

MEDIA RELEASE

General practices pilot a palliative care toolkit

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Six Gippsland general practices are working with Gippsland Primary Health Network to pilot a palliative care toolkit to enhance the palliative care services they deliver.

The toolkit was developed by Gippsland, Murray and Western Victoria PHNs as part of the Australian Government's Greater Choices at Home Palliative Care Program to improve palliative care coordination in the regions, and to enhance capacity and responsiveness of services to meet local needs.

Being cared for at home and dying at home is most people's preference. This initiative aims to help make that possible.

The six practices expressed interest to participate in the pilot which includes education and training. Over the coming months, at least one general practitioner, practice nurse and an administrator will undertake a package of training from the Program of Experience in the Palliative Approach (PEPA), considered the industry standard.

The participating practices are:

- Advantage Health Point in Bairnsdale
- Bairnsdale Medical Group
- Project Health in Traralgon
- Mercy Medical Clinic
- Inglis Medical Centre in Sale
- Neerim South Medical Clinic

Gippsland PHN Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Proposch, said Gippsland PHN completes a needs assessment before commencing programs of work or commissioning services.

"We engaged with consumers, health professionals and services including the Gippsland Palliative Care Consortium," Ms Proposch said. "This feedback included the need to upskill the primary care workforce in palliative care.

"Building relationships between general practice and palliative care teams in the region to ensure that our community has access to the best palliative care support is also so important."

The practices are also undertaking up to three targeted quality improvement activities aimed at improving the palliative care services they can deliver and embedding a palliative care approach in their daily practice. The toolkit includes information and resources to facilitate the implementation of this quality improvement.

Care Coordinator at Inglis Medical Centre, Meg Osborn, said the general practice was participating in the palliative care initiative to improve its systems when assisting a patient commencing palliative care due to their medical status or going through the stages of palliative care.

“We aim to provide our patients with up-to-date knowledge and satisfactory care, especially when going through these end stages of their life,” Ms Osborn said. “We are here to support our patients but also their loved ones.”

A governance group is overseeing the pilot project and the project will be evaluated once completed. To find out more about the Greater Choices at Home Palliative Care Project, go to the Gippsland PHN website at <https://gphn.org.au/what-we-do/programs/palliative-care/>

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Caption:

Care Coordinator at Inglis Medical Centre in Sale, Meg Osborn, said the general practice was participating in the palliative care initiative to improve its systems when assisting a patient commencing palliative care due to their medical status or going through the stages of palliative care.

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