

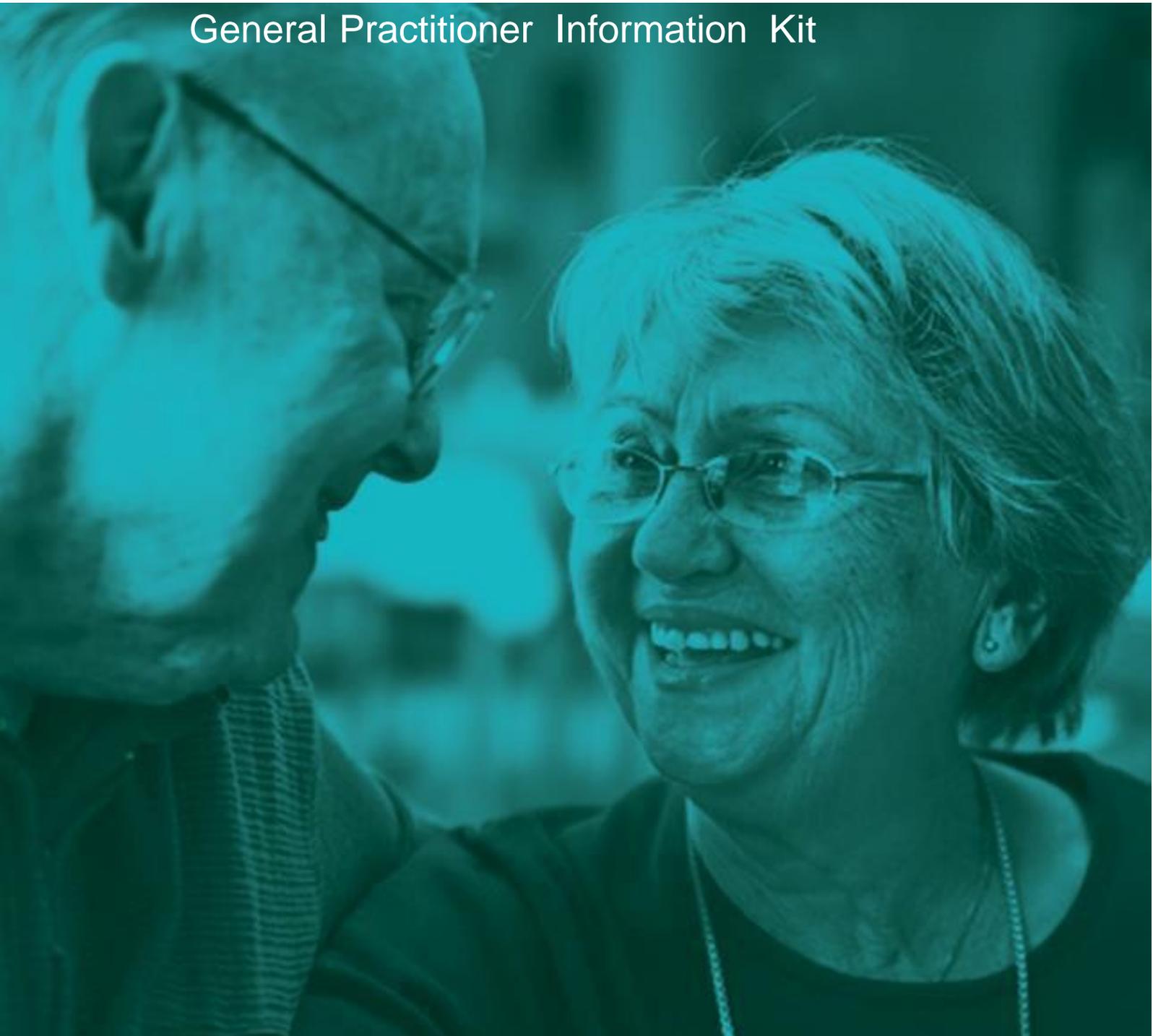


NSW Ambulance

excellence in care

Authorised Palliative Care Plans
Respecting patient wishes

General Practitioner Information Kit



Authorised Palliative Care Plans

General Practitioners (GPs) involved in palliative care now have the option of closing the after-hours gap for their palliative care patients. In consultation with the patient and their family, the GP may elect to complete a NSW Ambulance Authorised Palliative Care Plan (Adult and Paediatric available).

