

Enhanced Delivery of Palliative Care

Shannon's Pack

Palliative care is a team approach to care for people living with life-limiting illnesses. The primary goal of quality of life and helping person and family live well. Palliative care is more than just end of life care but managing dying is a big part of it. Studies consistently show that almost 70% of Australians would prefer to die at home, with hospitals and aged care facilities their least preferred places to die. However only about 14% of Australians die at home each year with 60% occurring in hospitals.

As medical care for people with life-limiting illnesses improves, deaths in Australia have become more predictable. It is disappointing that with almost 70% of deaths being “expected” that healthcare teams are still not able to narrow the gap between the preferred and actual site of care.

Our local GPs are ideally placed to help patients and families to talk about where they prefer their care to happen. An early pilot study has demonstrated that by talking about these difficult issues, we managed to match the preferred site of care with the actual place of care and death in 91% of patients between in the 12 months from February 2015. This innovative model helps local people access expert and local care with the aim of not just a “good death”, but better living. And to be where they want to be for whatever time they have left.

Our biggest hurdle so far to help people stay at home for their care is making sure we have excellent and consistent afterhours cover for patients living at the edges of the palliative care service areas. This is because, although all Victorians have access to a palliative care service at their home, these services might not be able to always provide urgent and home based care after hours.

We are starting to tackle this hurdle in a few ways. We are arranging emergency kits for use at home by the patient and their loved ones. With the kind permission of her family, these kits are called “**Shannon's Kit**” in honour of Shannon McKnight who helped create this kit and died at home with her family present. An example of this kit is included.

Also we want to improve the **after hours support** for patients and families, with a focus on areas that fall at the edge of Palliative Care Services. The service areas for palliative care do not always follow the health service areas, which is confusing and difficult to navigate. We hope to make this clear so that anyone who wishes to remain at home has that opportunity.

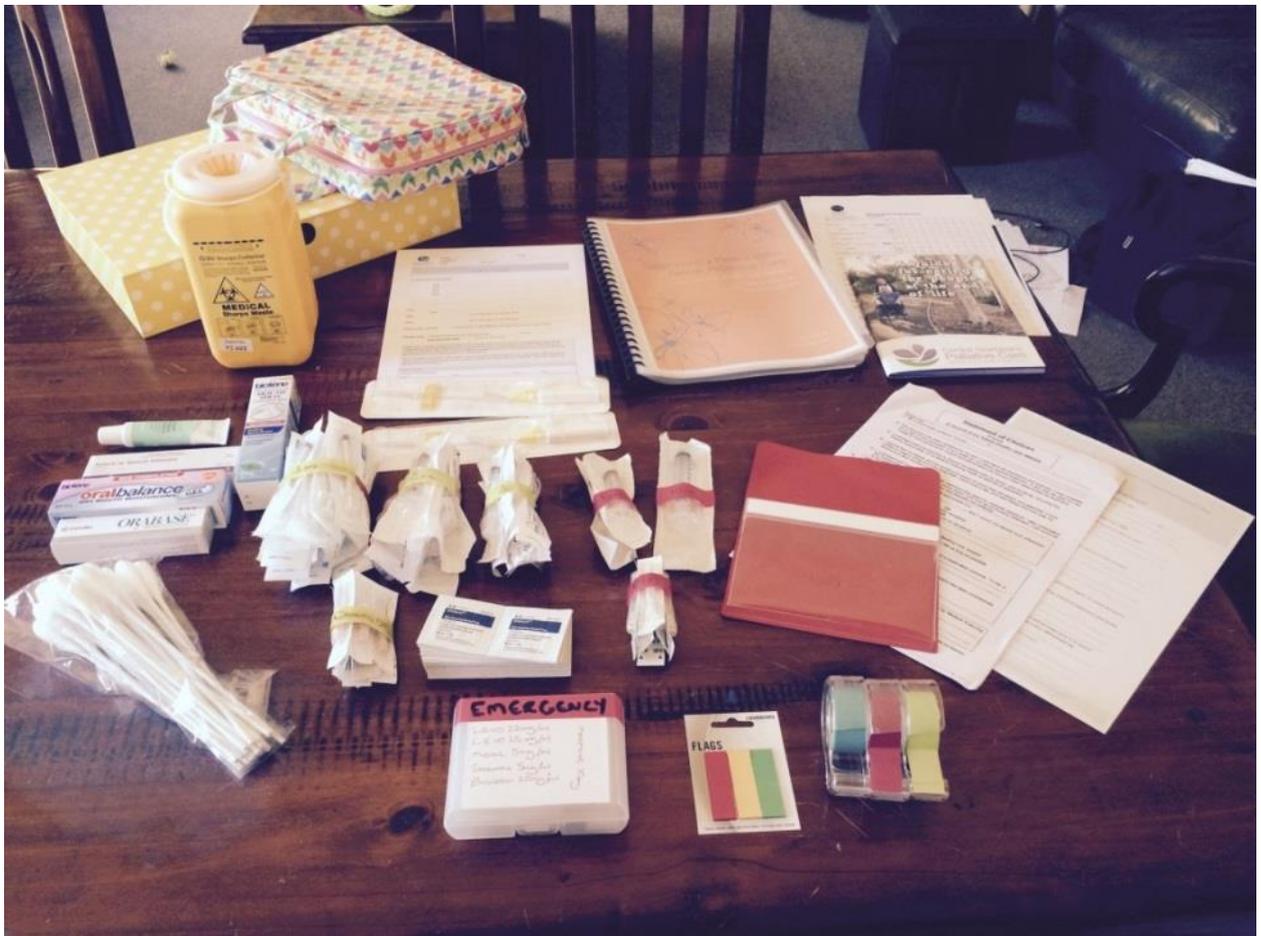
The team involved in this project would be very happy to provide more details, costings, research or data on request to interested parties.

Donations can be made by cheque or Direct Debit via Ballarat Hospice Care Inc

www.ballarathospicecare.org.au/make-a-donation

Please call donations “Shannon's Pack”

Email claire.hepper@creswickmedical.com.au if you have any questions



Shannon's Pack

A combination of emergency symptom control equipment & instructions to deliver the care with information to support patients and families. The first pack was created when Shannon McKnight needed the contents to help make her comfortable at home when she was dying. The pack helped with Shannon's wish to stay at home, surrounded by family.