



Media Release

Students play a vital role in Palliative Care at Bethesda Hospital

Monday 20 May 2013

Bethesda Hospital will be promoting Palliative Care Week which runs from 19 – 25 May 2013, to patients and their visitors in their hospital foyer, as well as their in-patient Palliative Care Unit (PCU).

Palliative care is an issue that will affect all of us at some point in our lives, whether as a patient, carer, family member, neighbour or friend. To ensure that we all have quality care at the end of life, and are able to live and die well, we all need to take responsibility for making this happen. Palliative Care Australia is calling 2013 the year to make palliative care *everyone's business*.

The Claremont based hospital has an outstanding reputation in the provision of palliative care services, through their 23 bed PCU, and their Palliative Ambulatory Service North (PASN) - a mobile consultancy service based at the Hospital and funded by the WA Health Department.

The Hospital is committed to education and collaboration in palliative care, having become partners 12 months ago in learning project with The University of Notre Dame (Australia) and University of Western Australia, as well being the only private hospital in WA to be a member of ehospice - first globally managed news app and website that will deliver international news and intelligence on hospice, palliative and end of life care.

Up to six nursing and medical students are clinically placed in the PCU four days a week and are provided with the opportunity to learn about the provision of palliative care. They are supported and mentored by Bethesda hospital staff, a Practitioner Scholar (Nursing), and a Palliative Care Physician over a two to four week period.

The students also utilise a 'classroom learning hub' at the hospital, providing students and staff with a dedicated learning and debriefing environment. 85 nursing

and medical students have participated since commencement of the project, with a further 75 scheduled to attend in 2013.

General nursing students are also employed by the hospital as Patient Care Assistants on the PCU ward, to gain some invaluable work experience during their studies.

Glenys Thomas, Clinical Nurse Manager of the PCU said that 'the students gain invaluable skills through their clinical placement that are specific to the treatment and care of a palliative care patient. By working in the hospital setting, as well as undertaking community visits with our PASN team, these students can really see the invaluable service and care that is provided at a time of great need'.

The care provided in the PCU is tailored to meet individual needs and is 'holistic' in nature, meaning that the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects are all considered important. The hospital's care team consists of highly skilled palliative care physicians, registered nurses, enrolled nurses and care assistants, chaplain, OT's, counsellors and a social worker who all work tirelessly with each patient and their families.

A team of wonderful hospital volunteers joins the care team to provide massage therapy, aromatherapy, reiki, social interaction and visits to the beautiful hospital garden, as well as a small 'nip' from the drinks trolley in late afternoons whilst overlooking the beautiful Swan River in either of the two dedicated family rooms.

Bethesda is an independent 88-bed hospital in Claremont, which has been providing outstanding care and service to the Western Australian community for nearly 70 years.

www.bethesda.asn.au

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Photographic opportunities of these students in action in the PCU are available.