

Care Association, or call:

**The NSW Cancer Council**  
**Tel: (02) 9334 1941.**

Telephone numbers are correct at time of publication but are not continually updated. You may need to check the numbers in the telephone directory.



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NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service

## **LOVING CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH TERMINAL ILLNESS**

**NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service**

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**NSW HEALTH**  
DEPARTMENT

## Loving Care for People with Terminal Illness

When people of any age are dying or have an illness that can't be cured, they need a special kind of care which is called palliative care. The aim of palliative care is not just to treat the disease, but to care for the person as a whole by making sure the remaining time he or she has left is as good, as active and fulfilling as possible.

Palliative care aims to control any distressing pain or symptoms, and to keep patients comfortable. It also means looking after their spiritual needs and making sure they have plenty of contact with their family and friends. Patients and their families are encouraged to ask questions about their health care and to be involved in any decisions and discussions about care.

Palliative care also offers support for the family during the patient's illness and, later on, helps them to cope with bereavement.

When Maureen knew she was terminally ill with cancer, for instance, she wanted to stay home for as long as she could. She was able to do this with the help of a Palliative Care Service which provided her with a team of people, known as a community team, to help control her pain and to help with other problems. (A community team can consist of many different types of workers, including trained nurses, social workers, physiotherapists and volunteers, usually working in conjunction with the patient's doctor.)

After a few months, it became harder for Maureen to look after herself at home. Rather than move in with her daughter who had a young family to care for, she decided to go to a hospice – a special hospital

for terminally ill people. There she painted a scarf for her daughter and made soft toys for her grandchildren. If she wanted to talk to the minister from the local church, the hospice arranged a visit. She saw her family every day and when finally she died peacefully, her family were with her.

An hospice has an atmosphere that is more like a home than a hospital. There's less hospital routine, pleasant gardens, and flexible visiting hours so friends and family can spend as much time as possible. There are crafts and other activities, and religious or cultural practices are respected.

Other services provided by Palliative Care Services include:

- Transporting patients between the hospital and home.
- Helping patients from a non-English-speaking background, and their families, to find community services which are appropriate for their culture.
- Arranging for interpreters, if required.
- Arranging emotional and practical help to enable patients to stay at home, and offering support to family members and other carers.
- Arranging services, such as Meals on Wheels.

### How to contact a palliative care service

If you, or someone in your family, need palliative care you can refer yourself to the nearest palliative care service. To find out where that service is, ask the nearest hospital or your GP for advice. You can also be referred by your GP, community nurse or a social worker. If someone is in hospital, the hospital can refer them to a palliative care service. If a doctor or hospital is unsure where to find palliative care for a child, ring (02) 587 8333 and ask for a member of the Palliative