

MEDIA RELEASE



**Palliative
Care
Australia**

Palliative Care Australia Inc.

Suite 4, 37 Geills Court, Deakin ACT 2600 | PO Box 24, Deakin West, ACT 2600
t: 02 6232 4433 | f: 02 6232 4434 | w: www.palliativecare.org.au | e: pcainc@palliativecare.org.au

23rd January 2012

A new future for palliative care?

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) has welcomed the government's new telehealth pilot program, which aims to utilise the National Broadband Network to provide high quality health services to older Australians, people with cancer and those requiring palliative care, in their own homes.

'It is great to see such an innovative approach to providing healthcare for these vulnerable people,' said Dr Yvonne Luxford, PCA Chief Executive Officer. 'The fact that the pilot has chosen to focus on these groups is evidence of the government's recognition that our health system is not adequately addressing the needs of older Australians and those requiring palliative care, and that we need to look at new ways of delivering health services.'

PCA conducted a consumer survey last year which showed that the majority of people wanted to be supported to die at home. 'We need to provide health services which allow people to remain at home at the end of their life, with adequate access to health professionals, pain and symptom management and to avoid unnecessary hospitalisations,' Dr Luxford said. 'Certainly the aims of this project align with this thinking and we look forward to seeing the results of the pilots.'

Another key issue for palliative care is ensuring equity of access to services for all Australians. This has been identified as a key priority by PCA in its recent submissions to government and identified in its [National Palliative Care Consensus Statement](#). 'We support any new technology which will improve access to palliative care services for our rural and remote populations,' said Dr Luxford.

'We are well aware of the issues facing us in the near future – an ageing population, a declining workforce and an overburdened hospital system. Innovative solutions, such as the telehealth project, are essential to deliver high quality health services to all Australians when and where they need it.'

Ends

Contact: Claire Maskell – PCA National Communications Officer – 02 6232 4433/0406 258 722

PCA is the peak national organisation representing the interests and aspirations of all who share the ideal of quality care at the end of life

Patron: Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia