



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

5 July 2004

### **Caring Volunteers making a difference to end of life**

Giving support and strength to patients and their families during terminal illness is a rewarding experience and volunteers are needed for palliative care services at Braeside Hospital and South Western Sydney Area Health Service (SWSAHS).

SWSAHS volunteer coordinator Dianne Nicholson said becoming a volunteer brought immense personal satisfaction and help to those in need.

“Volunteers work with a team of people including specialist doctors, nurses and other health staff such as physiotherapists and social workers,” she said.

“We are currently seeking volunteers to work in the Fairfield, Liverpool and Bankstown areas.

“Together we provide a key role in supporting patients as well as their families or carers at home,” said Ms Nicholson.

Palliative care volunteers provide short-term respite for carers while providing clients with comforts such as gentle massage, aromatherapy, reading or memory book writing.

Volunteers will participate in an 8 week training course from 27 July to 21 September 2004 at Braeside Hospital, Fairfield. Another course will be run at Bankstown Hospital each Tuesday 28 September to 16 November 2004.

Participants will learn skills including communication, caring for people at home, bereavement support and basic massage.

Palliative Care is defined by the World Health Organisation as an approach improving the quality of life for patients and their families facing a life threatening illness - through the prevention and relief of suffering, assessment and treatment of symptoms, and physical, emotional and spiritual support.

For further information contact Dianne Nicholson on 9616 8656.

*Interview/photo opportunity: Dianne Nicholson or Tricia Parker (long standing volunteer) are available to talk about their experiences and the immense satisfaction of volunteering for the palliative care service.*

**Issued by South Western Sydney Area Health Service Public Affairs 9828 6951 or 9828 5700.**