



BCR Communities



Home Care



Sanctuary Point,
New South Wales

Goal

To establish an integrated palliative care system at BCR Communities that empowers staff, enhances collaboration with healthcare partners, and provides seamless, values-based support for clients.

Highlights

- Improved palliative care coordination
- Staff training and upskilling through face to face education and nurse clinical placement opportunities
- Integrated new clinical assessment tools including the STOP and WATCH Tool
- Integration of advance care planning

BCR Communities, a not-for-profit organisation, serves the Bay and Basin region on NSW's South Coast, delivering essential home care services to aged care clients from northern Illawarra to southern Shoalhaven. With a dedicated team of care workers and office staff -including seven Care Managers, two registered nurses and two nurse managers, BCR offers a broad range of services, including personal care, social support, transportation, and domestic assistance.

Currently, BCR supports 160 Home Care Package (HCP) clients. With increasing frailty across clients, BCR recognised a need to strengthen palliative care resources and knowledge across their team.

In evaluating where they could improve their palliative care services, BCR realised that limited integration with local palliative care services, GPs, and primary health networks was impacting client support, especially for those with advance care planning (ACP) needs and palliative requirements. ACP information was typically provided to clients at the start of their care; however, follow-up practices were minimal, and care workers often felt unsure about discussing sensitive or complex care preferences with clients.

"We've developed a system for recognising and responding to change, including a structured Communication Pathway and Clinical Referral process."

Participating in the ELDAC Linkages program, BCR embarked on a comprehensive effort to enhance its palliative care approach by building partnerships with the local health service, Specialist Palliative Care (SPC) Team and the local Primary Health Network (PHN). In alignment with these goals, BCR also sought to strengthen its team's confidence through targeted upskilling in palliative care, enabling care workers and managers to engage more openly and effectively in end of life discussions.

With support from the ELDAC Linkages facilitator, BCR introduced structured training initiatives, created clear communication pathways for care continuity, and implemented a values-based support planning system. They also developed the 'Care Coach' role, designed to offer mentorship to care workers on palliative and end of life care practices.

Working alongside the ELDAC Linkages facilitator, BCR explored the ELDAC toolkits, utilising resources from Palliative Care Australia, Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (PCOC), PalliAGED, and Program of Experience in the Palliative Approach (PEPA) to align their practices with leading standards in palliative care.

Throughout this journey, BCR's commitment to continuous quality improvement, teamwork, and resilience in managing change has been instrumental in achieving these improvements. Conducting an initial gap analysis and delivering routine education sessions has enabled the team to gradually implement new practices, resulting in enhanced care quality for clients and increased confidence among staff. Strengthened interactions with the SPC and PHN teams have not only improved awareness of available resources but have also led to a coordinated, client-centered approach to palliative care, supported by consistent clinical language.

As BCR Communities continues to integrate these palliative care practices, they are creating a more compassionate and collaborative care environment for clients and their families.

Key outcomes

- Established a database to coordinate care with the SPC Team, streamlining shared client communication
- Increased staff confidence skills and knowledge, strengthening understanding and shared clinical language.
- Updated intake process, which now identifies clients already connected with SPC, ensuring comprehensive, integrated care

"We now have a clear communication pathway for reporting changes, accessible to both care workers and care managers."

"Supported decision-making for care managers has been strengthened with a new clinical referral form, seamlessly extending from the pathway to guide care planning."

A personal account from a staff member

Being part of the ELDAC Linkages program has been life-changing for me, personally, and also enabled me to bring knowledge and resources to our organisation.

As part of the program, I was privileged to spend three full days on clinical placement with our local community SPC team, facilitated by PEPA. I was able to sit in on team meetings and accompany the RNs on their home and facility visits. By being 'up close' at the coalface, I was able to observe, first hand, the services and support provided by the SPC team.

I now feel more comfortable educating our clients on what palliative care is and what SPC can offer. I am able to encourage clients to embrace palliative care in a positive way to help them to do things 'their way', reassuring them that palliative care is person-centred and focuses on improving quality of life and minimising pain and discomfort. It is about supporting both the client and their families physically, spiritually and emotionally.

Another significant outcome of the Linkages program was that it gave us the tools to work on and implement our Recognising and Responding to Deterioration process and pathway. With the introduction of a new assessment tool for our Care Workers, we have empowered them to identify deterioration in a client and report that deterioration to the Care Manager. We have now developed clear steps to assess a client and refer them to our Clinical Care Team, using the same assessment tools as the SPC team, in order to 'speak the same language'.

Overall, the ELDAC Linkages program has been an overwhelmingly positive experience and I will continue to engage our clients and staff in the palliative care space.

Rebecca Anderson RN, BCR Communities

