

MEDIA RELEASE



**Palliative
Care
Australia**

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eHealth Vital for Aged and Palliative Care Reform

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) has welcomed the Government's latest call for software vendors to help prepare the aged care sector for the introduction of personally controlled electronic health records (PCEHRs).

'We see the PCEHR project as vitally important to ensuring that older Australians have high quality and well-coordinated care,' said Dr Yvonne Luxford, PCA Chief Executive. 'This is especially pertinent to palliative and end of life care where people often see a range of health professionals and have a variety of treatments. It is essential that this is well managed.'

Personally controlled electronic health records offer consumers the opportunity to make their end of life care preferences explicit and for this information to be accessed by the health professionals who care for them.

'We urge all involved in the development of these systems to include an advance care plan as a component of the design, where consumers can list their substitute decision maker and any other decisions they have made about their care preferences,' said Dr Luxford.

There is already some excellent progress being made in this area, Tasmania's Cradle Coast project and Calvary Healthcare ACT are both pilot eHealthsites with a particular focus on aged and palliative care. 'We look forward to seeing the results from the pilot sites and are excited by the potential of this project to assist in the delivery of seamless palliative and end of life care,' said Dr Luxford.

An electronic record can also help break down any issues related to distance. 'Access to services is a huge issue for palliative care,' said Dr Luxford. 'Electronic records could help overcome some of the problems, especially in rural and remote communities.'

'We know that the key to delivering high quality palliative care is for people to have had conversations about the type of care they would like to receive and that this information is shared with their loved ones and caregivers. A PCEHR incorporating an advance care plan would be a step forward towards achieving this.'

Ends

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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