



Media Release

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Respecting and meeting end-of-life care needs in residential aged care

Access to high quality palliative and end-of-life care in aged care facilities will enable more Australians to have a good death, aged care, palliative care and aged care consumer peak bodies said today.

To help mark National Palliative Care Week 2017, Palliative Care Australia, COTA Australia, Alzheimer's Australia, Aged & Community Services Australia, Leading Age Services Australia, Aged Care Guild and Catholic Health Australia released a set of agreed principles to guide the delivery of palliative and end-of-life care services in residential aged care.

The principles reflect the need to recognise when an aged care resident is approaching the end of life and to ensure their physical, emotional and spiritual needs are assessed and met; that their care is holistic and that their dignity, privacy and diversity is respected.

The peak bodies noted that approximately 75 per cent of people aged at least 65 years who die in Australia use aged care services in the 12 months before their death, yet relatively few access palliative care in residential aged care.

A recent survey conducted by Palliative Care Australia, however, shows strong support for the provision of palliative care in aged care services, with more than 80 per cent considering it important or extremely important.

With an ageing population, the demand for palliative care will grow and support for end-of-life care in residential aged care services is likely to remain strong.

The principles reflect a shared commitment to ensuring that people who are approaching the end of their lives in residential aged care services have the best death possible and are able to live life to the fullest with dignity and in comfort. Importantly, the principles also recognise the contributions of all those involved in the delivery of palliative and end-of-life care and the need to support aged care residents, families and carers through all stages of the illness and in bereavement.

National Palliative Care Week 2017 is focussed on aged care, with the theme 'You matter, your care matters. Palliative care can make a difference'.

The peak bodies believe that implementing these principles will make that difference.

Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of people and their families associated with life-threatening illnesses by preventing and relieving suffering and recognising and treating pain and other problems, including physical, psychosocial and spiritual.

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