



# ECH Inc.



Home Care



Parkside,  
South Australia

## Goal

To empower clients to live according to their wishes at the end of life by providing high-quality, community-based palliative care through a skilled and confident workforce.

## Highlights

- Upskilled all levels of staff through accredited education programs and tailored training sessions
- Enabled hands-on practical training in newly established skills-based training rooms for care workers
- Built a strong foundation with robust policies and clarified roles to enhance service delivery
- Increased focus on palliative care within community care provision

ECH, a respected home care provider in South Australia, works to empower clients to live well and make their own choices as they approach the end of life. With around 550 staff members, including nurses, care workers, and allied health professionals, ECH supports more than 2,200 clients of diverse backgrounds across metropolitan and regional areas, growing significantly from 640 packages before the pandemic. Despite their dedication, ECH faced challenges, including limited resources, shifting aged care regulations, and the need for greater 'death literacy' among staff. Cultural diversity in the workforce also required thoughtful approaches to building confidence in palliative care delivery.

A staff member's personal experience caring for her mother through ECH services had highlighted gaps, emphasising the need for greater education and support. This feedback inspired ECH to engage fully with ELDAC, which provided resources to strengthen their approach. The ELDAC Linkages program played a pivotal role in helping ECH address their challenges.

"We have enthusiasm across our staff, and we have a real pride in what we are achieving."

ECH's aim in joining the program centred on equipping staff with the skills to help clients live according to their wishes. Their key objectives included enhancing the nursing workforce's ability to facilitate advance care planning, developing individualised palliative care plans, and training staff to recognise end of life stages using clinical tools.

ECH achieved many outcomes from the program, including the development of new policies and procedures to enhance palliative care, end of life care, and advance care planning for their clients. The clinical team created a specific palliative care assessment and care plan tailored to meet the needs of the clients, ensuring a structured and compassionate approach to care. They also embedded and validated assessment tools that supported more effective care planning and delivery, strengthening the quality and consistency of the palliative care provided.

Through ELDAC Linkages participation, ECH have significantly built capacity across their 320 home care workers. They identified 16 senior home care workers who stepped away from their traditional roles of client care to hold a mentor/buddy role. These 16 mentors received training and completed a registered training program in palliative care.

They now buddy up with other home care workers to support, train and mentor palliative care provision for clients in their homes.

ECH has also upskilled care workers ensuring as many as possible receive training, which is now set to continue in an ongoing cycle. Self-care was also promoted across the service, highlighting the message that 'caring for yourself when caring for others' is a necessity not a luxury, also ensuring that access to self-care activities was widely shared.

Through ELDAC's support, ECH made significant progress in strengthening critical elements of their palliative approach in their home care service. Staff have become more engaged and confident, adopting new assessment tools and improving care planning. Communication within the organisation has grown stronger, with a shared language around palliative care that has unified the team. The Clinical Nurse Manager has led a successful awareness campaign, with hands-on training facilities established for practical skill development for care support workers.

These efforts have laid a solid foundation for sustainable, quality palliative care, with formalised policies and clarified roles. ECH's focus on community-based palliative care has allowed them

to honour clients' end of life wishes, enabling them to remain at home with dignity and compassion. The transformation, supported by the ELDAC Linkages program, reflects ECH's dedication to improving end of life care.

"We realised we had been doing things in isolation and the ELDAC Linkages program gave us the opportunity to really navigate the landscape, scope it all out and start to really identify where we had to go next and to figure out how to get there."

## Key outcomes

- Enhanced staff confidence and competence in delivering palliative care through comprehensive training and education
- Improved collaboration with specialists and other home services, leading to more cohesive and effective care for clients
- Increased client satisfaction and quality of life by honouring individual end of life wishes
- Established a strong organisational framework with clear policies and procedures to support sustainable, high-quality palliative care

## The value of feedback to help raise awareness

A pivotal moment at the start of ELDAC was when our staff member's mother became unwell and became palliative, we subsequently provided palliative care services to her mother at her home. Our staff member provided us with good humour, stories and feedback about care they received at home through our service. This feedback was helpful and raised our awareness of being in the clients' shoes facing the challenges of care and support at home of a loved one who is requiring palliative care.

It was at that moment that we realised we had to act - we had already undertaken some improvement activities in various spaces with the PHN and through our palliative care network, but we realised we needed to have a more consolidated approach.

Through the ELDAC Linkages program, we have navigated and made significant change in our organisation. We have invested commitment, time and energy to make significant improvements and develop our service. Our amazing staff have been key to all our growth in processes and care delivery through the program.

Proudly we have improved our staff confidence in delivering good palliative care.

The program has presented us with opportunities for meaningful collaboration with our palliative care networks and this in itself has strengthened our position.

Through the program we developed a clear understanding of what was important. For the road ahead, we continue to develop the foundations to allow us to build adaptive capacity This is a continuing journey.

Our team and service is evolving, rising to many new challenges and we continue striving to provide excellent palliative and end of life care.

*Anna Jones, Senior Clinical Manager*