



Jillian Skinner
Minister for Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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AFTER-HOURS HELPLINE FOR PALLIATIVE CARE PATIENTS AND CARERS

An after-hours helpline to support people receiving palliative care, carers and health professionals was launched today by Health Minister Jillian Skinner.

The Palliative Care After-Hours Helpline is part of the *NSW Government Plan to Increase Access to Palliative Care*.

“More than 70% of Australians say they want to be cared for and die at home yet only about 16% do, which is why the NSW Government is committed to helping people stay at home for as long as they can,” Mrs Skinner said.

“Having access to advice and support overnight, on weekends and public holidays is a key factor in whether people remain at home, particularly in regional and rural areas where there is limited access to GPs and support services after hours.”

The helpline is staffed by registered nurses with training in palliative care. If the issue is more complex, the call is transferred to a specialist palliative care nurse.

Support provided can include information about symptoms, pain and medication management, advice on how to manage equipment and emotional support to manage fears.

The helpline is designed to be complementary to specialist palliative care services which are provided during business hours, as well as other after-hours palliative care arrangements. A summary of the call is provided to the patient’s specified palliative care provider to ensure continuity of care.

The Palliative Care After-Hours Helpline is a free call number - 1800 548 225.

It is available on weeknights (5pm - 9am), weekends (5pm Friday to - 9am Monday) and on public holidays.