

Position Statement

SUPPORTIVE AND PALLIATIVE CARE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH CHRONIC PROGRESSIVE LUNG DISEASE

Lung disease in Australia is common and is often underestimated. Lung disease affects over 2.6 million people in Australia. Lung Foundation recognises Supportive and Palliative Care as a fundamental stage of care in living with a lung disease. Supportive and Palliative Care allows people with a lung disease to enhance their life in a way that is meaningful to them. It also supports families and caregivers in their adjustments to some of the lifestyle changes they may have to face.

Lung Foundation Australia believes:

1. Supportive and Palliative Care is an essential service that optimises function and comfort and minimises symptoms throughout the continuum of care for people living with progressive lung disease.
2. Supportive and Palliative care services must be offered as early as possible to manage the changing needs of the patient and to facilitate end of life discussions and decision making consistent with the patient's needs.
3. Services need to be provided for people living with progressive lung disease and they need to be informed of these services.
4. People with progressive lung disease need to have equity of access to any service or intervention available that improves quality of life at any time during the course of the disease.
5. It is imperative that extensive education and ongoing support be available for palliative care service providers involved in the care of people with lung disease.
6. Access to ongoing support services to help family members cope during the course of the disease and after passing must be included in patients' palliative care plans.
7. It is vital that Supportive and Palliative Care service providers be familiar with all current guidelines for evidence-based practice in managing progressive lung disease.
8. Supportive and Palliative Care can be used simultaneously with active medical intervention focused on disease modifying care.



Lung Foundation Australia calls for:

1. Equitable access for all people living with malignant and non-malignant lung disease to services in Supportive and Palliative Care.
2. Supportive and Palliative Care services to be available to meet the needs of people living with a lung disease as early as possible after diagnosis, enabling the best possible quality of life and dignity in dying.
3. Supportive and Palliative Care healthcare providers to understand the specific needs of people with lung disease
4. Increasing awareness of the benefits of Supportive and Palliative Care to people living with lung disease and their families.
5. Increased facilitation of appropriate Supportive and Palliative Care service referrals.
6. Health Practitioners having a responsibility to facilitate referrals.
7. Identification of barriers to timely and appropriate referrals.
8. Education for all healthcare providers on respiratory patients' supportive and palliative care needs and services available to support them.
9. More funding made available to allow equitable access to Supportive and Palliative Care services.
10. Utilisation of Lung Foundation Australia's links, education and resources.