

MEDIA RELEASE



**Palliative
Care
Australia**

Palliative Care Australia

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23 May 2010

A hospice on the hill is not the answer

The current focus on acute hospitals and increasing the number of beds in sub-acute care will not deliver quality care at the end of life for all.

'Focusing solely on place of care is problematic as it fails to recognise the centrality of the individual and of tailoring care to individual needs so people can see the right health professional, at the right time, in the right place,' said Professor Margaret O'Connor AM, President of Palliative Care Australia.

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) welcomes the Federal Government's commitment to making the health system work better. However, with so much reform covering the health sector from one end to the other, the challenge is to ensure coherence and integration, and to see the outcome of these sometimes disparate reviews in the provision of seamless, coordinated quality care at the end of life regardless of care setting, diagnosis, prognosis or geographical location.

Delivering the right care at the right time and in the right place is a challenge the health system needs to meet. There is an emerging understanding of the need to improve the experiences of people as they approach the end of life. Experiences across the health system are not uniform: some people receive the care they wish, many do not. Some experience excellent care in hospitals, hospices and at home – many do not.

Furthermore, not all people living with a terminal illness will require specialist care and can be cared for in the community by their general practitioner with referral to other services as appropriate. Indeed, many people at the end of life prefer to die at home. But the health system is not yet structured to make this a reality for all who choose it.

During National Palliative Care Week, PCA is emphasising that reform must recognise the place of palliative and end-of-life care within a health system that cares for people at all stages and phases of life. Reform must position palliative and end-of-life care appropriately within these new systems.

On Wednesday 26 May, Minister for Health, Nicola Roxon, will be speaking about the health reform agenda in relation to palliative care.

The theme for National Palliative Care Week 2010 is *If only I knew ... how to talk about dying*. For more information, see www.palliativecare.org.au.

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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