



Innovation,
Applicability and
Transferability

Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner Role in Residential Care

Resthaven commissioned Western Sydney University to evaluate the role of the Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner (PCNP) and palliative care provision in their residential aged care homes in South Australia.

The introduction of the PCNP in the aged care setting is integral to delivery of optimum care to residents. Resthaven undertook extensive work establishing the role of a PCNP who would greatly improve access to palliative and end of life care for residents and their families.

Initial research included a pilot program in 2006, and involvement in the 'Nurse Practitioner—Aged Care Models of Practice Program' from 2010-2014.

The Western Sydney University evaluation (2017) reviewed the palliative care processes and outcomes in all Resthaven residential sites following the introduction of the PCNP.

Eleven Resthaven sites were evaluated. Evaluation measures and methods included:

- Reviewing documentation associated with deceased residents to evaluate the use of:
 - Advance Care Planning (ACP)
 - Palliative Care Case Conferences (PCCC)
 - End of Life Care Pathway (EoLCP)
- Number of referrals to the PCNP
- Surveying staff and GPs on views and understanding of the PCNP role
- Focus groups with Resthaven staff exploring experiences and perceptions of the PCNP role.

Results of the evaluation indicate that the three clinical processes—Advance Care Planning,

Palliative Care Case Conferences and End of Life Care Pathway—are being well utilised across Resthaven. These clinical processes in conjunction with the PCNP, have enabled the majority of Resthaven residents to remain in their home until death, reducing unnecessary hospital transfers in the last week of life.

Staff demonstrated a positive attitude to palliative care and the role they had in ensuring palliative and end of life care was provided for residents and families.

Recommendations were made regarding staff education/training needs, key priorities for service development, and overcoming identified barriers to accessing specialist end of life care.



In 2017, Resthaven's PCNP, Peter Jenkin, was awarded 'Excellence in Palliative Care in an Aged Care Setting' by Palliative Care Australia, and Employee of the Year by Aged and Community Services (ACS) SA and NT.