

Palliative Care

Palliative care maximises living for people faced with life-limiting illness.

The goal of the Palliative Care Service is to work alongside patients with life limiting illness, their important support people and their existing healthcare providers. Palliative Care is provided within interdisciplinary teams and aims to improve or maintain quality of life by providing holistic support and services which address physical, psychosocial, spiritual and cultural needs.

The Canterbury Palliative Care Service is an integrated service incorporating the tertiary hospital and Nurse Maude Hospice inpatient unit and community services.

Why specialise in Palliative Medicine?

Palliative Medicine brings together the intellectual and academic interest of medicine with the concern for treating a person holistically with an emphasis on care, comfort and communication. Palliative care is a growing field of need and offers many areas of special interest for the clinician. It offers a specialty where past career and life choices are valuable in a new setting.

The “Palliative Approach” is appropriate in many fields of medicine but can feel foreign within unless a doctor has been exposed to Palliative Medicine as an entity. This argues strongly for spending some time in Palliative Care whatever one’s specialty choice will be eventually.

Career prospects

Our population continues to age. With this comes the increased need for the services that Palliative Care offers. This has been recognised at governmental levels and there is goodwill towards increasing the workforce within Palliative Care. This bodes well for career prospects for Palliative Medicine Physicians and also for doctors who have an interest in the field.

Medical Kaimahi (staff) in our service

Six SMOs work as a team across the hospital, hospice and in the community. Two trainee RMO positions are available, one based with the Hospital Palliative Care Service and one with the Nurse Maude Specialist Palliative Care Service in Merivale.

All about our service

The Hospital Palliative Care Service provides a consultative service to all wards and hospitals across the Health NZ Waitaha Canterbury. The Nurse Maude Hospice Palliative Care Service cares for patients in the 11 bed Nurse Maude Hospice inpatient unit, and for patients in their homes and Aged Residential Care facilities across the Canterbury region and West Coast.

The “Team” within the hospital consists of Consultant Physicians, Nurse Practitioner, Specialist Palliative Care Nurses and Registrar. The Nurse Maude Hospice Palliative Care Service is made up of 4 part time Palliative Medicine Specialists, one registrar, two medical officers, specialist nurses and a comprehensive interdisciplinary team.

The Hospital team will assess patients promptly and where possible inpatients will be seen on the day of referral. Hospice inpatients are reviewed daily and patients in the community are contacted within a few days of referral and day of their referral and a convenient time is negotiated to see them. .

The Hospital Team assists with planning for discharge and liaison with community services.

Clinics allow for an integrated approach between hospital and community specialties. Our team members are frequently involved in meetings with the patient and their extended family to explore the implications of the sufferer's disease and the impact this will have on their living situation.

Research

Research in the field is highly valued and encouraged where there is an interest in contributing to the body of knowledge. There is excellent access to the Oncology Service Research Unit - actively supported to join multi-centre trials. Assistance with ethics approval, nursing etc is provided by CORU. In addition, Nurse Maude Association actively participates in research and registrars involved in community based projects may be able to seek support from dedicated research nurses.

SMO / Kaimahi (staff) support

24 hour SMO on-call availability. The senior staff pride themselves on their approachability and welcome opportunities to use difficult clinical situations as teaching opportunities.

Advantages to training in Palliative Care, Health NZ Waitaha Canterbury

We have an integrated Palliative Care Service allowing for full training in Palliative Medicine within the region.

We are an accredited site for the RACP Clinical Foundation in Palliative Medicine. This is a useful further training for other clinicians - such as Family Doctors - with an interest in Palliative care.

There is an active education and training programme in place.

Relationships with GPs, community services and residential facilities are excellent, with an active educational focus directed towards them.

Enquiries

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