

# NEWSLETTER

**PCC4U**

PALLIATIVE CARE  
CURRICULUM FOR  
UNDERGRADUATES

Funded by the Australian Government  
Department of Health

The PCC4U project directly articulates with goals one, two and five of the National Palliative Care Strategy 2010. Find out more about the strategy at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/ageing-npcs-2010-toc>

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Order resources or subscribe by following the links on the home page at [www.pcc4u.org](http://www.pcc4u.org)

## Welcome...

Welcome to the Palliative Care Curriculum for Undergraduates (PCC4U) newsletter. The PCC4U project aims to improve the skill and confidence of the health workforce to support people with palliative care needs. This is being achieved through promoting the integration of palliative care training within all health undergraduate and entry to practice courses in Australia. The Principles for including palliative care in undergraduate curricula (2012) includes the core values, desirable learning outcomes, principles for teaching and learning, and benchmarks for curricula.

PCC4U implementation rates continue to reflect increasing inclusion of palliative care within health undergraduate and entry to practice courses in Australia. Given the important role that many other health care providers play in the care of people at end of life, the PCC4U project team is now directing some attention to supporting inclusion of palliative care learning within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. This work will focus on improving palliative care capabilities for VET sector graduates, including Enrolled Nurses, Paramedic Assistants, Aboriginal Health Care Professionals and Aged Care workers.

There are compelling reasons to extend the success of PCC4U in university health courses to the VET sector. Health care providers prepared in the VET sector deliver a significant proportion of direct care provided in residential aged care and community care settings where end-of-life care is commonly required. Aged & Community Services Australia (2015) identified palliative care as one of the areas of high care need requiring training to increase the capacity of staff.<sup>1</sup> See below for some data highlighting the important role of graduates from courses in the VET sector.

### Composition of the Aged Care Workforce:<sup>2</sup>

- Enrolled Nurses comprise 11.6% of the residential direct care workforce
- Personal Care Attendants comprise 68% of the residential direct care workforce
- Community Care Workers comprise 81% of the community direct care workforce

<sup>1</sup> Aged & Community Services Australia. (2015). The Aged Care Workforce in Australia. Position Paper. Licensed from Aged & Community Services Australia under a Creative Commons Attribution.

<sup>2</sup> King, D., Mavromaras, K. et al. (2013). The Aged Care Workforce 2012. Final Report. Commonwealth of Australia.

# Palliative Care Workforce Development

A National Palliative Care Workforce Development Framework has been developed to provide guidance for individual health care providers, education providers, health service managers and policy makers to ensure all health care providers are equipped with capabilities relevant to their context to provide care for people who are dying. The ultimate aim of this Framework is to enhance the quality of palliative care service delivery and increase support for people affected by life limiting illnesses in all care contexts.

## What elements are included in the Framework?

- Defining palliative care
- Core values underpinning palliative care in Australia
- Purpose and scope
- Defining characteristics of the palliative care workforce in Australia
- Palliative Care capabilities for specialist and non-specialist health care providers
- Principles to support the development of palliative care capabilities
- Teaching and learning strategies to develop palliative care capabilities.

The QUT Palliative Care Education and Training Collaborative (the Collaborative) has developed the Framework and has been working with the CareSearch team to incorporate its principles and approaches within the Education section of the CareSearch website. The Framework continues to be refined following feedback from stakeholders. It includes a palliative care workforce development model (draft) (Figure 1). For further information on the Framework, email [pcc4u@qut.edu.au](mailto:pcc4u@qut.edu.au)

