

PALLIATIVE PROFILE: ROYAL BRISBANE AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICE



Five of the 7 members of the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) Palliative Care Service.

From mid-2002, the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) was supported by a combined palliative care service that also supported the Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH).

In 2005, the RBWH determined to establish a separate palliative care service and appointed a full-time Director. Simultaneously, the RBWH Palliative Care Service was incorporated within Internal Medicine Services.

Palliative Medicine is now a recognised sub-specialty within Medicine and the positioning of the Service within Internal Medicine Services is important, as it provides palliative care throughout the RBWH for patients with malignant and non-malignant disease.

The team is supported with a basic physician trainee now that palliative care has been included within the rotations for General Medicine. This capacity has allowed for main-streaming of palliative medicine and provides medicine trainees with what is often their only exposure to the specialty.

The profile of the Service has increased with initiatives such as the development of a home page on the RBWH intranet site clarifying the role of the Service and its potential to support of RBWH patients. The inclusion of a 'drop-down' specific referral form has facilitated the process for treating teams.

The RBWH Palliative Care Service operates in a

consultative manner, providing advice and direct support at the bedside. Service delivery activity has continued to increase over the year and now approximately 60 new patients are referred to the Service each month.

A major development is the establishment of a plan for the RBWH Service to soon have a small capacity of beds, which it will use to care for patients referred to it that are in the terminal phase.

The RBWH Service liaises closely with the TPCH In-Patient Service. This allows for the timely transfer of patients to the TPCH, if it is beneficial to the patient and family.

The RBWH Palliative Care Service provides a small number of ambulatory out-patient clinics weekly to support patients continuing to receive treatment at the RBWH.

In addition, a multi-disciplinary model of care utilising the experience of the palliative care physician and nurse is utilised by the Department of Neurology to support motor neurone patients. Both a neurologist and a palliative care physician consult together, to provide better outcomes for patient and family.

The RBWH Palliative Care team is comprised of:

- Director , Dr Carol Douglas
- Staff Specialist (part-time), Dr Peter Whan
- Clinical Nurse Consultant, Veronica Connors
- Clinical Nurse, Jane Williamson
- Clinical Pharmacist (part-time), Tony Hall
- Honorary Chaplain, Fr Keith Foote
- Administration Officer, Charmaine Norris

