

Palliative Care Online Training Portal

Client: Australian Government – Department of Health

Services: Development of a palliative care online training and information portal

Context

The AHHA's online palliative care training and information portal is on track to reach its target of 45,000 users by mid-2017 with more than 27,000 practitioners and carers so far signed up. The Department of Health engaged AHHA to develop the portal to deliver comprehensive online training across Australia as part of the *National Palliative Care Strategy 2010 – Supporting Australians to Live Well at the End of Life*, which represents the combined commitments of the Australian, state and territory governments, palliative care service providers and community-based organisations. It guides the development and implementation of palliative care policies, strategies and services across Australia.

Approach

AHHA is the lead organisation on this project, overseeing the governance, administration, consultation and engagement strategies, and the marketing and project management of the online portal. Based on the Guidelines for a Palliative Approach for Aged Care in the Community Setting, six online modules have been developed by a consortium of experts led by the AHHA. Final training materials were peer reviewed by key subject matter experts Australia wide, with a formal pilot study with 700 healthcare professionals to refine content and delivery.

Central to the development of the project has been AHHA's unique ability to engage with stakeholders from multiple disciplines to inform the development of the training. The majority of participants are drawn from residential aged care facilities, community aged care organisations, and the palliative care sector. The AHHA has also engaged widely with practitioners providing care to older people in the community, including general practitioners, community care providers and support organisations.

Results

The training package has been evaluated as having considerable reach across a range of settings in both aged care and the community, and being very successful in increasing the knowledge of a palliative approach to care. It has achieved extremely high satisfaction rates, particularly given the diversity of participants. It has significantly increased the level of understanding of the palliative care in the community with almost all respondents rating their knowledge as excellent or significantly improved after completing the training. Participants expressed a high need for the package and a strong willingness to market the package to their employers and colleagues. The success of the program demonstrates the AHHA's capacity to develop and market educational programs and capitalise on its extensive networks to promote and deliver high-quality, evidence-based training.

The project has attracted national attention for its innovative approach to online learning and has received three national e-learning accolades for its innovative content, ease of use and adoption across the sector. Additionally, the strong advocacy leadership demonstrated by AHHA resulted in significant additional investment by the Commonwealth Department of Health in the project in the 2015 budget, at a time when health agencies generally experienced significant budget cuts.