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**MEDIA STATEMENT
7 January 2011**

BETHESDA SUPPORTS PALLIATIVE CARE PROJECT IN INDIA

Wendy Scott, Clinical Nurse Consultant for the Bethesda Palliative Ambulatory Service (North) was enthusiastically supported by the hospital recently in her palliative care endeavors in India. Wendy joined Dr Anil Tandon, Clinical Lead, WA Cancer and Palliative Care Network as part of Project Hamrahi, a collaborative initiative between the Australasian Palliative Link International (APLI) and a charitable trust called Pallium India. APLI is a group of Australian palliative care personnel and supporters interested in the supportive development of palliative care in the Asia-Pacific region.

Their work involved a voluntary placement at two neighbouring hospitals, the Meherbhai Tata Memorial Hospital and the Tata Main Hospital, located in Jamshedpur in the Eastern zone of India, approximately 2,000 km from Mumbai. Their objective was to share experiences with medical and nursing staff to assist them to take care of those patients who were dying, ensuring a peaceful and pain-free death.

Though having many years of combined experience in palliative care, Nurse Wendy Scott and Dr Anil Tandon found the immediate environment quite confronting.

Dr Tandon described the distress of the patient as being “very difficult to witness” and even though the pair has a combined 28 years of experience in palliative care work, nothing could have prepared him for what he described as “a warzone of cancer-related pain, grief, financial hardship....desperation and much, much more”.

Ms Scott spoke with 130 nursing students over 4 days, with a focus on communication, pain assessment and care of the dying patient and their role in the alleviation of suffering. “There was limited, effective use of appropriate pain medication, with the communication between team members during the last hours of a person’s life resulting in poor care outcomes”, said Wendy.

Ms Scott’s experience leaves her with a feeling that she has “given something back – even in a small way”. Dr Tandon spoke of the immense value in the opportunity to contribute. “To see patients, crying when they first come into hospital, their bodies rigid with agony and their speech just a whimper, gradually return to humans who could talk to us, walk to the toilet and regain their appetite was without doubt the greatest reward”.



Above: Nurse Wendy Scott in the ward office at the Meherbhai Tata Memorial Hospital in Jamshedpur, India.



Above: Hospitals visited by Nurse Wendy Scott and Dr Anil Tandon in Jamshedpur, India.

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