

MEDIA RELEASE

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Hospital staff come together for Palliative Care Week

From 22 to 28 May, Toowoomba Hospital palliative care staff are highlighting the ways in which palliative care can help to provide a better quality of life.

“This week is National Palliative Care Week and the theme is ‘Living Well with Chronic Illness’,” Dr Patty Lee-Apostol, palliative care physician at Toowoomba Hospital, said.

“We want to let people know that early access to palliative care for patients in the advanced stages of their chronic illnesses can help improve their quality of life.

“There is a common misconception that palliative care is only available to cancer patients.

“We want to encourage people to talk with their family about end-of-life care. While 82 per cent of Australians agree that it’s an important thing to discuss, only 28 per cent have actually taken the step to formalise these discussions.

“It can be a difficult thing to talk about, but doing so means patients can have an active input into how they would like to receive end-of-life treatment, which helps us to provide the best level of care possible, in accordance with the patient’s wishes.”

Andrea Barber, nurse unit manager of the Regional Cancer Centre at Toowoomba Hospital, said a dedicated team was on hand to help patients and their families with end-of-life care.

“Palliative care is a specialised area of treatment, so we are very proud of the team we have to provide help and support,” Ms Barber said.

“In addition to our palliative care physician, Dr Patty Lee-Apostol, we have a palliative care clinical nurse consultant, specialised clinical nurses and a dedicated allied health team comprised of social workers, psychologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, dieticians and speech pathologists.

“Our nurses need a particular skill set so we also have a clinical facilitator to provide training which equips our nurses to give the best possible evidence-based, end-of-life care.

“This means when a person comes to Toowoomba Hospital they not only get expert medical and nursing care they also get expert care right across the multidisciplinary spectrum.”

As part of the palliative care week, staff are also taking part in lectures with other doctors, GPs and community health providers with a focus on advanced health care planning and related palliative care topics.

Photo caption: Staff from across the Toowoomba Hospital including (from left) Sue McLevie, Alistair Stronach, Andrea Barber, Tracey Roberts, Annette Hodgkinson, Betty Hobson, Karen McKellar, Dr Patty Lee-Apostol, Donna Byrne, Dr Ashleigh Herron and Liz Palmer work to provide the best palliative care outcomes for patients.

Ends

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