

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO**

Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 30 & 31 May and 1 June 2012

**Question: E12-021**

**OUTCOME 12: Health Workforce Capacity**

**Topic:** Palliative Care

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Number of pages:** 2

**Senator:** Senator Boyce

**Question:**

- a) Palliative care needs to be an important part of workplace development. What resources are available to support practitioners in relation to palliative care?
- b) I still hear stories where palliative care patients are in pain because specialists are treating the underlying condition but failing to treat the pain. What do you believe is the best way to educate specialists so that pain management is an intrinsic part of the patient's treatment?

**Answer:**

- a) Resources available to healthcare practitioners to support them in delivering quality palliative care include clinical and therapeutic guidelines, referral templates, educational and training opportunities, consultancy services and tools such as a palliative care formulary, opioid conversion charts and care pathways.

These are available through professional bodies, state and territory health services and other bodies such as Medicare Locals.

The Australian Government has funded a range of projects to assist practitioners in providing quality palliative care. These include:

- CareSearch.com.au - an online resource of palliative care information and evidence;
- The Program of Experience in the Palliative Approach offers placements in palliative care services to non-specialist providers such as GPs, nurses and Aboriginal health workers;
- The Palliative Care Curriculum for Undergraduates project promotes palliative care education in all medical and allied health care training;
- NHMRC-approved palliative aged care guidelines;
- Therapeutic Guidelines for Palliative Care produced by an independent organisation;

- The Rural Palliative Care Project developed improved models of palliative care in rural and remote locations; and
- The Rural Health Education Foundation produces end of life care DVDs and learning guides.

The May 2012 Federal Budget included additional funding for the Program of Experience in the Palliative Approach and for the establishment of palliative care and advance care planning advisory services for older Australians.

- b) If the question is referring to the training provided by palliative care medical specialists, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and its Chapter of Palliative Medicine is responsible for the Palliative Medicine advanced training program, including eligibility, assessment and course accreditation. The College can be contacted at 145 Macquarie St, Sydney 2000, or at [www.racp.edu.au](http://www.racp.edu.au).

If the question is referring to the training provided to oncologists, the Australian Government funded the Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (PCOC) which works with palliative care services to benchmark and improve performance. PCOC reports a steady improvement in the pain management of the clients.

The Australian Government funds Flinders University for the Palliative Care Clinical Studies Collaborative (PaCCSC), a research project into the safety and efficacy of a number of medicines for palliative care use.