



MEDIA RELEASE

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COMMUNITY PALLIATIVE CARE PROGRAM FOR BETHESDA HOSPITAL ANNOUNCED

Coinciding with Australia's National Palliative Care Week, the Bethesda Hospital Board of Directors last week signed a contract with the Department of Health, WA for a new community-based program to support people who require end of life care. This new service, named the *Palliative Care North Metro Area Health Team* has the potential to significantly address the known 'gaps in care' that currently exist in residential aged care facilities, mental health facilities, correctional facilities and those hospitals without a dedicated palliative care unit. The new program will be based at Bethesda Hospital and will service the entire north metropolitan region. It will compliment, not duplicate, the service that is currently being undertaken by Silver Chain, who remain an important partner for Bethesda Hospital.

Bethesda's Chief Executive Officer, Ms Yasmin Naglazas says she is delighted to be able to embark on the expansion of Bethesda Hospital's current in-patient program, currently offering 20 in-patient beds. She confirmed that this new program adds even more opportunity to provide care to those who do not necessarily require in-patient accommodation. "For some time now, aged care facilities have worked to implement a 'palliative approach' to their care regimes; this new ambulatory program will serve to strengthen the care networks and address some of the existing gaps which will result in better coordination and more timely access to palliative care in the community".

Palliative care is considered an integral part of health care in Australia, with the community becoming more aware of the importance of good end of life care, whether it be for a cancer, a life-limiting illness or symptoms of chronic disease.

The last 10 years have seen many changes and developments in palliative care in Australia, moving from an approach that fostered the provision of narcotics and counseling before 'slipping away peacefully' to an era of advanced care planning with a focus on quality of life and symptom control.

"With a very experienced and dedicated palliative care team, Bethesda Hospital is passionate about making a difference to the quality of care being offered. Bethesda has made significant progress with partnerships with universities, which is having a positive impact on the ability to offer clinical placements for our future doctors and nurses in palliative care" says Ms Naglazas. "This will go along way in addressing some of the WA health system's future demands for quality end of life care for an increasing population".



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