

Media Release

Wednesday, 22 May 2024

Increasing access to palliative care medicines in South Western Sydney

In recognition of Palliative Care Week, South Western Sydney Primary Health Network (SWSPHN) is highlighting the Core Palliative Care Medicines map which helps patients and caregivers quickly locate pharmacies committed to stocking core palliative care medicines.

Select pharmacies across South Western Sydney have volunteered to ensure the availability of core palliative care medicines for patients in need, particularly those wishing to receive end-of-life care at home or in aged care settings.

The Core Palliative Care Medicines – Building collaborative partnerships with Community Pharmacists project is a joint effort between SWSPHN and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, which aims to minimise access barriers and facilitate timely prescription, supply and use of medicines for end-of-life symptom management by ensuring alignment across the service system.

The project ensures participating pharmacies maintain sufficient stock of these core medicines to provide initial urgent supplies to patients or carers and minimises delays in access to core palliative care medications.

William Clayton, pharmacist and owner of Clayton's Pharmacy in Bowral, emphasised the importance of community access to these core medicines.

"These medicines are vital for allowing effective end-of-life care to patients who choose to receive this care in their own homes," he said.

"Having these medications accessible in the pharmacy ensures there are no delays in supply for community patients or aged care facilities. Given how time-critical some of these medicines are, it is vital to have them in stock where possible.

"A 24 to 36-hour ordering window would result in less-than-ideal symptom management or deny a patient access to end-of-life care in their own home if timely medication supply became an issue."

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South Western Sydney PHN is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting general practitioners, practice nurses and other primary health providers to deliver the best possible care for their patients. Our aim is to improve access to quality local healthcare for all residents living in the Bankstown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Campbelltown, Camden, Wollondilly and Wingecarribee LGAs, areas which include but are not exclusive to the major traditional nations of Dharawal (Tharawal) and Gundangarra (Gandangara).

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the waters and lands on which we live and work, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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Mr Clayton encouraged other pharmacies to join the initiative, stressing the essential role of these medicines in providing quality end of life care.

"I would absolutely encourage other pharmacies to commit to stocking these medicines if they are in a position to do so. By increasing the number of pharmacies committed to stocking these five core medicines, we are improving medicine access, information and care for those in our communities," he said.

Direct feedback from patients and caregivers has highlighted the initiative's positive impact on access to information and resources for end-of-life care.

Mr Clayton said the map also provided a great pathway for other healthcare providers including nurses, GPs and other allied health professionals involved in end-of-life care to point patients in the right direction to source these medicines, once prescribed, at short notice.

[Visit South Western Sydney PHN's website to find out more about Core Palliative Care Medicines.](#)

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