

Title: **The Development, Implementation and Evaluation of an End of Life Care Pathway for Residential Aged Care Facilities in Australia.**

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The Australian government National Palliative Care Strategy consensus document emphasises the need for quality palliative care accessible to all people who are dying. The associated Australian Palliative Residential Aged Care (APRAC) project team acknowledged that the population of residents dying within residential aged care facilities (RACFs) is disadvantaged with respect to accessing such care. There is a need for service delivery research to ensure that this vulnerable population receives best practice palliation.

The Brisbane South Palliative Care Collaborative is undertaking a prospective three-year project to develop, implement and evaluate an end of life care pathway (EOLCP) in seven RACFs in Brisbane south. The project is funded by the Local Palliative Care Grants Program, Department of Health and Ageing. An important component of this research is the evaluation because, while consensus professional opinion is that care pathways promote best possible patient outcomes, there is a paucity of evidence to substantiate this claim within the palliative care community.

An Expert Advisory group and a Link Nurse group (with representatives from each participating facility) has informed the development of the EOLCP. After collection of baseline data, the introduction of the EOLCP will be supported with education for medical and nursing staff. The evaluation is to be based on process and outcome measures and aims to compare the effectiveness of the pathway against best practice standards of care determined by the peak body, Palliative Care Australia.

Overall, it is expected that this research will inform practitioners who plan and deliver care in RACFs.