



## MEDIA RELEASE

### SUPPORT FOR GPs IN DELIVERING PALLIATIVE CARE IN AGED CARE HOMES

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The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has launched a new online learning module to support general practitioners, practice nurses and general practice managers in the delivery of palliative care in aged care homes.

These activities have been developed by Palliative Care Australia, with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. The activities are now available through the RACGP's online education portal *gplearning* at [www.gplearning.com.au](http://www.gplearning.com.au) and Category 2 QA&CPD points are available to GPs who complete the training.

“By looking at prevention and ways to alleviate patient discomfort, general practitioners play a key role in advance care planning in aged care homes. Through this work we can improve the quality of life for patients,” said Dr Chris Mitchell, RACGP President, and GP in Northern NSW.

“This new learning activity guides GPs to determine when a resident requires a palliative approach and helps to identify resources that are available to put this care into practice.

“Living with a terminal condition causes distress for patients, their carers and loved ones. Sometimes it is very difficult for those supporting a patient to accept that a palliative care approach is needed.

“Communication between the resident, family/carer, aged care home staff, GP and specialist palliative care service is of utmost importance to ensure everyone is clear about the care goals and the care provided to the patient,” said Dr Mitchell.

This new education module provides an interactive and practical way to manage palliative care in aged care facilities. As it is available online, GPs can complete these learning activities anywhere and at any time.

At the end of this module participants should be able to:

- Describe the role of evidence-based guidelines in clinical care

- Discuss the potential benefits of the *Guidelines for a Palliative Approach in Residential Aged Care*
- Determine when a palliative approach is appropriate in aged care homes and what resources are available for implementing it
- Explain the role of the GP in advance care planning in aged care homes
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of communication between the resident, family/carer, aged care home staff, GP and specialist palliative care service
- Assess and manage symptoms commonly experienced by residents who require a palliative approach
- Provide appropriate care and support for the resident and family/carer in the last weeks and days of their life
- Recognise and manage 'burnout' and acknowledge the importance of self-care
- Implement safety standards in general practice.

The activity uses evidence-based information from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) document: *Guidelines for a Palliative Approach in Residential Aged Care – Enhanced Version May 2006*. Visit [www.nhmrc.gov.au/PUBLICATIONS/synopses/files/pc29.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/PUBLICATIONS/synopses/files/pc29.pdf)

***The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is responsible for maintaining standards for quality clinical practice, education and training, and research in Australian general practice. The RACGP has the largest general practitioner membership of any medical organisation in Australia and represents the majority of Australia's general practitioners. Visit [www.racgp.org.au](http://www.racgp.org.au)***

***End Release***

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