

# Continuing Care newsletter

February 2005

## Children benefit from additional palliative care funds

Funding for children with palliative care needs in the terminal phase of their illness is now available to meet the gaps in service or equipment availability. The flexible support funds provide discretionary funding for children, their families and carers.

Any funded palliative care service caring for a child in the terminal phase of their illness can access these discretionary funds to help meet the specific needs of the child and their family/carer.

Many families need a range of goods and services. This includes in-home and out-of-home respite, equipment, wound care, oxygen, incontinence aids and counselling. The flexible support funds aim to:

- Improve quality of life and symptom management
- Optimise the capacity of individuals and families to maintain a family environment
- Promote access to in-home or out-of-home respite
- Provide support to families in their caring role
- Improve options and choices about support
- Enable proactive intervention and minimise the occurrence of crisis.

These funds can be accessed through the Victorian Paediatric Palliative Care Program (VPPCP) by any funded palliative care service. The allocation of funds will be dependant upon an assessment completed by the treating team/service providers and submitted to VPPCP. Services and/or equipment required should not be accessible through any other funding source (such as, *Post Acute Care, Early Choices, Making A Difference, Family Choice, Continuity of Care, PADP, the Aids & Equipment Program or any other funded program*).

The guidelines for the use of flexible support funds for children with palliative care needs can be found on [www.health.vic.gov.au/palliativecare](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/palliativecare).

Referrals are to be forwarded to:

Carol Quayle  
Manager Victoria Paediatric Palliative Care Program,  
Royal Children's Hospital  
Flemington Road  
Parkville 3052  
Tel: 9345 5522  
Email: [carol.quayle@rch.org.au](mailto:carol.quayle@rch.org.au)



## Introducing Vivien Adler

### *Acting Manager Continuing Care*

Vivien joined the Acute Health Division of the Department of Human Services in 1998 after a wide ranging career in the health sector. Vivien trained as a social worker and has worked in clinical and management roles in health and related areas including community mental health, community health, hospitals and the former WorkCare Rehabilitation system. Prior to joining the Department, Vivien was the first CEO at the Inner South East Melbourne Division of General Practice.

Vivien's initial focus at the Department was on programs including Hospital in the Home, Post Acute Care, the Effective Discharge Strategy and organ donation. Vivien's usual role is Manager, Palliative Care and Specialist Programs, which includes renal dialysis and HIV. Vivien has a particular commitment to improving the linkages between different parts of the health sector.

Since Janet Laverick's move to Community Health, Vivien has been enjoying the opportunity to act as the Manager of the Continuing Care unit.

## More placements now available in palliative care

The *Program of Experience in the Palliative Approach* (PEPA) provides workforce placements with specialist palliative care providers, in either an inpatient or community setting. A second round of placements will give primary health and aged care professionals further opportunity to gain hands-on experience in palliative care.

PEPA aims to enhance the skills and expertise of primary health and aged care workers providing care for people who are dying, their families and their carers. It also seeks to:

- Support workers to collaborate across professional boundaries
- Develop and explore opportunities for workers to gain professional exposure to, and experience in, palliative care
- Build relationships between agencies.

Typical placements are either two one-week blocks within a designated period or one day per week for ten weeks. Placements are flexible and planned to suit the needs of participants. Ongoing post-placement support programs will assist workers to implement skills learned during the work placement within their own organisations.

Applications for round two close on 25 February with placements beginning in April. Round one applications exceeded available placements and interest for the 2005 places is expected to be strong. The program will run until September 2005.

Workers in primary health (allied health and nursing) and residential care, Aboriginal health workers, complementary therapists and volunteer managers/coordinators are invited to apply. Employers will receive payment to backfill staff participating in PEPA and rural employees may receive an allowance for travel and accommodation.

For more information and applications forms check the PEPA website on [www.health.vic.gov.au/palliativecare/pepa](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/palliativecare/pepa) or contact Allan Havelock on 9616 1459 or email [allan.havelock@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:allan.havelock@dhs.vic.gov.au).

## Maintenance Dialysis Advisory Committee

A review of maintenance dialysis services in Victoria has recently been completed. The final report from this review – *Renal dialysis: a revised service model for Victoria* – is now available on the website (see below). Hard copies of the report will be distributed to health services and other relevant organisations in the week beginning 28 February.

One of the recommendations from the review is for the establishment of a Maintenance Dialysis Advisory Committee. The role of the committee is to provide independent and expert advice to the department on the future development of the maintenance dialysis service system on:

- The current and future role of individual hubs and satellites
- Variations to the geographic coverage responsibilities of hubs
- Priority locations for new and/or additional maintenance dialysis chairs
- Funding issues, both recurrent and capital.

The committee will include representation from:

- Hubs and satellites
- Metropolitan and rural renal services
- Metropolitan and rural departmental personnel
- Physicians, nursing and allied health personnel
- Service planning and administrative personnel
- Consumer and peak bodies

Letters seeking nominations have been sent to all relevant service providers. Nominations close on 11 February 2005 and the first committee meeting is scheduled for 10 March 2005.

Any enquiries please contact Gillian Smith on 03 9616 1333 or [gillian.smith@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:gillian.smith@dhs.vic.gov.au).

Website: [www.health.vic.gov.au/renaldialysis/improving.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/renaldialysis/improving.htm)

For further information, or to subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter, contact Coralie Kennedy on [coralie.kennedy@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:coralie.kennedy@dhs.vic.gov.au)

## Comprehensive Assessment Tool Update

The final report into the review and identification of an existing, validated, comprehensive assessment tool can now be downloaded from our website. A summary of the outcomes of this project, undertaken by the Lincoln Centre for Ageing and Community Care Research, La Trobe University, is also available.

Next steps are:

- To develop a framework to guide the comprehensive assessment of older people with complex care needs and individuals with chronic health conditions. The framework will be developed in consultation with service users and providers. It will include a set of principles to support a client centred and carer inclusive approach to comprehensive assessment. It will also establish clear processes for identifying clients who would benefit from a comprehensive assessment of their care needs.
- To explore the costs associated with adopting the InterRAI suite of tools. This will include software costs to enable the tools to be used in an electronic format and education and training costs to support the adoption of the tools. This information will inform future decisions regarding proceeding with a demonstration project.

The link to the final report and summary of the project outcomes is: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/subacute/assessment.htm>

If you would like any additional information about this project, please contact Belinda Gilsenan on (03) 9616 1313 or email [belinda.gilsenan@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:belinda.gilsenan@dhs.vic.gov.au)