Lutheran Services

Melissa Blakemore RN MACN

Lutheran Services is one of Queensland's longest established and most diverse aged care and community service providers. The organisation offers services, support, and accommodation for older people, young people, families, people living with a disability or mental concerns, and people experiencing domestic and family violence.

As a Registered Nurse for 25 years, with 13 years in aged care, Melissa Blakemore, Clinical Systems Partner at Lutheran Services, is passionate about utilising clinical technologies to positively impact residents' quality of life.

"Within the last 12 months, we've been working with PainChek's team to enhance our use of PainChek®, supported by education for our teams. The results have been amazing," Melissa shares.

In her current role, Melissa supports service delivery and clinical outcomes for aged care residents through digital solutions and innovation.



PainChek
Intelligent Pain Assessment

As part of the organisation's commitment to providing exceptional care, Melissa provides clinical system and program support across the organisation, contributing to system innovation, data quality oversight, clinical education, and advice on the use of the organisation's clinical management systems.

"It is an exciting and unique role," Melissa says. "I thoroughly enjoy collaborating with many different organisational stakeholders, managers and teams to make a meaningful contribution to clinical care through digital solutions and service support."

Improving pain management practice

Many residents at Lutheran Services aged care communities experience acute or chronic pain due to underlying medical conditions, making effective pain management a critical priority. Improving the quality of life for residents with chronic pain depends on how well their pain is managed.

> ***"At Lutheran Services, the wellbeing of our aged care residents is at the heart of all we do. We want the people in our care to live to their potential, all things considered, and exceptional pain management is all part of this."***

"Many residents in our care have underlying medical conditions, diagnosis or history that impacts their experience of pain," Melissa explains. "It is important that pain is assessed regularly, managed through appropriate interventions and follow-up, and that referrals are made when required to ensure effective treatment regimes are in place. It is also important that the assessment tools used to identify pain are clinically proven and support best practice."

In 2021, Lutheran Services implemented the PainChek® digital pain assessment solution to support several key outcomes for residents, staff, and the organisation, including:

- Meeting Aged Care Quality and Safety Standards
- Supporting digital transformation and the use of technology to support clinical workflows
- Enhancing clinical governance around data collection and reporting to improve pain management practice and outcomes for residents
- Improving pain identification, follow-up, and management
- Providing an assessment tool that can be used to identify pain indicators when a resident experiences challenges in communicating their pain
- Supporting system innovation, clinical service delivery processes, compliance, and clinical governance monitoring around the assessment and management of pain

> ***"Working with the PainChek team to project manage and implement PainChek® at Lutheran Services has been a pleasure. The professionalism, education, and support offered have been key to ensuring the successful adoption of new digital technology and that the use of PainChek® is embedded into clinical practice at Lutheran Services. They have also provided wonderful educational opportunities and resources for our clinical teams."***

Prior to implementing PainChek®, staff used the Numeric Rating Scale (NRS) to assess pain in residents who could self-report, and the Abbey Pain Scale for those unable to reliably verbalise their pain.

Today, the team uses PainChek® to assess residents' pain in several scenarios: on admission, in the event of a significant change in condition, any time pain is suspected, and as part of the residents' ongoing care plan review.

Clinical staff are provided access to PainChek®, with ongoing training and support.

With PainChek® Analytics each aged care site across the Lutheran Services organisation receives an automated monthly report and can monitor in real-time residents who require a baseline assessment, residents who have not had an assessment within 90 days, and residents with outstanding follow-up.

"Organisational clinical governance is enhanced through PainChek® Analytics, improved pain assessment and management, and the monitoring of effectiveness and interventions. Reports are shared with all services along with our Quality Partners. This report also provides valuable information regarding the quality of pain assessments and can assist with clinical education and training. Examples of this include the monitoring of assessments being conducted using auto-facial analysis, assessments post-movement, a combination of PainChek® and NRS, monitoring of 0 Pain Scores, and follow-up assessments."

Melissa says PainChek® has been integral to ensuring timely identification and management of pain for residents and guides end-to-end care planning amongst practitioners.

Since implementing PainChek® across all sites between April 2023 and February 2024, the best practice tool has enabled increased monthly assessments, made it easier to track repeat assessments and enhanced clinical governance and monitoring.

"The implementation of PainChek® at Lutheran Services has contributed to improved pain management practice. The application supports the clinical team in conducting pain assessment at the point of care. Identifying pain early means that it can be better managed."

"PainChek® also assists in evaluating the effectiveness of pain management interventions. In addition, assessment information can be shared with Medical Practitioners and Nurse Practitioners to facilitate pain treatment regimes for residents."

Streamlined clinical workflows & reporting

Lutheran Services uses PainChek® together with Telstra Health's Clinical Manager. All PainChek® pain assessments, charting, and documentation are automatically shared with Clinical Manager, streamlining workflows to a single assessment tool.

"When PainChek® became available with the NRS (Numeric Rating Scale), this presented an opportunity to remove other assessment options from our Clinical Software," Melissa shares.

"The integration with our clinical management system was critical to a successful adoption of PainChek®. It has streamlined workflow. PainChek® is now used across all sites for pain assessment for all residents, not just those with cognitive impairment."

Ultimately, Melissa says PainChek® has played an important role in supporting residents to live comfortably and pain-free wherever possible.

"The health outcomes for residents with chronic pain are very much dependent on the recognition, assessment, and effective management of pain. The rapid identification of pain, particularly for residents who may have challenges communicating their pain, is a key aspect in their improving quality of life."

If you're interested in implementing PainChek® at your facility, submit your expression of interest today.

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