



MayShaw Health Centre in Swansea, Tasmania, serves a predominantly older community, with the highest proportion of over-65 residents in the region. Swansea is a small community on the east coast of Tasmania and is classified as a rural remote area. As a multidisciplinary site with urgent care, sub-acute hospital beds, residential aged care, and home care services, MayShaw's goal in participating in the ELDAC Linkages program was to improve palliative care by enhancing staff education and fostering collaboration with specialist palliative care services.

Situated in a remote area, MayShaw faced challenges in providing consistent, skilled palliative care, with limited access to external face to face education opportunities and resources.

With ELDAC's support, MayShaw Health Centre seized the opportunity to provide staff with much-needed face-to-face education. This training empowered staff to engage in meaningful conversations about death and dying, helping them to approach palliative care at an earlier point for the resident and therefore enabling earlier interventions. Staff developed skills in recognising changes and deterioration earlier, which allowed them to manage symptoms earlier and to work with the resident and families to implement advance care directives that aligned with residents' wishes. For families, this proactive approach provided valuable time to process and accept the changes ahead, easing the intensity of grief and shock at the time of death.

The ELDAC Linkages program also opened doors for MayShaw to build essential collaborative relationships with external palliative care providers. Through the program, MayShaw improved communication with the local palliative care service as well as connecting with Palliative Care Tasmania, mapping ways to leverage external support and build momentum for ongoing improvement in palliative care.

"A highlight for us is watching staff engage with health care professionals from the Specialist Palliative Care Team, increasing their knowledge and seeing their investment in different ideas that they can then share with colleagues."

The MayShaw team also reviewed and redeveloped palliative care related policy, as well as developing new palliative care resources to support their teams in providing quality care.

This new-found confidence and collaboration enabled MayShaw to develop a more resilient, compassionate approach to end of life care. By fostering strong connections within and beyond the organisation, MayShaw created a supportive network that ensures residents and their families receive palliative care that honours their needs, dignity, and wellbeing.

"Knowing who to contact how, when and for what is a benefit we have gained through the ELDAC Linkages program."

Key outcomes

- Improved early recognition of end of life trajectory and timely advance care directive implementation
- Increased family and resident involvement in end of life planning, reducing grief and anxiety
- Updated and expanded policies on end of life, after death care, and voluntary assisted dying
- Embedded palliative care in nurse and carers meetings
- Updated resources for palliative care, advance care directives and starting conversations on end of life

Before participating in the ELDAC Linkages program the identification and initiating of the end of life plan and understanding our resident needs through the advance care plan was ad hoc and staff did not feel confident in delivering the end of life care. Due to this we found that end of life was sudden, family was less involved in the end of life process. Staff were not confident in their communication with families and families therefore did not discuss death openly or therefore have the opportunity to discuss the implications of decisions being made around life saving measures for the resident at end of life. There were signs that we could be doing better in collaborating with families more for better end of life outcomes.

Staff have now participated in face to face education and have been supported in building their confidence in discussing end of life and delivering care for not only the resident but also most importantly, the family. Advance care plans have been implemented in a proactive manner with participation with residents and family and utilising prompts from the ELDAC information kits available for the staff.

We have seen great improvements in not only the staff's experience but also the collaboration with the multidisciplinary teams that have supported them, and also engaging with family in a timely and appropriate manner. Due to this, we have now been receiving feedback that we feel reflects on the learning and growth of the MayShaw team and engagements we have delivered through the ELDAC Linkages program.

One family wrote to us with a positive comment below:

"Dear MayShaw team, we have so much gratitude to you all for the incredible job that you did in looking after our father J..., for the last 6 months of his life.... you played a part keeping Dad happy, pain free, clean and comfortable"

Another family recognised the important role we played in engaging with them as a family :

"K... daughter and family wanted to let you know that you were amazing to her family in all the process for her, many big thanks from them."

And furthermore, how we recognised the end of life trajectory and assisted family to be by the bedside leading to the following compliment we received:

"Not only did you care for P... but the family as well. Particularly during P's last week when B... & J... stayed."

The ability for the team to take on the learning offered through participation in the ELDAC Linkages program has given not only the staff, but our residents and their family the ability to engage in the end of life trajectory and have more positive impact on the end of life pathway. The outcome from this has created staff being confident to create safe and peaceful deaths that engage with the families and reduce grief and bereavement impacts.

MayShaw clinical team

MayShaw Residential Aged Care



Residential Aged Care



Swansea, Tasmania

Goal

To increase staff confidence in recognising end of life stages, improve communication about end of life care, and establish collaborative relationships to support palliative care delivery.

Highlights

- Enhanced access to face-to-face education and palliative care training
- Strengthened confidence among staff in providing quality palliative care
- Built new connections with external palliative care providers, improving collaborative support