

Attachment 1

Health

Palliative Care

COTA Position

Everyone has the right to a good death and that there should be appropriate palliative care services and support available to help this occur.

COTA believes that there should be:

- Increased funding for a community awareness campaign on palliative care and end of life care to move the campaign to the local level. This would also include encouraging the use of advanced care directives.
- Development of and funding for integrated palliative care services to ensure all people with a terminal illness can access services. Consumers should be included in the design of such services.
- Funding for palliative should not be time limited and should allow for differing intensity of support as the individual's condition changes.
- Funding distributed across the various care settings in line with patterns of demand to improve the possibility of people having care in their setting of choice.
- An implementation plan for the national framework on advanced care directives with regular reporting on progress.
- Capacity for advanced care directive should be included in personal electronic health records
- Annual reports on progress on the National Palliative Care Strategy

Issues

The National Palliative Care Strategy (NPCS) was founded on the premise that palliative care should form an integral part of a comprehensive health care system that supports people at all stages of life, helping people to die well with the appropriate care and support.

The development of the current National Palliative Care Strategy commenced in 1998 and it was endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council in October 2000. The National Palliative Care Strategy represents the combined commitments of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, palliative care service providers and community-based organisations to the development and implementation of palliative care policies, strategies and services that are consistent across Australia. The Strategy was revised in 2010.

There is a large unmet need for specialist palliative care in public hospitals, in aged care facilities and in the community and a shortage of palliative care nurses. In addition there is general acknowledgement that there needs to be a renewed effort to ensure that a palliative approach is used by other health professionals where appropriate. In 2012 the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee undertook an Inquiry into palliative care. COTA put in a submission to that Inquiry available at <http://www.cota.org.au/submissions..>