

## **Time for Change: Still Gathering the Momentum**

### **An Advocacy Strategy for Hospice Palliative and End-of-Life Care**

#### **Goal:**

Quality end-of-life care for all Canadians. Currently less than 15% of Canadians have access to hospice palliative care services.

#### **Vision:**

It should be the right of every Canadian to die with dignity, free of pain, surrounded by their loved ones, in a setting of their choice.

#### **Key Messages:**

##### *National*

1. We need a national hospice palliative and end-of-life care strategy that is committed, long-term and adequately funded (A-based) at \$20 million dollars per year. The national palliative and end-of-life care strategy should be socially responsive and work towards quality end-of-life care for all Canadians. This strategy will allow the federal government to show leadership and coordinate a national response to this issue.

##### *Provincial*

1. Canadians need hospice palliative care services that are integrated into the health care system, are coordinated with other services and are comprehensive in nature. Quality end-of-life care must be delivered with all the components available otherwise the burden on the family becomes overwhelming. The six main components include: home care; respite care; compassionate leave; pharmacare; access to non-prescribed therapies; and access 24/7 to hospice palliative care professionals including volunteers.
2. The provincial governments need to continue to invest in a palliative home care program, as stated in the 2004 Health Accord that meets the needs of their citizens and includes: nursing care; supportive care; pharmaceutical medications; case management; and other programs and services. Not all Canadians want to or can die at home. Hospice palliative care services and programs in other settings must not be reduced to offset these costs – programs and services in all settings are needed.
3. The provincial and territorial governments, as well as the federal government as a health care provider to Aboriginal people, prisoners and others, must develop strategies within their jurisdictions to meet the Pan-Canadian Gold Standards in Palliative Home Care as produced by the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association and other partners. This document will be released in December 2006.

## **Who Should Be Involved In This Strategy?**

Everyone who cares about end-of-life care and wants to see this care made available to all Canadians. This includes:

- Health care professionals working in hospice palliative care settings
- Health care professionals not working exclusively in hospice palliative care settings
- Volunteers
- Patients
- Families & Friends
- Caregivers

## **How The Journey Started?**

The Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) identified the need for a well-funded and sustainable national strategy as a result of gains made by the Canadian Strategy on Palliative and End-of-Life Care's Working Groups (Health Canada) over the last 24 months. Much has been leveraged however Canada still does not have a sustainable mechanism to ensure that hospice palliative and end-of-life care is a universal, equitable and available service.

The CHPCA Board of Directors has endorsed this Advocacy Strategy. CHPCA has also shared this Advocacy Strategy with the key stakeholders from the Coordinating Body of the Canadian Strategy on Palliative and End-of-Life Care (Health Canada), as well as the Executive Committee of the Quality End-of-Life Care Coalition of Canada (QELCCC). All of these stakeholders have endorsed this Advocacy Strategy. The next step is to engage provincial hospice palliative care associations and member organizations of the QELCCC to advocate for this action. It will take a concerted effort at both the federal and provincial levels to realize the goal of quality end-of-life care for all Canadians.

## **A Few Alarming Facts:**

- Approximately 245,000 Canadians die each year
- Each death affects approximately 5 family members and or caregivers
- With the advancement of treatment therapies Canadians are living longer in declining health for a longer time period than ever before
- Every Canadian will die with at least two chronic diseases
- By the year 2020 Canada will have more than 310,000 deaths per year
- If we have less than 15% of Canadians receiving adequate hospice palliative care services today, where will we be in the year 2020 without serious changes to the health care system?