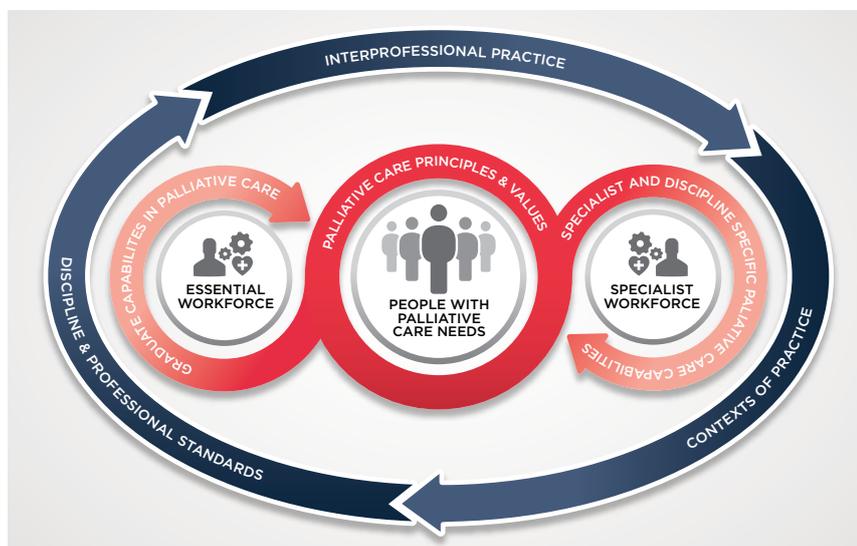


Figure 1: Draft Palliative Care Workforce Development Model

## CareSearch Education Section

CareSearch is an online palliative care knowledge network bringing relevant evidence and quality information on palliative care to the community and to health professionals. The redevelopment of the CareSearch Education section has been a collaborative project between the QUT Palliative Care Education & Training Collaborative and CareSearch. The information provided in the new Education Section will help all health professionals consider their educational needs and find learning options. Users are able to freely access practical information on how to support learning by using one of the three pathways:

- I am part of the health workforce and want to explore my learning options (this includes conferences, workshops, formal qualifications, web based learning)
- I am an educator or manager and I want to support learning in palliative care (this includes how to apply the workforce development Framework, develop teaching and learning skills)
- I am a volunteer / unpaid carer and I want to access community education (this includes community education and elearning for volunteers and elearning for carers).

To find out more please visit the CareSearch Education Section.

**CARESEARCH**  
palliative care knowledge network

## Upcoming Events

PCC4U and PEPA staff will be attending key education and health professional conferences over the next couple of months. Look for the Palliative Care Education and Training exhibition booth at:

- Palliative Care Victoria (PCV) conference July 28-29 in Melbourne
- Palliative Care Nurses Australia (PCNA) conference September 11-12 in Canberra

*inside outside* 28-29 July 2016 Melbourne | palliative care  
Keeping the essence of palliative care alive!



# Health Professional Education Conferences

By Lynda Carnew, Senior Research Assistant

The Collaborative (PCC4U and PEPA teams) recently attended the Australian & New Zealand Association for Health Professional Educators (ANZAHPE) conference in Perth and the International Nurse Education Conference (NETNEP) in Brisbane. At both events we saw overwhelming interest in the emerging presence of palliative care education within both the higher education and the clinical practice setting for all health professions. Palliative care education is emerging as a core

element for inclusion within curricula and clinical education activities across all health disciplines. Our exhibition booths were visited by many motivated delegates requesting further information about PCC4U resources. We are pleased to be able to provide free hardcopy resource packs to those involved in palliative care education. We are also pleased to provide access to the resources online for international delegates.

## Focus on Module 2: Communicating with people with life-limiting illnesses

Module 2 explores the core principles of communication as well as the experience of being diagnosed with a life-limiting illness and how people cope. Within this module, learners can develop supportive person-centred communication skills and understand how to determine the best ways to respond to the needs and concerns of people with life-limiting illnesses. Activities within this module provide learning opportunities relevant for all health disciplines – how to effectively communicate in difficult situations, including communication with patients and their families receiving news of a secondary cancer diagnosis, as well as patients nearing the end-of-life. Learners also review strategies relating to communication and support for children of parents with life-limiting illnesses and identifying sources of psychological, social and spiritual support for people with life-limiting illnesses and their families.

Key discipline specific learning opportunities within this module are presented in the table below.

Discipline	Michelle's Story – content and suggestions
Medicine	Assessment and management of progressive breast cancer with secondary liver, lung and bone metastases; difficult conversations (breaking bad news); symptom management (breathlessness)
Nursing	Understanding sources of distress; providing person-centred support and information; psychological and psychosexual support and referrals; supporting patients preference to be cared for at home; providing end of life care in the home setting (oral care, positioning); coordinating multidisciplinary teams and palliative care team support
Nutrition and Dietetics Speech Therapy	Diet and nutritional advice during the end-of-life care phase (swallowing difficulties)
Occupational Therapy	Home modifications to enable patients to be cared for at home at end-of-life; activity modification and other non-pharmacological strategies in the management of dyspnoea
Pharmacy	Pharmacological management of pain at end-of-life (syringe driver medication)
Physiotherapy	Activity / fatigue management (pacing, planning, prioritising) and supportive care for breathlessness (breathing exercises)
Psychology	Family dynamics and changing relationships; psychological and existential challenges; psychosexual support; dealing with stressful situations; a child's responses to a parent's diagnosis of a life-limiting illness
Social Work	Partner/ Carer and family support at end-of-life; financial and community support; spiritual care



# PCC4U Learning Resources

PCC4U supports the inclusion of palliative care into health care training through the provision of a suite of evidence-based learning resources. The PCC4U modules focus on developing graduate capabilities in palliative care and include a case study, video vignettes and current references.

