



Uniting Tamworth Residential Aged Care provides care across two well-established facilities in Tamworth, New South Wales. Each site offers accommodation for up to 60 residents, with a focus on promoting individual choice, dignity, and autonomy in daily living.

The two facilities joined the ELDAC Linkages program to improve their capacity to provide end of life care and to align their initiatives with the Aged Care Standards. Key goals included enhancing staff confidence, skills, and knowledge in communicating palliative care needs and symptom management, as well as fostering stronger access to palliative care advice and support. Recognising the growing need for a collaborative and informed approach to palliative care, the team was determined to build sustainable frameworks that would benefit residents, families, carers, and staff alike.

Several strategies were implemented to achieve these goals. Role clarification was an early focus, with connections established between the aged care facilities, the local palliative care unit, and local GP services. Verbal and written communication pathways were strengthened through the development of tools like ISBAR to standardise and enhance information sharing. The team also adopted the ELDAC Linkages toolkit, disseminated newsletters, and introduced education sessions to support the implementation of these resources.

"By focusing on our advance care plans and directives we were able to ensure that our residents had their wishes and needs met, avoided unnecessary transfers to hospital, and gave families peace of mind that a plan was in place for end of life."

Knowledge exchange and upskilling were prioritised through targeted education initiatives, including syringe driver training for end of life care, ISBAR training to enhance handovers, and a suite of resources such as online modules and in-service sessions.

Participating in the ELDAC Linkages program had a significant impact. Staff gained access to a reliable point of contact for palliative care guidance and training, while residents and their families benefited from improved symptom management and holistic care.

Regular newsletters kept all stakeholders informed about updates in education, training, and service enhancements, reinforcing trust and transparency. Enhanced connections with external services supported the integration of care and maximised outcomes for residents receiving palliative and end of life care.

The ELDAC Linkages facilitator played a key role in these achievements by guiding the development of a dynamic and adaptable action plan. Their support ensured the goals were realistic, evidence-based, and sustainable. Resources provided by the facilitator empowered the team to implement changes effectively and to build on their strengths through collaboration and shared learning.

Key outcomes

- Improved understanding of the importance and value of using ISBAR to communicate palliating residents needs to GP
- Improved understanding from GPs of what the palliative resident is needing in regard to symptom management and comfort
- Increased confidence among clinical staff in delivering succinct and timely information to GPs
- Improved timeframes for review and treatment of palliative care residents
- Reduced stress for both the palliative person and family

Improved confidence in clinical staff

The RN had commenced her afternoon shift and during her round she checked on a palliating resident and noticed the deterioration of her condition, it was a Friday afternoon, and she was concerned if the resident's condition deteriorated further over the weekend, due to the difficulty of getting GP access on the weekend they would not be able to manage her symptoms effectively. The RN contacted the resident's GP and used the ISBAR framework to provide a clear and concise handover, outlining the resident's symptoms, changes in condition, and the medications she believed were necessary for effective management. The GP was then able to chart medications in a timely manner which was then sent to the pharmacy for immediate supply.

As predicted by the RN, the palliative residents condition began to deteriorate and the RN was able to, after consultation with the family, administer medications as charted by the GP to maintain the person's comfort, reduce her anxiety, maintain her dignity, and provide her end of life wishes. The resident passed away a few days later and the RN expressed that she was comforted knowing the resident was comfortable and pain free during her last days, and the family expressed their gratefulness for the care and management their mother received at the end of her life. By participating in the ELDAC Linkages program this RN was able to ensure the palliating resident received the appropriate and timely charted medications to keep her comfortable and reduce stress for the residents, family, and staff.



Uniting Tamworth



Residential Aged Care



Tamworth,
New South Wales

Goal

To improve staff confidence, skills, and knowledge in communicating palliative care needs and managing symptoms effectively.

Highlights

- Strengthened connections with the local palliative care unit, local GPs, and pharmacists to improve access to expertise and resources
- Delivered targeted staff education to enhance palliative care skills and communication
- Embedded continuous quality improvement processes and the recruitment of palliative care champions to drive best practices