Once endorsed by NSW Ambulance, this plan specifically authorises NSW Ambulance paramedics to deliver individually tailored treatment based on the GP's advice

as documented in the plan. In the event of a Triple Zero (000) call-out by the patient, the NSW Ambulance Authorised Palliative Care Plan may be initiated. This may include administration of medications and other actions to relieve and manage symptoms in the patient's chosen place of care.

Please note: To enable NSW Ambulance Paramedics to comply with the patient's wishes a copy of the endorsed plan must be provided. Therefore NSW Ambulance advises patients to keep a copy of their endorsed plan with them at all times.

What we know

Individuals with palliative care needs often access care through their local family GP and community palliative care nurse. Families and carers also have an important role in supporting individuals with palliative care needs in the home, particularly in the after hours period when health service providers may be more difficult to contact.

This plan allows the paramedic responding to a Triple Zero (000) call to respect the palliative care wishes of the patient and follow the GP's advice.

It is understood that families and carers are often well prepared with education and support, including medication regimes to help manage breakthrough pain and other symptoms in the after hours period. It is also understood that on occasion, things may not go as planned and more help is needed.

According to recent research, 70 per cent of Australians would prefer to die in their own homes yet only around 14 per cent are able to. The most recent statistics on palliative care and deaths in hospital indicate that in 2013-14, 50 per cent of Australians who died that year did so within a hospital setting¹.

In the after-hours period when sudden changes in health may lead to uncertainty, NSW Ambulance Triple Zero (000) service is commonly a first response. In the absence of detailed clinical knowledge about the patient, the paramedic's response is protocol based and transfer to the hospital emergency department is generally required.

This transfer is often not the optimal outcome in these situations and may be avoidable. For a patient with palliative care needs, transfer may be avoidable if the paramedic has access to a NSW Ambulance Authorised Palliative Care Plan.

When the paramedics are called via Triple Zero (000), they are advised that a patient at that address has an Authorised Palliative Care Plan in place. The finer details within the plan are not visible on their system. The patient/person responsible will be required to provide a copy of the endorsed plan to the paramedics when they arrive.

¹National Hospital Morbidity Database

What does an Authorised Palliative Care Plan include?

Checklist and instruction sheet:

SUBMISSION OF AN AUTHORISED PALLIATIVE CARE PLAN

- The plan may be completed electronically or by hand.
- All handwritten details must be clear and legible.
- All fields must be completed. Additional relevant documentation may be attached to the plan.
- Completed plans must be submitted to NSW Ambulance for endorsement.
- All applications must be endorsed by the treating clinician.
- Completed plans must be completed using the attached form and may be submitted via fax or scanned and submitted as a PDF attachment via email
Email:
AMBULANCE-ClinicalProtocolP1@health.nsw.gov.au
Fax: (02) 9320 7380.

EXISTING AUTHORISED CARE PLANS

- Check "New Patient" if this is the patient's first NSW Ambulance Authorised Palliative Care.
- Check "Existing Patient" if the plan being submitted is a modification or new version of an existing plan.

PATIENT DETAILS

- All fields are to be completed.
- The patient's full address (including street number, street, suburb, post code) is to be completed (as the NSW Ambulance response alerts are linked to the patient's address).

CARDIAC ARREST TREATMENT DECISION

- Ensure 'PERFORM CPR' or 'WITHHOLD CPR' is clearly selected (not both).
- Select all applicable check box reasons for withholding resuscitation.

TREATMENT AND MEDICATION OPTIONS

- All fields are to be completed.
- It should be noted if the medication/s to be administered are outside NSW Ambulance Pharmacology, the patient is required to provide their own medication for administration by the paramedics.

