Mary's journey

Bwgcolman (Palm Island) - First Nations -**Cancer of Unknown Primary**

Mary is a 60 year old proud Aboriginal woman, who has family connections in Bwgcolman, Townsville & the Atherton Tablelands. She enjoys watching her family play sport, as well as fishing & cooking. After noticing Mary had lost weight & started walking with a limp, a health worker encouraged Mary to have an annual health check.





tumour markers, while the X-ray of Mary's pelvis

Mary's blood test shows raised

JOYCE PALMER HEALTH

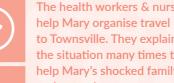
SERVICE (JPHS)

reveals a tumour.

CHEMOTHERAPY - TUH

Mary stays with her niece when in Townsville for chemotherapy or scans. The TUH Indigenous Health Liaison Officers (IHLO) & JPHS health workers support Mary & her family.





PICC & JPHS The health workers & nurses

help Mary organise travel to Townsville. They explain the situation many times to help Mary's shocked family understand.

DIAGNOSIS / SPECIALIST CARE -TOWNSVILLE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL (TUH)

cancer care team at TUH diagnose Mary with cancer of unknown primary with bone metastases in Mary's hip and spine.

DECLINING FUNCTION



Mary's family don't understand why Mary isn't getting better after the chemotherapy. The physiotherapist & nurses provide education, training & equipment.

PAIN **MANAGEMENT** AT HOME -**SPECIALIST PALLIATIVE CARE**

phn

JPHS organise telehealth appointments with the specialist palliative care service at TUH. Mary is very worried about having medications in the house & how to keep the children safe.



The CELC Townsville project is administered by Palliative Care Queensland and supported by funding from Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) through the Australian Government's PHN program.

BEREAVEMENT

25 members of Mary's family gather at the hospital in her last days. After Mary dies, the nurses assist the family to bath & dress Mary. While the council helps plan Mary's burial.









Mary is showing signs of a spinal cord compression & her pain medications need close monitoring. JPHS nurses & health workers spend many hours preparing Mary's family for her death.

Potential issues/barriers:

- Staff shortages use of agency nurses, adequate medical staffing for patients to be transferred back to JPHS
- Medical teams often keen to transfer people to Townsville

- Limited residential aged care
- Mealthcare professionals understanding of eldership
- **a** Late diagnosis due to reluctance to go to Townsville for investigations
- No culturally appropriate pain assessment tools available



- Common end of life medications & 2 syringe drivers available at Joyce Palmer Health Service
- Some families, use & storage of controlled drugs in the home is a concern, due to drug misuse & dependency within the community
- Realth literacy & support for planning healthcare

PRIMARY CARE -

COMPANY (PICC)

PALM ISLAND COMMUNITY

Mary has her health check with the female doctor, who has always been

good with women's business.

- Culturally appropriate health and bereavement services
- Timing & access to advance care planning & specialist palliative care
- **Experienced** health professionals often need to be strong advocates for patient wishes









After biopsies & many scans, the multi-disciplinary