

MEMBERS' BUSINESS: COLIN SMYTH MARIE CURIE REPORT ON CHALLENGING INEQUALITIES IN PALLIATIVE CARE

Royal College of Nursing

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is the trade union for nursing staff, with members in the NHS, independent and third sectors. RCN Scotland promotes patient and nursing interests by campaigning on issues that affect members, shaping national health policies, representing members on practice and employment issues and providing members with learning and development opportunities. With around 40,000 members in Scotland, the RCN is the voice of nursing.

The implementation of health and social care integration should, in time, bring about a more seamless transition between services for those moving between medical care and palliative

Background

RCN Scotland shares the view of the Marie Curie that health services should be designed to ensure



In 2015 RCN Scotland provided evidence to the [Health and Social Care Committee](#) which can be found [here](#).

Overview

Those in need of palliative care should experience a service which is delivered in a timely and seamless manner, accessing care in a coordinated and compassionate way at the end of life.

Complex systems run differently by different care providers can lead to confusion in an already stressful situation for patients and their families. There is only one chance to get end of life care right.

Specialist nurses provide much of the training and education on palliative and end of life care to pre-registration and post registration nursing staff and to non-registered staff. They also provide input to the development of courses both in universities and other settings and are crucial to the development of future education for the nursing workforce.

Delivering end of life care

Nurses, particularly specialist nurses, district nurses and practice nurses working in the community and primary care, are very likely to be the people asked to provide the coordinated care of those who can benefit from palliative and end of life care. They are frequently the main link between the GP, local authority and the patient.

Commissioning and planning end of life care

As significant providers of, and experts in, palliative and end of life care nurses play a key role in helping to inform the commissioning strategy of health and social care partnerships. They also act as advocates for patients and those important to them to ensure that the services that are commissioned meet the needs of the local people who are recipients of the services.

Further information sources

If you contact Sarah Atherton, Parliamentary and Media Officer, by email at sarah.atherton@rcn.org.uk or by telephone 0131 662 6172.