



Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association

Association canadienne de soins palliatifs

Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association calls for more compassionate visitation protocols during COVID-19 pandemic

OTTAWA, May 19, 2020 – In response to inconsistent and in some cases extreme restrictions on end-of-life visitations across Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) and the CHPCA Champion’s Council are calling on health authorities to implement a more compassionate approach.

While certain provinces have taken steps to relax visitation protocols for end-of-life situations, many hospitals and long-term care homes still do not allow family access, even with personal protective equipment (PPE).

“Every Canadian deserves the chance to say goodbye to their loved ones, even in an unprecedented crisis such as COVID-19. There have been too many heartbreaking stories of families who were unable to say goodbye due to extreme restrictions on end-of-life visitations.” said Sharon Baxter, Executive Director at the CHPCA. “While health and safety must continue to be paramount as we fight COVID-19, we can do better as a society by promoting a more compassionate, inclusive visitation protocol that embraces hospice palliative care principles and dying with dignity.”

The CHPCA, which serves as the Secretariat for the Quality End of Life Care Coalition of Canada (QELCCC), is urging health authorities and providers to deliver on three key asks:

- Adopt a compassionate protocol that allows those nearing death to say goodbye to their families and loved ones, and follows safety measures including PPE requirements as indicated by the Public Health Agency of Canada. This can be achieved by reviewing current public health protocols to include a compassionate approach around end-of-life visitations.
- Liaise with the hospice palliative care (HPC) community to exchange expertise in caring for the dying and the bereaved. Many of the approximately 265,000 Canadians who die each year are supported by HPC, so the CHPCA and its partners have extensive experience in this area and valuable learnings to share.
- Offer grief and bereavement support services for those who lose a family member or loved one. Existing grief and bereavement services are extremely limited and not necessarily funded by the health care system. There are significant long-term implications Canada could face if growing demand is not addressed.

“Together, these recommendations will help Canadians say goodbye and deal with their loss in a way that protects the safety of frontline health care workers and prevents transmission of COVID-19,” added Russell Williams, chair of the CHPCA’s Champion’s Council. “We look forward to collaborating with health care providers on this important issue.”



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About The Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association

The CHPCA is the national voice for Hospice Palliative Care in Canada. Advancing and advocating for quality end-of-life/hospice palliative care in Canada, its work includes public policy, public education and awareness. Established in 1991, its volunteer Board of Directors is composed of hospice palliative care workers and volunteers from Canadian provinces and territories as well as members-at-large.

For more information

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