



UNITED Spanish Latin American Welfare Centre Inc



Home Care



Melbourne, Victoria

Goal

To build capacity to provide culturally appropriate, end of life care through workforce upskilling in palliative care and the establishment of collaborative linkages with palliative care providers.

Highlights

- Connected with Spanish speaking health care professionals via an organised community palliative care forum at UNITED
- Arranged for upskilling and training and established linkages with palliative care networks and consortia
- Implemented external clinical supervision for case managers
- Increased culturally sensitive discussions helping dispel taboos within the community

UNITED Spanish Latin American Welfare Centre (UNITED) in Melbourne has long been a trusted resource for Spanish-speaking communities across Victoria, offering support tailored to their unique cultural needs. With over 40 years of service, UNITED's programmes have evolved to meet the changing demographics of the Spanish and Latin American communities, which now increasingly require aged care services. Today, UNITED operates a Home Care Packages Program, social activity groups, and an aged care community visitors scheme, engaging over 240 clients. However, as the needs of this ageing population become more complex, UNITED recognised that it lacked strong connections with palliative care resources and that its workforce required upskilling to confidently support clients in palliative care and advance care planning.

An exciting starting point of improvement activities for this service was to initiate a community palliative care forum to connect with Spanish speaking professionals involved in aged care and palliative care. The outcome of this was forming linkages with Spanish speaking palliative care nurses, GPs and psychologists, all of whom called for UNITED to address the lack of community awareness about palliative care.

"Through the ELDAC Linkages program we have extended our service provision into the space of palliative care and we now feel we are in a stronger place to support the palliative journey with our clients."

Other key successful activities followed raising awareness across staff and clients including holding a conversation starters day on What Matters Most to coincide with the National Palliative Care Week. It was reported that the conversations that ensued between community members were surprising and enriching for all, as many expressed, they had not given thought to the concept of advance care planning (ACP).

With the ELDAC Linkages program providing the lens and impetus, these key activities led to widening and opening out to a greater awareness for staff and upskilling on the foundations of palliative care and ACP. Through the ELDAC Linkages program, UNITED was able to access best-practice training and resources, allowing it to integrate palliative care knowledge and tools directly into client services. The upskilling of staff and training initiatives became a cornerstone, as it provided all staff with a strong foundation in

palliative care principles, while external clinical supervision enhanced case managers' abilities to oversee complex care plans.

Other improvements included standardising a communication system for identifying and communicating change/deterioration in clients so that changing needs could be proactively addressed. This service introduced palliative care clinical supervision and mentoring for Case Managers to support client care planning providing ongoing improvement and upskilling of the team.

Translated End of Life Care and Palliative care Resource kits were sourced for staff and clients to support communication.

The ELDAC Linkages program also facilitated vital connections with palliative care networks, opening new referral pathways and improving UNITED's ability to coordinate care effectively. These partnerships have enabled UNITED's team to guide clients and their families in navigating end of life

"ELDAC Linkages program has prepared us, linked us, resourced us and has given us a solid platform to continue on as we progressively grow our organisation and support our community."

Barbara Leon, Operations Manager

care options with cultural sensitivity. An important aspect of this journey involved addressing cultural taboos around death and dying. The workforce was able to initiate culturally appropriate discussions, breaking down barriers and easing anxieties around palliative care.

This shift led to more open conversations within the Spanish-speaking community about care preferences, helping clients and families to feel informed and empowered in their choices. Overall, UNITED's enrolment in the ELDAC Linkages program has fostered a compassionate, knowledgeable, and culturally responsive approach to end of life care, ensuring that clients and their loved ones receive support that respects their language, heritage, and wishes.

Key outcomes

- Improved referral pathways and connections with palliative care services, enhancing options for client support
- Strengthened workforce capacity to facilitate culturally sensitive end of life conversations with clients and carers
- Fostered more meaningful advance care planning discussions, supporting clients in making informed choices

Just at the right time for our needs

Our participation in the ELDAC Linkages program came at the right time given the increasing needs of an ageing Spanish speaking community. The ELDAC Linkages program supported us to strengthen our home care service to better support our Spanish speaking community. It has given us an opportunity to raise awareness and to be better prepared and have confidence around advance care planning and palliative care provision to our clients.

The culturally sensitive awareness raising activities that were started at the beginning of the program guided us to implement a wide range of organisational improvement activities including educating and upskilling our staff, sourcing and/or creating relevant translated resources, and embedding of a palliative approach within our systems and care processes and most importantly embedding our improvements and increasing staff knowledge skills and confidence.

Our improved communication systems have led to a more proactive systematic approach with more timely response to care planning for our clients. The new evidence based resource we were introduced to through the program has been most helpful for supporting our care staff.

The palliative care clinical supervision and mentoring for Case Managers has made significant improvements in staff and have supported care planning. We have been able to focus on upskilling our team providing care to our clients and there is a growing interest and passion to continue with further ongoing education to best support our clients who might require palliative and end of life care.

Finally, with the assistance and support from our ELDAC Linkages facilitator, we strengthened our linkages and communication with palliative care sector/services, enabling team members to be aware of referral pathways and resources.

Participation in the ELDAC Linkages program has cemented our confidence as a care provider – we came to the realisation that "we have a place in this community" of care or within this sector. We were able to share information about our service with the broader palliative care sector and be recognised as a relevant player in home care sector. Participation in ELDAC has enriched our care delivery and has enabled us to build a solid foundation, equipping our team to deliver culturally appropriate palliative care.

Operations Manager, UNITED, Barbara Leon