Concord Hospital

Concord Centre for Palliative Care
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Concord Centre for Palliative Care (CCPC) is a centre of excellence providing sensitive, compassionate, multidisciplinary care for patients with a life-limiting illness and their family and carers.

The Centre is a 20-bed inpatient unit with 16 single rooms with ensuite and two shared rooms on the grounds of Concord Hospital.

The Role of Palliative Care

Palliative Care is provided for all people living with and dying from a life-limiting illness. The primary goal is to maintain quality of life in a way that is meaningful to patients. Palliative care is provided for patients with cancer and non-cancer diagnoses.

Palliative care aims to help and support patients and their carers by addressing the physical, emotional, spiritual and practical needs associated with their illness and its treatment.

Our service provides holistic, patient and family-centred, multidisciplinary care by doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and volunteers to patients living within Sydney Local Health District.

Care is provided across three distinct patient care settings: patients’ homes, acute hospital wards and our dedicated Inpatient Unit.

Care is provided by four teams:

- Palliative Care Inpatient Unit Team
- Palliative Care Consult Team
- Palliative Care Community Team
- Bereavement Team

Inpatient Unit

In the Palliative Care Inpatient Unit, care is provided by specialist palliative care doctors, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, clinical psychologists, complementary therapists and volunteers.

Comprehensive, patient-centred care is delivered with attention to symptom control and holistic, psychological and spiritual care. Staff are dedicated to supporting patients, their families and carers.

Admission to the Inpatient Unit is offered for complex palliative care needs that require a multidisciplinary approach including:

1. Symptom management
2. Psychological, social and functional concerns
3. End of life care in the last few days to weeks of life
4. Respite care where no alternative exists, subject to bed availability

Patients and their families have access to a TV, fridge, barbecue facility and common lounge. Families and carers are encouraged to help personalise the patient’s space, bring home-cooked meals and are welcome to stay overnight. There are no restrictions on visiting hours.

Patients have the opportunity to participate in research during their inpatient stay.

The Inpatient Unit is a short stay facility and appropriate discharge planning to home or an aged care facility may need to be arranged during the admission process. Patients discharged home from the Inpatient Unit are linked with their local community palliative care service.
Community Palliative Care Team

The Community Palliative Care Team works with the patient’s General Practitioner (GP) to support patients and their carers in maintaining quality of life, comfort and dignity in their own homes.

The Community Team consists of:
- Sydney District Nurses
- Social Workers
- Occupational Therapists
- Medical home visits for non-ambulatory patients
- Volunteers

Sydney District Nurses are core to our community palliative care team, with care provided by generalist community registered nurses, clinical nurse specialists and clinical nurse consultants.

The role of the Community Team includes:
- Monitoring and management of symptoms including pain, nausea, constipation
- Patient and carer education
- Liaison with GP and other specialists
- Facilitating end of life care at home
- Arranging volunteers to provide respite and companionship at home
- Palliative care doctor home visits for patients who are housebound. A referral from a GP is required

Patients can be referred to the community palliative care services by their GP or specialists.

Consult Team

The Palliative Care Consult Team assists the hospital medical and surgical teams in managing and supporting patients who are admitted to Concord and Canterbury Hospitals.

The team includes:
- Specialist palliative care doctors
- Specialist palliative care nurses

The role of the Consult Team includes:
- Managing complex symptoms including pain, shortness of breath, nausea and constipation
- Emotional and spiritual support for patients who are dying in hospital and their carers
- Complex advance care planning
- Enhancing End of Life Care in the hospital through education, leadership and research

Patients can be referred to the palliative care consult service by their admitting medical or surgical teams.

Useful community websites and contact numbers:
Access Care Team: 1300 722 276
slhd.nsw.gov.au/communityhealth/sydneydistrictnursing
Outpatient clinics
Concord Centre for Palliative care provides the following outpatient clinic appointments by referral:

- Palliative care doctors
- Clinical psychologists
- Bereavement counsellors

Role of clinics:
- Introduction to palliative care
- Symptom management
- Psychological support
- Advance care planning
- Providing a link to community services and allied health
- Bereavement care

Allied Health Team
Social Work
Palliative Care Social Workers provide a service to palliative care patients in the community and to inpatients in both the acute hospital and the Inpatient Unit.

A Social Worker in Palliative Care can help with:
- Providing counselling and emotional support to patients and their families, including guidance on supporting children and young people
- Arranging assistance for a number of practical needs such as care at home (including showering/personal care, respite or cleaning)
- Providing information on financial and legal matters (which can include early release of superannuation funds)
- Housing/accommodation
- Assisting with planning for future care

Patients can be referred to the social worker by their doctor, nurse or other health team member. Social Workers can also be contacted at the Social Work Department on 9767 6680.

Additional support is available from the following services:
- Centrelink Disabilities, Sickness and Carers line: 13 27 17
- My Aged Care: 1800 200 422
- Cancer Council Telephone Support Group: 13 11 20
- Carers Australia Programs: 1800 242 636
- Commonwealth Carers Respite Centre: 1800 052 222
- National Carer Counselling Service: 1800 242 636
- Canteen (support for teenagers): 1800 226 833
- Lifeline 24-hour counselling: 13 11 14

Clinical Psychology
Clinical Psychologists have specialist training in assisting people with a wide range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties including anxiety, depression, adjustment to illness and finding meaning and hope.

