SETTING OURSELVES UP FOR SUCCESS REGARDLESS OF THE SETTING! NATIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE STANDARDS

Chelsea Menchin [1],
1. Palliative Care Australia, Canberra, ACT, Australia

KEYWORDS

Standards, Quality, Systems

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is now a greater recognition that palliative care is delivered in a range of settings by a range of health and social service providers. National Palliative Care Standards outline best practice palliative care in simple and descriptive terms for their respective audiences, Specialist Palliative Care Providers, and those delivering primary palliative care in general practice, aged and community care settings and through other specialties, such as nephrology. The presenter aims to outline the two sets of Standards, their audiences, and their purposes.

INTRODUCTION

Palliative Care Australia has been developing standards for almost 20 years to support the specialist palliative care sector to deliver high quality palliative care. Since the development of the NPCS 5th ed in 2018 – there has been a greater recognition that palliative care is delivered in a range of settings by a range of health and social service providers.

HIGHLIGHTS

- There are two sets of National Palliative Care Standards outlining best practice palliative care in simple and descriptive terms for their respective audiences.
- The Standards for Specialist Palliative Care Providers are supported by a new self-assessment tool – designed to simplify the process and collect evidence for mandatory accreditation processes.
- The Standards for those not working in specialist palliative care are helping to facilitate better delivery of palliative care in settings where it has previously been neglected. It is also anticipated that these Standards will improve access to specialist palliative care for those with more complex needs, through better understanding of palliative care, its delivery by all health professionals and shared better supported care arrangements.
- There are a range of free national training programs with CPD and resources for staff and clients, audit tools and service stories to assist services in meeting the National Palliative Care Standards.

METHODOLOGY/ PROCESS

In the past four years, PCA has undertaken two processes to strengthen the quality improvement suite for those working in palliative care, across a breadth of settings.

In 2022, PCA launched the ***National Palliative Care Standards for All Health Professionals and Aged Care Services Ed. 1 (2022)*** *- for those not working in specialist palliative care*. These are used for best practice delivery of palliative care in non-specialist palliative care settings. The development of the Standards was an important step in improving awareness and understanding that palliative care occurs across many health settings, beyond 'specialist palliative care services,' including in primary health, other specialist services, and importantly in aged and community care settings.

Then in 2023, a limited scope review led to two updates of the Quality Improvement Suite for the specialist palliative care sector, namely:

1. the introduction of the **National Palliative Care Standards for Specialist Palliative Care Providers 5.1 Ed. (2024)** and

2. a simplification of the Palliative Care Self-Assessment (**PaCSA**) into a series of downloadable packs that support self- assessment against each of the updated Standards allowing more practical engagement with the process as part of clinical practice.

RESULTS/ OUTCOMES

Continuous Quality Improvement (QI), while necessary within the health system, is often required to be addressed in clinical hours. PCA has listened to the needs of the sector and has established a QI Suite that fits within a variety of team or sole clinician settings, and has the congruencies between other Standards, and relevant frameworks mapped, to assist services to meet the QI requirements both within and outside the palliative care specialisation.

Using the newly launched PaCSA Packs (for self-assessment), participants will be able to engage with the new National Palliative Care Standards in new and more meaningful ways. The self-assessment tools have been simplified to enable practical, timely responses to continuous quality improvement efforts, within the clinical setting and for professional development and service improvement innovations.

Evidence collection can now be harnessed through PaCSA to contribute to mandatory accreditation processes.

Both sets of Standards have been mapped to relevant Standards, including the National Safety and Quality Healthcare Standards (NSQHS),and an Appendices of Other Standards and Frameworks, including mapping to the National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards, consensus statements for end-of life. The mapping to the new (draft) Strengthened Aged Care Standards will be available once finalised.

CONCLUSION

PCA's national Standards outline best practice palliative care in simple and descriptive terms for their respective audiences, regardless of the setting.

The Standards for those not working in specialist palliative care are helping to facilitate better delivery of palliative care in settings where it has previously been neglected. It is also anticipated that these Standards will improve access to specialist palliative care for those with more complex needs, through better understanding of palliative care, its delivery by all health professionals and shared care arrangements can be better supported.

Both sets of Standards, PaCSA, Facts Sheets and Posters are available at www.palliativecare.org.au