

MEDIA RELEASE

Pan-Canadian Gold Standards for Palliative Home Care released today by the CHPCA and CHCA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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(Toronto) – At a joint press conference to be held today at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel in conjunction with the Canadian Home Care Association’s national conference, the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) and the Canadian Home Care Association (CHCA) will announce the release of **Pan-Canadian Gold Standards for Palliative Home Care**.

Most Canadians with life-threatening illnesses would prefer to die at home surrounded by family and friends, yet approximately 75% of deaths in Canada still occur in hospital or long-term facilities. The gap between Canadians’ preference and current practice in the health care system is due to a number of factors, including lack of awareness of hospice palliative care services available to people in their homes and the wide variation in the type of hospice palliative care services provided by home care organizations in different jurisdictions.

In 2004, in the 10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care, governments recognized the need for hospice palliative care services in the home. In that plan, the federal, provincial and territorial First Ministers made a commitment to “*provide first dollar coverage by 2006 for certain home care services ... [including] case management, nursing, palliative-specific pharmaceuticals and personal care at the end of life.*”

To support provincial and territorial government efforts to fulfill their commitment, the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association in partnership with the Canadian Home Care Association has defined the “gold standard” for each of the four home care services listed above. These standards provide the benchmarks for high quality home care services by articulating the desired practice and the vision for excellence for hospice palliative care at home.

Nadine Henningsen, Executive Director of the Canadian Home Care Association stated, “The CHPCA and CHCA recognize that provinces and territories are at different stages in developing home care services for clients and families requiring hospice palliative care. While the gold standards encourage consistency, they do not imply uniformity. Jurisdictions may differ in their approaches to home care services for end of life care, their goal should be the same – to provide services that meet the gold standards in order to relieve suffering and improve the quality of living and dying for people at end of life.”

Sharon Baxter, Executive Director of the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association said, “The gold standards released today establish the ideal level of care and support that all jurisdictions should strive to provide. We will work with the federal, provincial and territorial governments to ensure they create programs and services that are built on these gold standards. We will use the gold standards released today to create a report card in December 2007 to grade the effectiveness of the implementation of the commitments made by the federal, provincial and territorial governments in the 10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care.”

Our goal is to ensure all Canadians have equitable access to high quality hospice palliative and end-of-life care at home.

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