

SA Palliative Care Community Pharmacy Update

A joint initiative of South Australian Palliative Care Services

To support health care professionals in assisting people with palliative care needs to remain in their home, the Australian government has funded a number of projects. This fact sheet examines three projects.

Project resources

While most Australians with palliative care needs will die in a hospital, much of the care they receive in the last 12 months of life will be community based. The Australian government acknowledges this by funding various projects to upskill primary care providers - including pharmacists - to improve palliative care provision.

PEPA

The Program of Experience in the Palliative Approach (PEPA) is a National palliative care project. PEPA aims to boost the capacity of healthcare professionals to deliver a palliative approach through their participation in:

- > Funded [Clinical placements](#) in Specialist Palliative Care (SPC) services; or
- > Interactive workshops, delivered by SPC providers

While the focus is on learning, relationship building between primary care and specialist palliative care is a significant outcome.

PCAM

The Palliative Care Access to Core Medicines (PCAM) Project aims to improve access to five subcutaneous medicines through community pharmacies, for people who wish to die at home. These medicines form the [Core Medicines List \(CML\)](#), which was developed by stakeholders from three Adelaide specialist palliative care services (South, Central and North). It addresses six symptoms commonly seen during the terminal phase (pain, terminal restlessness, anxiety, nausea, dyspnoea and noisy breathing). The use of a CML can minimise access barriers to patients, and facilitate

timely anticipation, prescription, supply and use of medicines for end-of-life symptom management. Contact the [SA/NT branch of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia \(PSA\)](#), for more information. This project is open to all pharmacists, regardless of their membership status.

caring@home

Well-trained and supported carers can give breakthrough subcutaneous medicines in the home. This is useful in providing timely symptom management. The *caring@home* project aims to improve the quality of palliative care service delivery across Australia by providing resources to guide nurses to train carers to give subcutaneous medicines. Resources for services, healthcare professionals and carers are freely available online and are applicable Australia-wide. Developed in conjunction with the National Prescribing Service (NPS), resources include:

- > [palliMEDS](#) smart phone app
- > [Guidelines for the handling of palliative care medicines in community services \(1.15MB pdf\)](#)
- > [Medicine handling legislation](#)

For more information

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This update is intended to provide practical up to date and factual information relating to pharmacy and medicines management in the setting of Palliative Care and is based on critical review of available evidence. Individual patient circumstances must be considered when applying this information. Please feel free to distribute this update further to interested colleagues.