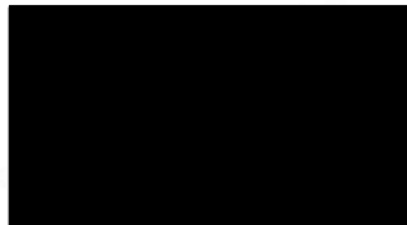




Victorian Auditor-General's Office



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Ms Lilian Topic  
Secretary  
Legal and Social Issues Committee  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
Spring Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3002

<lsic@parliament.vic.gov.au>

Dear Ms Topic

**Inquiry into End of Life Choices**

Thank you for your letter of 3 June 2015 inviting submissions to the Legal and Social Issues Legislation Committee's Inquiry into End of Life Choices.

I refer the Committee to the recently tabled *Palliative Care* audit report (15 April 2015) which I consider relevant to the Committee's Inquiry. This report is available at [www.audit.vic.gov.au](http://www.audit.vic.gov.au).

The *Palliative Care* audit found that more needed to be done to promote and embed Advance Care Plans (ACPs) – a patient's documented end-of-life preferences - across the health system. It found that while health services were developing better systems to identify and manage palliative care patients, including making wider use of ACPs, audited health services had made variable progress in the past 12 months. The use of advance care planning is still low and shows no signs of growth despite it being one of the central pillars of palliative care and an accepted model of practice for many years.

The audit found that reporting on the use of ACPs is poor so the prevalence of palliative patients with an ACP is not well known. The report recommended that health services prioritise the implementation of advance care planning and comply with the Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) data collection and reporting requirements. This would enable DHHS to better understand if inpatient services are using and promoting this vital tool.

The Committee may wish to fully examine the use of ACPs across a broader sample of health services.

All recommendations of the report were accepted by the audited agencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to your Committee's Inquiry. If my Office can be of further assistance, please contact Ms Jacquie Stepanoff (8601 7056).

Yours sincerely



John Doyle  
Auditor-General