

Additional Info:
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Palliative Care Nurses Australia Senate Briefing Paper – April 2012

Funded by the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA), Local Palliative Care Grants Program, the Brisbane South Palliative Care Collaborative (BSPCC), (a joint partnership between Queensland Health and Griffith University School of Medicine) developed, implemented and evaluated the Residential Aged Care End of Life Care Pathway (RAC EoLCP).

The RAC EoLCP was adapted from the Liverpool Care Pathway. The detailed results of this research are published in the Australian Health Review.¹ One important research outcome, with wider implications for the health system, was the finding that residents commenced on the RAC EoLCP were significantly less likely to be transferred to the acute hospital setting for end-of-life care provision than those who were not on an end-of-life care pathway.

BSPCC subsequently partnered with the University of Queensland / Blue Care Research and Practice Development Centre (UQ/BC) under the DoHA Evidence Based Practice Residential Aged Care (EBPRAC) program. This national consortium developed and implemented an evidence based model of palliative care in residential aged care facilities that incorporated the RAC EoLCP.

The model is based upon the Palliative Approach Toolkit (PA Toolkit) which involves three key processes of care, advance care planning, palliative care case conferences and use of the RAC EoLCP. The model, through the use of clinical tools and education, provides a step-by-step approach to implementing a palliative approach in individual Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF).

The PA Toolkit was designed to build capacity within existing funding available in RACF; no new staff needs to be employed and case conferences and medical care plans are eligible for Medicare rebates. To further support capacity building, Link Nurses from each RACF are up-skilled to champion the PA Toolkit both within their RACF and to external care providers such as General Practitioners.

The PA Toolkit has received widespread support from the palliative care and aged care industries leading to appeals from clinicians and managers for a national implementation of the PA Toolkit with enhanced supportive resources, across all Australian RACF.

A consortium led by BSPCC including UQ/BC, Aged Care Association Australia, Australian and New Zealand Society of Palliative Medicine and Royal Australian College of General Practitioners has submitted a national implementation proposal for the PA Toolkit to the DoHA Aged Care Service Improvement and Healthy Ageing Grants, Flexible Funds.

The emphasis of the PA Toolkit on advance care planning will translate into less inappropriate transfers from RACF to acute care facilities where dying residents often receive unwanted, futile and expensive interventions. This project represents value, on many levels, for the Australian health system.

¹ Reymond, L, Israel, F, Charles, M. *A residential aged care end-of-life care pathway (RAC EoLCP) for Australian aged care facilities*, Australian Health Review, 2011, 35, 350-356