



# Co.As.It. Italian Association of Assistance (NSW)



Home Care



Sydney,  
New South Wales

## Goal

To build capacity in our teams to be able to offer holistic person centred palliative care and empower consumers to realise their goals for end of life care.

## Highlights

- Strengthened our teams to provide holistic care planning and care delivery to consumers
- Recognised the importance of building partnerships and connections, observing the benefits to clients and their families.
- Committed to growing networks and exploring wider referral options for clients

The Italian Association of Assistance (Co.As.It.), NSW offers a wide range of one-on-one support services and assistance for older people living at home. The services, tailored to meet the needs of clients and the expectations of their loved ones and family, are designed to help individuals live independently, while remaining connected to their culture and heritage.

Co.As.It. employs around 100 staff, including community care workers, nurses, and case managers, providing in-home services such as personal care, domestic assistance, respite care, socialisation services, meal preparation, and allied health services to Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) and Home Care Package (HCP) clients. Co.As.It serves approximately 440 HCP clients and 220 CHSP clients across all Sydney regions.

"We now know where to go who to contact and this has made a big difference."

*Zheng Zhu (Team Leader)*

Co.As.It. decided to participate in the ELDAC Linkages program to enhance their holistic care model and empower consumers to achieve their care goals and wishes throughout the palliative journey and end of life care. The organisation aimed to upskill their care staff, boosting their confidence and knowledge to improve care planning and delivery. A key focus was to equip staff with the skills needed to have meaningful conversations with families and to address cultural taboos surrounding death and dying.

Before undertaking the ELDAC Linkages program, Co.As.It. identifies barriers in ensuring clients were referred to palliative care services where required. These challenges resulted in delays for clients receiving palliative care services, communication breakdowns between HCP providers and palliative care service providers, and difficulties in addressing cultural taboos related to end of life wishes.

Through the ELDAC Linkages Program, Co.As.It. gained valuable insights into the service delivery role of specialist palliative care services. This knowledge created opportunities to build new networks with palliative and end of life care providers. As a result, meaningful connections were developed, paving the way for a more integrated approach to care.

Improved communication skills among staff have opened up end of life discussions with families and clients, with the extra training providing staff with a better understanding of palliative care planning. Care plan assessments and documents were updated to include links and details that prompt discussions with families at assessment times.

Through the ELDAC Linkages program and guidance given by the ELDAC Linkages facilitator, Co.As.It. has also enhanced its assessment and support for substitute decision-makers by upskilling staff on the legal aspects of decision-making and capacity. A reference resource has been developed for staff, including information on processes, procedures, pathways, responsibilities, when to discuss advance care planning, and tools to use. The ELDAC Linkages program has been instrumental in helping Co.As.It. locate and embed evidence-based materials to support the planning and delivery of palliative and end of life care at home.

## Key outcomes

- Created a new network of palliative care and end of life services
- Upskilled staff in palliative care and end of life care
- Built in new systems and guidelines to support palliative approach
- Reviewed Assessment Tools and Care Planning process
- Developed reference resources for staff to support care planning and care delivery
- Created ACD documents with translated resources updated and included in care planning process

"It brings me great professional satisfaction being able to refer our consumers to specialised end of life services in their final months of life to empower them to have the death they wanted to have".

*Case Manager, Co.As.It.*

The ELDAC Linkages facilitator encouraged Co.As.It. to initiate the relationship with palliative care specialists and local palliative care providers and she assisted us to connect with those local palliative care providers to support our end of life consumers. The ELDAC Linkages program also helped us to clarify roles in palliative care and provided lots of relevant information to assist us to provide education to care staff.

After participation in the ELDAC Linkages program, we have built a network with a local palliative care provider. We learnt recently that one of our HCP clients had been deemed as a palliative client by his doctor. His Home Care Package case manager contacted the local palliative care provider. A joint home visit to assess and plan care was organised between both case managers from the palliative care service and Co.As.It within 24 hours of referral. Equipment and resources were fully allocated to meet client's care needs and all in home services were coordinated smoothly after the case conference with the family without delay. The in-home client was well supported during his end of life period of time. The family provided highly complementary feedback to both Co.As.It and the palliative care provider.

By working together with the specialist palliative care service, we were able to upskill our staff and build in new systems and guidelines to support the provision of palliative care and end of life care to our clients. Our care staff are keen to learn and upskill about palliative care rather than fear the topic. Our care team indicate that they are more equipped and more confident to initiate conversations about their wishes and planning end of life care with clients and their families.

The legacy from our participation in the ELDAC Linkages program is the new network of palliative care and end of life services we have built links and referral pathways with. This has allowed us to provide holistic care for our consumers and allow many of our consumers to realise their goals when it comes to their end of life care and dying wishes.

Our takeaway lesson is the importance of these partnerships, and we are committed to continuing to grow our networks and referral pathways so we can empower more of our consumers to continue having a voice and exercising their rights.

*Anita Bonanno, Head of Community Services, Co.As.It. (NSW)*