



Media Release

Wednesday, 24 February 2016

MND Australia report shows need for improved access to palliative care

Two Australians die of motor neurone disease (MND) every day, showing the need for better access to palliative care for people with these conditions, Palliative Care Australia (PCA) CEO Liz Callaghan said.

The report - Economic analysis of MND in Australia by Deloitte Access Economics - released by MND Australia today highlights not just the huge costs to the health system, but a gap in access often felt by chronic disease groups.

“Many people with MND will access palliative care, but the majority (56%) of services are still delivered to people with cancer. Australians with end stage chronic illnesses can also benefit from the symptom and pain management provided by palliative care.

“As a result of this report MND Australia has called for access to care and support services to help people living with MND live well, and we hope palliative care is considered as part of that.”

United States research from 2006 considered palliative care essential from early diagnosis: “At present treatments for MND offer only the potential to slow the disease process. A palliative care approach is therefore required from diagnosis to ensure that early discussions around future care management and advance care planning are held and optimal symptom management for the person with MND and their family is achieved.”*

Ms Callaghan said MND Australia is part of the Neurological Alliance Australia that joined with PCA to call for palliative care access based on needs and wants of people living with MND and family in 2014.

“The position statement seeks early, comprehensive and accessible information on palliative care for people with conditions like MND. There is a great deal palliative care can offer people living with MND and their carers like support, pain and symptom management all while they are treated for their condition.

“People die from MND usually within two and a half years of diagnosis. That means palliative care should be available from diagnosis to help manage symptoms and to support carers.

“MND has a huge impact on families, the health budget and productivity. We need to do everything in our power to ensure those diagnosed with the condition are given the highest quality of care at the end of their lives,” Ms Callaghan said.

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Read the report [here](#)

Read the PCA and Neurological Alliance Australia Position Statement [here](#)

D Oliver, D Walsh & GD Borasio (eds) Palliative care in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis: from diagnosis to bereavement, 2nd edn, Oxford University Press, New York, 2006.

