

# An extension of your care

You may be interested to know that the Hospice Palliative Care Association has changed its name. Going forward, the association will be known as the...



# APCC

ASSOCIATION OF PALLIATIVE  
CARE CENTRES™

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## The APCC defines palliative care as follows:

*“Palliative care is the physical, psychological, social and spiritual care provided by an inter-disciplinary team of experts to anyone with a life-threatening illness and their loved ones. Care is offered from the point of diagnosis and extends to bereavement support if needed. Over 90% of the care that APCC members provide is home-based with a focus on promoting quality of life.”*

As the new logo depicts, palliative care can and should be provided alongside curative treatments for life-threatening illnesses, ideally from the point of diagnosis. The care that APCC members provide is for patients and their loved ones, and includes bereavement support, if needed.

**This leaflet answers some of the specific questions that we frequently receive from medical professionals.**

## This leaflet aims to answer questions frequently received from medical professionals:

**Q: Why should APCC members be the first point of call for palliative care?**

**A:** Hospices are recognized as 'specialists' in Palliative Care.<sup>2</sup> APCC members are required to comply with the Standards for Palliative Healthcare Services, 4th edition, 2020 approved by the Council for Health Service Accreditation of South Africa (COHSASA) and the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua). These Standards are internationally recognised and benchmark the quality of services that our members provide. All APCC members are audited against these Standards. APCC has a cloud-based patient care monitoring, evaluation and reporting system able to report in detail on interventions given to any patient.

**Q: If I refer my patient to an APCC member, am I still involved as their medical practitioner?**

**A:** APCC members are comfortable working alongside the primary clinician or specialist. They can provide a supportive extension of your care to the patient and their loved ones; in most cases, the APCC members inter-disciplinary teams collaborate and work alongside the referring doctors who are treating the patient. They also provide supportive care to the patient's loved ones; this may include advanced healthcare planning, as well as psychosocial and spiritual support.

**Q: When should a patient be directed towards palliative care?**

**A:** Medical practitioners are encouraged to refer their patients to an APCC member after making a life-threatening diagnosis. Palliative care enhances quality of life and can help patients and their loved ones to cope with aggressive treatments by managing pain and symptoms as well as psychosocial support through the trajectory of the illness.

**Q: Who provides the services?**

**A:** An inter-disciplinary team that typically consists of a medical doctor, nurse, social worker and home-based carers. The care is holistic and provides clinical, psychosocial and spiritual support to the patient and to their loved ones. Bereavement or grief support are also an important aspect of care provided by APCC members, if and when required.

**Q: Where are the services provided?**

**A:** Primarily at the patient's home as well as in frail care, step-down and child care facilities, hospitals and care homes for the elderly. Some APCC members have in-patient units (IPUs) where patients are provided with 24-hour care.

<sup>2</sup> The National Policy Framework and Strategy for Palliative Care specifically identifies Hospices as Palliative Care Service Providers..

**Q: Can APCC members deal with patients who need a high level of care?**

**A:** Yes, APCC's members employ palliatively trained medical, nursing and psychosocial staff to provide a high standard of palliative care. They also have specialised knowledge and skills to prevent or alleviate distressing symptoms. To be a member of the APCC, members have to comply with the internationally recognised Standards for Palliative Healthcare Services. APCC members have been the pioneers of palliative care in South Africa since the 1980s.

**Q: If my patient believes that hospices only provide end-of-life care, how do I speak to them about it?**

**A:** Although APCC members provide excellent end-of-life care, their emphasis is to improve the quality of life of a patient from the point of diagnosis with a life-threatening illness. There is detailed information available on the APCC website ([www.apcc.org.za](http://www.apcc.org.za)) which can help inform the discussion you have with your patients.

**Q: Who pays for APCC members' services?**

**A:** This depends on the situation of each patient. Medical Aids pay for the services provided to their members, some patients pay for themselves, and some patients are subsidised by the APCC member.

**Q: For how long will my patient need palliative care?**

**A:** While patients can move in and out of a palliative care service, they may remain beneficiaries of the services for as long as they (or their loved ones) need or wish to. Patients may be discharged from the service if they are doing well and able to function independently. This is always negotiated between the patient, family and members of the care team. We encourage patients to engage with an APCC member from the point of diagnosis as this helps to dispel fears and provides insight into the holistic services that can be offered. Many patients have benefitted from an improved quality of life through the supportive care received from APCC members.

**Q: Does palliative care cover conditions such as HIV/AIDS, chronic respiratory diseases and more?**

**A:** Yes. All people who are diagnosed with a life-threatening illness can benefit from palliative care. Adults and children with chronic conditions such as HIV/AIDS, drug-resistant TB, chronic respiratory diseases, cardiovascular and neuromuscular diseases, MND and more; all benefit from palliative care. It would be helpful to check with the closest APCC member what their admission criteria are.



**Q: Where can I get a list of APCC members in my area?**

**A: Go to [www.apcc.org.za](http://www.apcc.org.za) and go to FIND A HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE CENTRE. The members are all listed per region.**



Your local APCC members is

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**E [info@emailaddress.co.za](mailto:info@emailaddress.co.za)**  
**[www.website.co.za](http://www.website.co.za)**  
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