

# MEDIA RELEASE



**Palliative  
Care  
Australia**

## Palliative Care Australia

Suite 4, 37 Geils Court, Deakin ACT 2600 | PO Box 24, Deakin West, ACT 2600  
t: 02 6232 4433 | f: 02 6232 4434 | w: [www.palliativecare.org.au](http://www.palliativecare.org.au) | e: [pcainc@palliativecare.org.au](mailto:pcainc@palliativecare.org.au)

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8 February 2010

## Dying well?

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) welcomes the attention on palliative and end-of-life care needs in the first *4 Corners* program of 2010, to be screened on ABC1 on Monday 8 February.

Through the generosity of four patients and their families and carers, the Australian public is given an insight into their personal stories and journeys. This has been enabled in part by the dedicated health professionals who, through participating in the *4 Corners* program, demonstrate the care they provide each and every day to the dying.

Palliative Care Australia President Professor Margaret O'Connor said 'All Australians ought to be able to expect to die with their preventable pain and other symptoms well managed, with the people they wish to be present, and whenever possible, in the place of their choice. To enhance access to needs-based quality care at the end of life, we need to support a health service model that delivers this'.

'To achieve this we must ensure that we focus on implementing better integration of the excellent specialist services provided by hospices with the rest of the health system. When this integration occurs, when primary care providers are skilled in caring for the dying and are supported by specialist palliative care providers, people will have real choice in where they wish to die, whether at home, in an aged care facility, or another location.'

Professor O'Connor said the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission (NHHRC) has identified the need to improve end-of-life care by enhancing the integration of specialist palliative care services with primary, acute, subacute, and aged care services, and with chronic condition services, including dementia.

A national forum was recently held in Canberra under the auspices of Palliative Care Australia to discuss end-of-life issues and, in particular, to review how well health reform is meeting the reality that death is inevitable for everybody and our health system must allow good care for dying people and those around them.

Professor O'Connor said 'the goal of the National End-of-Life Forum is to develop a guidance document that can lead to better quality care at the end of life for all Australians. Palliative Care Australia, in partnership with the national forum members and other stakeholders, will be developing this guidance document over the next several months. This will provide the pathway to meet patients' care needs and preferences, and to save unnecessary demand for hospital beds.

'It is now urgent for the media to assist the community to discuss the realities of life and death.'

This *4 Corners* program will raise important issues which will leave many people with questions about dying, death and grief. For further information see the PCA website [www.palliativecare.org.au](http://www.palliativecare.org.au) which provides links to important sources of information and advice.

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Contact: Fiona Allen – PCA Communications Manager – 02 6232 4433 / 0420 555 945

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