**Information for Health Professionals**

Wimmera Hospice Care is the specialist palliative care service in the Wimmera region.

We support people living with life limiting illnesses and their families and carers.

Our team visits patients at home, in aged care facilities and while in hospital. The

Wimmera Hospice Care team works with the patient’s local doctors, nurses and

allied health team to provide care. We are a team of Registered Nurses with

Administration Assistants and Equipment Maintenance staff.

**Areas covered**

Wimmera Hospice Care services the local government areas of Rural City Horsham, Hindmarsh, Yarriambiack and West Wimmera. This is an area of 37,000 square

kilometres with a population in excess of 40,000.

**Services**

* Our team of palliative care nurses help with managing symptoms and act as resource nurses to patients, carers and their primary care providers.
* A range of equipment is available free of charge.
* We provide education sessions to patients, families and carers, health care professionals and community groups. Education for health professionals is also available through the Grampians Regional Palliative Care Team.
* Bereavement support is offered for families and carers. Funding can be made available for specialist bereavement counselling.
* Volunteers assist with fundraising through the Wimmera Hospice Care Auxiliary to provide equipment.
* Doctors and a Nurse Practitioner from the Grampians Region Palliative Care Team visit regularly and participate in weekly teleconferences with our team. Consultations are prioritised according to need.

**Criteria for Admission**

* The patient has been diagnosed with a life limiting illness (This includes malignant or
non-malignant illnesses).
* The patient is located within the region serviced by Wimmera Hospice Care.
* The patient has poor symptom control requiring specialist palliative care assessment. Symptoms may include but are not limited to pain, nausea and vomiting, breathlessness or delirium

 AND/OR

 The patient and/or family/carer has complex social, spiritual or grief issues.

* Patients of all ages are accepted.
* Patients can be living at home, in aged care facilities or located in acute care facilities.

**Referrals**

A referral to Wimmera Hospice Care can be made by the patient, family member/carer or health care professional, providing consent is given by the client or legal representative.

When making a referral please make sure:

* That the patient is aware of the referral.
* That the patient is aware of what we do and why the referral has been made.
* Consent is given.

**The Palliative Care Short Stay Bed, Oxley Ward**

This is a government funded palliative care bed located in one of the acute wards in Horsham Hospital. This bed has an adjoining room and facilities for family to stay overnight with the patient. Patients admitted to this room are admitted under their normal treating doctor. This bed is available for private and public patients. Review by the palliative care nurse occurs daily during business hours.

Patients will also receive palliative care in other hospital beds in Wimmera Health Care Group and across the region. Patients requiring long term care or respite may receive care in a smaller hospital in the region or an aged care facility.

**Hours of Operation**

9.00am - 5pm Monday to Friday

**After Hours support for patients at home**

The team at Wimmera Hospice Care works with the patient and carer to develop plans during business hours to assist in symptom management, emergencies and in the event of a death at home.

If clients or families are experiencing symptom problems they are encouraged to contact the Grampians After Hours Service, operated by West Vic Division of General Practice (hours of operation 6pm to 8.30am nightly). This service is a local nursing triage service and these nurses have been trained to triage palliative care symptom issues using palliative care triage guidelines.

**After Hours support for health professionals**

If urgent advice is required regarding symptom management after hours, contact

 Gandarra Inpatient Palliative Care unit
 (Queen Elizabeth Centre, Ballarat Health Services)

 Phone: (03) 5320 3895

**When to contact the Palliative Care team**

The team of nurses at Wimmera Hospice Care are happy to be contacted for any questions or advice.

You can contact us:

* To discuss a patient who may need a referral to us.
* If you are unsure regarding medications or symptom management.
* When a patient condition has changed and what to do next.

Please let us know when:

* A patient is going home or has been admitted to hospital.
* A patient has died.

If we are not in the office, please leave a message on the answering machine and we will get back to you

as soon as we can.