

NEWS RELEASE FROM
THE REGISTERED NURSING HOME ASSOCIATION

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**CARE OF TERMINALLY ILL IN NURSING HOMES:
RNHA WELCOMES NEW GUIDANCE**

The Registered Nursing Home Association (RNHA) has welcomed the development of a new guide for care home managers and staff designed to help them improve care for people in the final stages of life.

The guide, due to be published by the NHS End of Life Care programme, has been produced by a national steering group of experts including an RNHA nurse representative.

Commented RNHA chief executive officer Frank Ursell: "It is vital that the clinical, psychological and social care of people in the final stages of life should be handled effectively and sensitively. Individuals should have access, where necessary, to appropriate levels of palliative care provided by trained nursing staff and other specialists.

"We, as an association, wish to promote the highest possible standards of terminal care and are pleased to be working with colleagues from all the care sectors, including the NHS, in disseminating best practice."

Figures for 2004/05 from the Commission for Social Care Inspection, the independent body that monitors the quality of care provided in nursing homes, show that 84% of those inspected during the year had met the national minimum standard for terminal care.

Said Mr Ursell: "Despite these encouraging findings, we accept that there can be no room for complacency. The new guide, when it is available, will add to the knowledge and expertise of nursing home staff and help us to further improve our care for patients during their final weeks and days."

He added: "We are aware that the national End of Life team, which has worked hard to produce the guide, is looking to strategic health authorities to provide training and resources for its implementation. We hope that the reorganisation of health authorities that has just been announced by the Secretary of State for Health will not create an administrative vacuum for the next couple of years."

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Notes to editors:

1. A progress report was published on 11th April 2006 by the national End of Life Care programme. The report refers to the imminent publication of a new guide for care home managers and staff that has been developed by a steering group comprising representatives from the statutory, independent and voluntary care sectors.
2. The RNHA represents over 1,200 nursing homes across the UK.

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