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IMPROVING RAPID ACCESS TO SYMPTOM CONTROL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL SUPPORT DURING OUT OF HOURS PERIOD: MARIE CURIE PALLIATIVE RESPONSE SERVICE

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Introduction Working in partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Marie Curie Cancer care introduced its Rapid Response Service as an extension to the existing Marie Curie Nursing Service supporting palliative patients throughout Wales.

Aims & Methods This service is designed to meet key recommendations of the Sugar Report¹ including: provision of 24 hour services to enable more patients to die in a place of their choice. The service aims to support patients and their carers by delivering urgent care provided by nurses with expertise and training in assessment, symptom management and care delivery. Marie Curie's experienced Registered Nursing staff deliver rapid nursing interventions to palliative care patients, irrespective of diagnosis, from 10pm to 7am, 7 days a week. It is integrated with the out of hours teams, working in collaboration with emergency care practitioners, district nurses, palliative care teams, local hospices, care homes and hospitals.

Results The service has seen an increased percentage of patients with non-cancer diagnosis accessing the service. The majority of recorded clinical input to address crisis has related to advice and support, symptom management, medication and pain management. In first year this service prevented over 600 unscheduled admissions to the acute sector.

Conclusion Delivering rapid nursing interventions, out of hours, provides patients and their carers with improved access to symptom control, psychological, social and spiritual support.

1. Palliative Care Planning Group Wales, Report to the Minister for Health and Social Services, June 2008.

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