Clinical psychologist reviews can be arranged in the clinic, Inpatient Unit or hospital.

A referral to a clinical psychologist can be made through a GP, specialist or nurse.

Occupational Therapy
Occupational Therapists aim to optimise function and independence in valued and essential daily tasks.

The role of an Occupational Therapist includes:
- Assistance with management of symptoms such as fatigue, breathlessness and pain
- Patient education
- Arranging appropriate equipment for use in the home

Occupational therapy reviews can be arranged in the community, Inpatient Unit or hospital.

A referral to occupational therapy can be made through a GP, specialist or nurse.
Physiotherapy
Physiotherapists maintain or improve mobility in palliative care patients as weakness and falls are common problems.

The role of physiotherapists includes:
• Advice on physical aids that may be required to improve mobility
• Non-pharmacological pain relief such as body positioning and ice packs
• Maximising function through exercise and adapting to functional losses
• Education for carers on how to safely mobilise and transfer the palliative care patient

Physiotherapist reviews can be arranged in the community, Inpatient Unit or hospital.
A referral to physiotherapy can be made through a GP, specialist or community nurse.

Complementary Therapies
Complementary therapies are provided for patients in the inpatient Unit:

Massage Therapy
• A fully qualified massage therapist visits the Inpatient Unit twice weekly
• Provides relaxing massages for patients and their carers
• Services are provided within the Inpatient Unit’s dedicated therapy room or in patient rooms

Diversional Therapy
• Empowers patients to make meaningful use of their recreational and leisure time
• Engages patients in a range of activities such as games, movies, puzzles, crafts and vision boards
• Volunteers also help organise day trips for patients and help them record and share their life stories through cards and letters

Pet Therapy
• Pets provide faithful companionship and unconditional love resulting in reduced anxiety and stress and increased relaxation
• A Therapy Dog visits the Inpatient Unit regularly
• Carers are welcome to bring a beloved family pet into the Unit to visit. Please ensure the nursing staff are informed prior to these visits

Music Therapy
• We regularly provide music based activities for the therapeutic benefit of patients and their families

Art Therapy
• A qualified visual artist visits the Unit and works alongside patients to help facilitate their creative journey

Feeding Program
• Provides assistance to those patients who may not be able to feed themselves when families are not present
• Our feeding program is run by dedicated and caring volunteers
Research and Development
Concord Centre for Palliative Care has a strong focus on clinical research with the aim to improve healthcare outcomes for palliative care patients and their families. Our research unit is involved in several projects aimed at developing and enhancing new management approaches for palliative symptoms and end of life care.

As a patient within Concord Centre for Palliative Care, you are invited to participate in one or more of our research studies. Participating in research can have many benefits:

• Additional time and education with an experienced health professional
• An opportunity to voice your opinion on your treatment and care received in a meaningful way
• An opportunity to contribute to knowledge which will improve care of patients now and in the future

For research related queries, please call 9767 6799.

Academic Program
The Concord Centre for Palliative Care has an expansive academic program for training and education of health professionals both locally and abroad.

Donations and Fundraising
Donations to the Concord Centre for Palliative Care help us to provide resources and advance research to ensure palliative care patients continue to access optimal patient-centred care.

All gifts large and small make a meaningful difference. Donations can be made using the donation form or via the Marketing and Community Relations Department on 9767 6038.

The Marketing and Community Relations Department actively fundraises for equipment and services not funded by the local health district. We would encourage and welcome your active participation in these activities.

We greatly acknowledge our past and present families who have generously donated to Concord Centre for Palliative Care.

Volunteers
The Volunteer Program is essential to the service provided by the Concord Centre for Palliative Care.

Our volunteers provide:
• Respite and companionship to patients and carers in the community and inpatient unit
• Weekly assistance with shopping in the community
• Diversional therapy and assistance with feeding in the inpatient unit
• “Jolly Trolley” rounds of the Inpatient Unit – a trolley filled with an assortment of alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and sweets, funded by donations

The volunteer service is available free of charge to all of our patients and their carers. Referral can be made by any member of the palliative teams.

If you are interested in volunteering please contact the Volunteer Coordinator on 9767 5139 for further information about training sessions.

Chaplaincy Service
The Chaplaincy team is able to assist and source suitable spiritual guidance and pastoral support for you. Pastoral care acknowledges and supports those who draw strength from their religious traditions/faith as well as those who have no such practices.

Ask your health team to contact the Chaplaincy Service that you require or feel free to bring a support person, Minister, Priest, Rabbi, Imam, Doula or spiritual advisor from your own faith community.

Bereavement Counselling Service
Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm
Phone: 9767 5656

Sydney Local Health District offers free counselling to people who are bereaved and feel the need for further confidential and professional support.

The Bereavement Counselling Service is staffed by qualified counsellors at Concord and Royal Prince Alfred Hospitals and is available via self-referral to anyone 18 years or older.