The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

Domiciliary support to a person requiring palliation that community pharmacy can provide

Community pharmacist can undertake the following roles within a multidisciplinary team to assist patients requiring palliative care to remain in the home and receive the best care possible:

- Provide dose administration aids (DAAs) to facilitate better management of medicines and undertake medicines reviews, such as MedsCheck and Home Medicines Reviews;
- Provide compounded medicines to address individual problems the patient may have with manufactured medicines such as swallowing difficulties or allergies to excipients;
- Pharmaceutical planning as part of a multidisciplinary team, for example, ensuring the pharmacy has realistic stock-holdings of required medicines, preparation for after-hours and/or unusual requests, advise on interim options where there are difficulties in immediate supply, cost-affordable therapies (e.g. PBS coverage and/or alternatives), regional regulatory requirements, and off-label medicines;
- Identify and address common adverse effects of palliative care medicines, such as nausea, vomiting and constipation, and provide modern wound care treatment;
- Provide aids and equipment to enable people to live safely in their own homes rather than needing institutional care, such as oxygen concentrators;
- Arrange home delivery service of medicines and other pharmacy products to patients in the community who are not able to physically attend pharmacy to pick up their medicines;
- Provide medicine profiles to consumers or their carers who are confused about the medicines;
- Provide locally relevant information on other health care services, such as respite;
- Dispose of unused or unrequired medicines, particularly Controlled Drugs and cytotoxics; and
- Assist with accessing timely replacement of nutritional supplements.

What is required is a formalised approach to the pharmacist's involvement in the patient's care plan to ensure that the person requiring palliative care and members of the palliation team are aware of these services and able to access them. This is depicted in the flowchart on the following page.

While the focus of palliative care is on the patient, it is also important to recognise the needs of the patient's family and carers. With frequent attendance at the community pharmacy, the pharmacist is well placed to also monitor and support these people, both during the palliative phase and after the patient's death.

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Tertiary setting

Formal Care Plan

GP

Palliative Care Patient

Carer

Pharmacist role in the multidisciplinary palliative care team

- ensure the pharmacy has realistic stock-holdings
- preparation for after-hours and/or unusual requests
- advise on interim options if issues with immediate supply
- advise on options to manage medicines issues e.g. swallowing difficulties
- advise on cost-affordable therapies
- advise on regional regulatory requirements e.g. Controlled Drugs
- advise on use of off-label medicines

Service provided by community pharmacy to the palliative care patient (within pharmacy and/or home)

- Medicine management support
  - Dose Administration Aids
  - Home Medicines Review (home only)
  - MedsCheck (pharmacy only)
  - Consumer Medicines Information
  - medicine profiles
- wound care
- home delivery
- compounding
- non-prescription medicines
- nutritional supplements
- health aids and equipment e.g. oxygen concentrators
- disposal of unwanted or unused medicines
- information provision regarding local support services and other resources

Community pharmacy services provided to the carer

- Medicine management support
- identify signs of distress
- information provision regarding local support services such as respite care
- self-care advice and support
- home delivery of medicines and health aids and equipment