CLINICIAN DETAILS

- Ensure all fields are completed and the treating clinician has signed this section

PATIENT CLINICAL HISTORY

- Ensure all fields are completed (additional pages may be attached).
- Write N/A where appropriate

FAMILY/ENDURING GUARDIAN

- Where identified, relevant family enduring guardian details must be provided
- Correspondence from NSW Ambulance will be sent to the person identified in the last part of this section. E.G. Patient or Family Member/Enduring Guardian.

PATIENT/FAMILY/ENDURING GUARDIAN AUTHORISATION

- The patient and/or their family/enduring guardian may sign the plan in this section to acknowledge the contents. If the patient is unable to sign, this should be indicated by writing "Unable to sign".

LOCATION OF CARE

- If appropriate, provide the address of the designated alternative care facility should treatment of the patient be unable to be continued in their current location.
- If the patient dies during transport by NSW Ambulance the preferred destination should be recorded here. (e.g. Nearest hospital or Patient's home address)

POST DEATH MANAGEMENT PLAN

- In the event of the patient's death, authorised NSW Ambulance paramedics will complete the "Verification of Death" form in accordance with NSW Health Policy "Death - Verification of Death and Medical Certificate of Cause of Death PD2015_040"
- The details of the Medical Practitioner who will complete the "Medical Certificate of Cause of Death" must be recorded here.
- Paramedics must be able to make verbal contact with the Medical Practitioner identified in this section at the time of death to enable the completion of the Verification of death procedure. If contact cannot be made NSW Police will be requested to attend the scene.

CONTACT DETAILS

- All relevant contact details should be completed

UPDATING OF CARE PLANS

- Clinicians where possible should complete the Plan in conjunction with the Palliative Care Service assisting with the care of this patient.
- Clinicians are to review and provide updated plans as required.
- NSW Ambulance Authorised Palliative Care Plans are valid for 12 months from the date of endorsement. It is the responsibility of the Clinician to ensure the plan (if required) is renewed with NSW Ambulance prior to the expiration date.
- In the event of death of the patient, the treating clinician is requested to notify NSW Ambulance.

ENDORSEMENT OF AUTHORISED PALLIATIVE CARE PLANS

A NSW Ambulance delegate will review each Authorised Palliative Care Plan application. Once the plan has been endorsed by NSW Ambulance, a letter and a copy of the endorsed plan will be sent to both the patient and the clinician.

Frequently Asked Questions

IS THERE A RIGHT TIME TO INITIATE AN AUTHORISED PALLIATIVE CARE PLAN?

At some stage in the progression of an individual's illness, the decision may be made that further treatment is not indicated. At this point, ongoing medical care aims to maintain comfort and function with an understanding that end of life is inevitable in the near future. An Authorised Palliative Care Plan is an appropriate response for individuals nearing end of life.

WHO CAN INITIATE AN AUTHORISED PALLIATIVE CARE PLAN?

Caring for an individual with palliative care needs can be a complex undertaking and may involve a number of treating clinicians. The plan can be initiated by any members of the team, however final approval and signing prior to submission to NSW Ambulance is the responsibility of the treating GP or specialist.

WHY DOES NSW AMBULANCE NEED TO AUTHORISE THE PLAN?

NSW Ambulance staff review the medical orders of each submitted plan to ensure the order is consistent with the capabilities and capacity of paramedics. It is possible components of the plan may need further discussion to ensure the plan is workable and endorsed. If this were to occur, the requesting GP or specialist would be consulted.

HOW DO I INITIATE AN AUTHORISED PALLIATIVE CARE PLAN?

Request the Authorised Palliative Care Plan template via AMBULANCE-ClinicalProtocolP1@health.nsw.gov.au

or

Phone (02) 9779 3821.

Discuss the plan with the treating team, patient, family, carers and/or enduring power of attorney and agree on what measures are appropriate for the situation.

Complete the form then scan and email or fax the signed document as per instructions

For more information

For more information about NSW Ambulance Authorised Palliative Care Plans (Adult and Paediatric) contact:

NSW Ambulance

Clinical Services

Email:

AMBULANCE-ClinicalProtocolP1@health.nsw.gov.au

Phone: (02) 9779 3821