



**Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association**

**Association canadienne de soins palliatifs**

## **Advance Care Planning in Canada: National Framework**

Advance Care Planning (ACP) is a process of reflection and communication in which a person with decision-making capacity expresses their wishes regarding their future health and/or personal care in the event that they become incapable of providing consent. The process may involve discussions with family and friends, as well as healthcare providers, and lawyers who may prepare wills and powers of attorney, and other professionals with whom the person has a relationship.

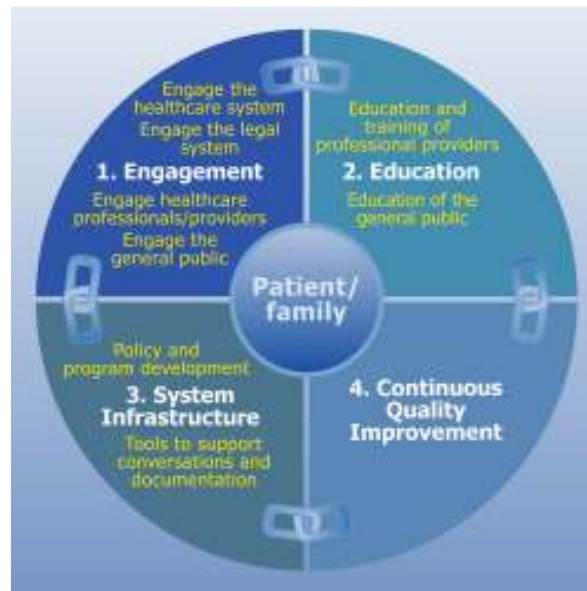
We have considerable evidence that advance care planning is done inconsistently, if at all – and at times is in fact poorly done. Often it happens only at the very end of life when crises occur, or when life-sustaining treatments have been instituted despite issues of poor prognosis.

Therefore, the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association has facilitated the development of *The Advance Care Planning in Canada: National Framework*. It is designed to give guidance to how we would operationalize advance care planning in a defined healthcare system.

The *National Framework* is being developed through a national consultative process that remains flexible and facilitates collaboration across sectors. This first draft of the Framework was developed by the Advance Care Planning in Canada: National Framework Project Task Group—who, along with experts in the field, is a group that represents national professional organizations and non-governmental groups concerned with advance care planning. The National Framework is currently out for a second round of consultation.

The National Framework is built on a model with the patient and family featured at the centre and four basic building blocks. The building blocks are:

1. Engagement
2. Education
3. System Infrastructure
4. Continuous Quality Improvement



Adapted with permission from Health Canada. Implementation Guide to Advance Care Planning in Canada: A Case Study of two Health Authorities. March, 2008. [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/alt\\_formats/pdf/pubs/palliat/2008-acp-guide-pps/acp-guide-pps-eng.pdf](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hcs-sss/alt_formats/pdf/pubs/palliat/2008-acp-guide-pps/acp-guide-pps-eng.pdf)

Each block of the model is essential and all blocks must connect and function together in order for the model to be effective. Within the blocks the *National Framework* identifies key activities and within the key activities are recommendations. The National Framework's recommendations are addressed to a wide audience – governments at all levels, the non-governmental sector, and healthcare, legal and social sciences.

By including all the four building blocks along with their key activities and recommendations we hope to provide a model for advance care planning that can be used to guide all related activity, program development, and standards of practice across Canada.

If you wish to participate in the *National Framework* Consultation, or would like more information, please contact Gillian Fernie at [gfernie@bruyere.org](mailto:gfernie@bruyere.org).