



Hospice Care in British Columbia: The Path Forward

MEDIA BACKGROUNDER



ABOUT THE REPORT:

This first-of-its-kind report describes the current state of hospice care in BC. It outlines the path recommended by stakeholders to leverage, sustain, and integrate the volunteer-driven services provided by hospice organizations to address the psychosocial, practical, and spiritual needs of persons living with a serious illness.

This report also describes the current state of the non-profit hospice care sector in BC, highlighting the major gaps, challenges, and opportunities to leverage and sustain the sector. It outlines the importance of volunteer-driven, person-centered hospice services within the health care system as a means of meeting the needs of British Columbians affected by a serious illness.

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WHY IS THIS REPORT IMPORTANT?

- By 2036, one-quarter of the province's residents will be over the age of 65 and will put increasing demands on hospice care. These older adults want to age at home and in their communities and want a say in the care they receive as they face serious illnesses.
- The increased demands will overburden the health care system and require immediate action to improve access to high quality, sustainable, and integrated hospice care in BC.
- The path forward calls for the establishment of an Alliance, with representatives from hospice organizations, government, health authorities, professional organizations, researchers, health care facilities, charities, and patient and family groups, to accelerate the improvement of hospice care in BC.
- The Report outlines a 10-step path to build a better, fully integrated, and sustainable hospice care sector to meet accelerating demands.
- The integration of hospice care services into the formal health care system will accelerate the ability of the province to leverage strengths and improve the quality of life for British Columbians.

"The recommendations in this report will embolden hospices across BC to step forward and embark on this essential collaboration. All sectors need to work together to ensure a 360-degree approach to meeting the current and future needs of our communities."

Kevin Harter, CEO Victoria Hospice

WHAT ARE THE 10-STEPS OF THE PATH FORWARD?

1. *Design a strong, integrated, governance structure for the Alliance*
2. *Secure reliable funding for hospice organizations*
3. *Advocate for a provincial policy and strategy for hospice care in BC*
4. *Establish a common definition for hospice care in BC*
5. *Establish provincial standards and an accreditation program for hospice care*
6. *Raise public awareness of the importance of person-centered care and advance care planning education provided by hospice organizations in BC*
7. *Establish core competencies and a provincial training program for hospice staff and volunteers*
8. *Ensure an effective volunteer engagement strategy*
9. *Leverage technology to facilitate networking, training, and knowledge exchange among the Alliance and its members*
10. *Explore and facilitate opportunities for meaningful partnerships between hospice organizations with underserved communities in the province*

"With the COVID-19 pandemic there is an immense need, like never before, for compassion, support, and care in our communities. Hospice organizations are rooted in their communities and are an important part of a wider palliative care system. Based on our experience, we know that hospice organizations can be mobilized to support the needs of our populations and have the agility to respond quickly when that need arises. The Path Forward report is timely. It calls for a collective action to strengthen and sustain hospice care in BC."

*Dr. Eman Hassan,
Executive Director,
BC Centre for Palliative Care*

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REPORT AUTHORS, PARTICIPANTS AND METHODOLOGY

What is the Provincial Hospice Working Group (PHWG)?

The founding members of the PHWG are representatives of the British Columbia Centre for Palliative Care, British Columbia Hospice Palliative Care Association, Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller, Victoria Hospice, and Vancouver Island Federation of Hospices. The recommendations were developed in consultation with the PHWG, hospice organizations across British Columbia, roundtable stakeholders, and industry experts.

This report is a great leap forward in providing a practical road map to expand and improve the quality of Hospice and Palliative Care services across BC. It provides for collaboration at all levels to help realize best practices to optimize the management of those suffering from a life threatening condition as well as End-of-Life Care for all our citizens.

*Dr. David Hunt - Vancouver Commander
Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem,
Knights Hospitaller*

How was the information for the Report gathered?

1. Relevant academic articles and grey literature that address the needs of persons living with a serious or life-limiting illness and their family or friend caregivers were researched.
2. 75% of the front line hospice organizations across BC participated in an in-depth survey regarding the current state of the sector in September 2019.
3. Stakeholders in the health care system and community, specifically palliative care clinicians, physicians, and researchers attended a roundtable, hosted by the PHWG, in November 2019.

For the full report go to <https://bc-cpc.ca/cpc/thepathforward>

For further information about this report please call
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