In 2013 – 2014, the PCC4U learning resources were updated and enhanced. Updated video vignettes for Modules 1, 3 and 4, and Topic 1 are also available.

The core modules articulate with the graduate capabilities in palliative care:

- **Module 1:** Principles of palliative care
- **Module 2:** Communicating with people with life-limiting illnesses
- **Module 3:** Palliative assessment & intervention
- **Module 4:** Optimising function in palliative care

The focus topics aim to support the care of specific populations with life-limiting illness and the provision of palliative care in a variety of contexts:

- **Topic 1.** A multidisciplinary approach in palliative care
- **Topic 2.** Caring for Aboriginal people with life-limiting conditions
- **Topic 3.** Caring for children with life-limiting conditions
- **Topic 4.** Cultural diversity and palliative care

All module and topic content can be accessed at [www.pcc4u.org](http://www.pcc4u.org).

All of the PCC4U learning modules and topics are freely available on the project website, along with a palliative care simulation scenario, a multiprofessional case study and palliative care teaching and learning resources. Materials to support use of the resources across a variety of disciplines and learning contexts include:

- an Implementation Guide, with all the module and topic learning content
- a Curriculum Blueprint, that provides a snapshot of module and topic content
- a workbook, with all module and topic thinking points
- a DVD of all video content from the modules, topics and the case scenario
- a USB containing the module and topic videos, guides and supporting documents.

Contact us to discuss implementation of the PCC4U resources and to receive copies of the supporting materials - [pcc4u@qut.edu.au](mailto:pcc4u@qut.edu.au).



## The role of dietitians in palliative care

Dietitians are an important member of the multidisciplinary team supporting people with palliative care needs. Within the pilot implementation phase of PCC4U, a workshop was held with 12 dietitians, two palliative care nurses and a speech pathologist to build on the work of PCC4U and inform the palliative care content to be included in a Dietetics program at an Australian university. Recommendations were made to guide curriculum development in a dietetics program. Learning outcomes relevant to the context of a nutrition and palliative care curriculum were identified within each of the PCC4U modules. These topics are outlined in Table 1.

The PCC4U learning resources provide a range of scenarios and opportunities to achieve the learning outcomes identified. Contact the PCC4U team to discuss strategies to integrate palliative care content within your curriculum – [pcc4u@qut.edu.au](mailto:pcc4u@qut.edu.au)

*“An early focus on nutritional problems and needs can help slow down weight loss and improve quality of life”.* Diet and nutrition in palliative care. Adelaide Hills Community Health Service (2012)

Further information in Nutrition and Hydration and links to key resources are available on Caresearch.

**Table 1: Key learning outcomes for nutrition and dietetic students**

Module:	Students should:
Module 1: Principles of palliative care:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Appreciate the cultural variation in the role of food and drink choices in palliative care</li> <li>▪ Understand illness trajectory, the role of nutrition along the trajectory, legal issues related to nutrition support</li> <li>▪ Understand quality of life measures in relation to food and drink choices</li> </ul>
Module 2: Communicating with people with life limiting illnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Participate in learning experiences that enhance their understanding about loss and grief</li> <li>▪ Review previous communication studies with students with particular relevance to palliative care and food and drink choices</li> <li>▪ Understand how to negotiate the variations between evidence based clinic practice and patient /carer /family needs in relation to nutrition intervention and support</li> <li>▪ Explore challenges that dietitians encounter in working in palliative care and outlining support options</li> </ul>
Module 3: Palliative assessment and intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand nutrition care goals in relation to illness trajectory</li> <li>▪ Explore evidence based practice guidelines in relation to nutrition support for patients receiving palliative care</li> <li>▪ Examine the role of the dietitian in the palliative care team with particular reference to key decisions related to nutrition support (e.g. artificial feeding) and hydration</li> </ul>
Module 4: Optimising function in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand functional and social issues which influence food choice</li> <li>▪ Explore the range of intervention strategies that support addressing these issues</li> </ul>