Home Instead SENIOR CARE®
To us, it's personal℠

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Palliative Care in Australia Inquiry Submission

Introduction

Home Instead Senior Care is a private non-medical provider of home care services for older people. Home Instead CAREGivers provide companionship and assistance with activities of daily living including personal care services such as showering and dressing, eating, mobility, communication, and escorting to appointments. In addition they provide assistance with instrumental activities of daily living including meal preparation and housekeeping tasks, such as cleaning, laundry, ironing, assistance with shopping, and incidental transport.

Home Instead offers flexible, client-centred and client-directed services that allow clients to choose the frequency and length of services to meet their specific needs - these services and schedules can be changed by clients as their needs change.

An international network of over 900 offices, Home Instead Senior Care is an ISO 9001:2008 Quality certified organisation and commenced its wholly Australian owned operations in Brisbane in March 2005. Currently there are 19 Home Instead offices across Australia.

Home Instead Senior Care is not a 'government funded organisation'. Clients and their families pay directly for their services. Home Instead offices collaborate very closely with many health care organisations to deliver high quality care to palliative care clients.

Our experience in palliative care

The experience of Home Instead Senior Care offices around the country providing services to palliative care clients and their families is as follows:

- they want the freedom to choose where their care services are provided
- they want to direct and personalize care services to meet their own personal circumstances, preferences and *rapidly* changing needs
- they want *access* to flexible, responsive care services during the evening and night
- a standard package of care services or a one stop shop approach is not what a client wants or needs
- a planned approach to end of life care is very important and requires a multi-disciplinary team to support them
- friends, family and neighbours provide some or all of these services in the short term, however this can severely impact their lives and places great stress on them

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- professional caregivers play a vital role providing respite and support to family and friends to reduce the burden of stress and allow them quality time with their loved one
- the primary care needs required by someone living at home with a terminal illness are assistance with their daily and instrumental living activities; all of which can be met by a trained professional CAREGiver
- it is rare that a client needs complex medical equipment to support them to live at home or a clinician to attend to their needs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- clients require on call access to clinical advice and may require daily or regular visits by clinicians to review and manage pain relief and attend to other clinical issues.
- some clients can communicate and make their own decisions about their needs however others get to a point where they are unable to make decisions or communicate
- it is important that appropriate directions are in place with an authorized and trusted person to make decisions when needed

Our philosophy

Clients must have the right to choose to stay at home to die or make a change to move into another environment (hospital, hospice, aged care home etc) whenever they want to.

Palliative Care at home is a choice many people desire to have and they should be supported to achieve this for the following reasons:

1. They are more comfortable both physically and emotionally in their own familiar environment amongst family and friends which provides them with a greater quality of life
2. The home setting is more intimate, more personal and allows family and friends to say goodbye, reconcile pasts and achieve personal closure creating a better psychological outcome for everyone as they grieve.
3. Dying people will generally retain a greater sense of control over their life at home as they can live by their own schedule; for example sleep and eat when they want to as they are not required to meet the schedule of an institution.
4. There are substantial economic benefits to providing palliative care in the home in comparison to the costs of providing care in a hospital, hospice or other institution.

Our recommendations to Government

Home Instead Senior Care recommends that the government considers providing formalized support for palliative care in the home by:

1. Allowing clients/families to arrange, supervise and fund their own home based palliative care services with the help of direct payments from Government based on need and income assessment.
2. Considering funding to support;
    a. An out of hours telephone nursing support service for access by family/professional carers from the home, plus funding for home visits by nurses and GPs to the home during daytime hours as required.

   b. Planning and case management by the palliative care team providing the services
3. Making non-medical home care services more affordable by removal of taxes eg GST and by providing tax relief where payments for palliative care services are made from taxable income.
4. Provide subsidy for hire of equipment and minor modifications to the home to facilitate the provision of care in the home
5. Fund palliative care training programs not just for clinicians but specifically for professional CAREGivers and informal carers.

END

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