welcome today’s announcements, we must ensure that Medicare Locals are tasked and enabled to support GPs and other health professionals to gain the skills and resources needed to identify those patients needing palliative care, and to achieve effective integration of that care within the broad health system, so we can realise quality end of life care for all Australians.” Dr Blackwell concluded.

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PCA is the peak national organisation representing the interests and aspirations of all who share the ideal of quality care at the end of life

*Patron: Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia*