



## Provincial Palliative and End-of-Life Care Innovations Steering Committee

The Provincial Palliative and End-of-Life Care Team (PEOLC) hope that all of you are taking the time to enjoy the Summer, including a mix of relaxation and fun. The warmer weather and loosening of some COVID-19 restrictions has done much to uplift many people's spirits. The provincial PEOLC team and the Provincial Palliative End-of-Life Care Innovations Steering Committee (PPAL/EOLC ISC) thank you for your continued hard work to respond to COVID-19 and to prepare for a potential surge. We hope you and your families are staying well and that you have a wonderful and rejuvenating rest of your Summer!

### Changes to the PEOLC Team

Tracy Lynn Wityk Martin, provincial Lead with the PEOLC team, has begun a temporary 2 year position with the Medicine Strategic Clinical Network. She will be applying her change management, project management and evaluation skills to lead systemic change as the Incremental Dialysis Practice Lead. We are actively recruiting for her position for a 2 year term.

Samantha MacGregor, Administrative Assistant, has also started a temporary position with the interRAI Education Grant as the Project Coordinator. She will help the grant related work stay on track and meet its objectives.

The PEOLC team wishes Sam and Tracy Lynn the best in the months and years to come!

Welcome Kristin Solowoniuk, she will be filling in for Samantha while she is re-assigned. Kristin is an Administrative Assistant within the Provincial Seniors Health Portfolio.

Updates on the Provincial Palliative End-of-Life Care:

- Advance Care Planning and Goals of Care Designations ([page 2](#))
- Evaluating the impact of COVID-19 on PEOLC ([page 2](#))
- An upcoming addendum to the 2014 Alberta Provincial PEOLC Framework ([page 3](#))
- The provincial PEOLC website ([page 3](#))

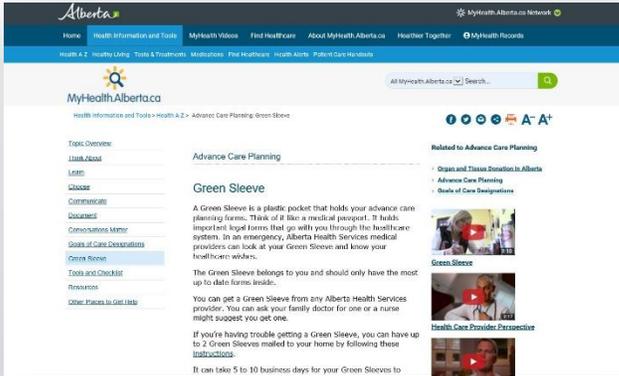


For PEOLC education opportunities, review the Provincial PEOLC Education Bulletin link.  
[www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page14438.aspx](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page14438.aspx)

- Pallium Canada and the Canadian Medical Association COVID-19 Response—Free, Online Palliative Care Modules
- 31st Annual Palliative Education & Research Day
- CHPCA—5th Biennial Learning Institute new virtual format



# Advance Care Planning / Goals of Care Designations (ACP/GCD)



There were 92,396 page views on the public facing ACP GCD webpages in the 2019/20 fiscal year – that’s over 250 per day! This is a 120% increase from the number of page views in 2017/18 (2018/19 data is not available yet). This is an encouraging sign of increased public awareness of ACP and GCD in Alberta.

The public facing ACP GCD webpages on [www.myhealth.alberta.ca](http://www.myhealth.alberta.ca) are being revised to align with the language in the updated Conversations Matter Guidebook and to improve user experience.

An updated eLearning module is being developed for healthcare providers. It will guide staff to targeted information based on their role.

Stay tuned for additional updates in the Fall!

Any questions please contact [conversationsmatter@ahs.ca](mailto:conversationsmatter@ahs.ca)

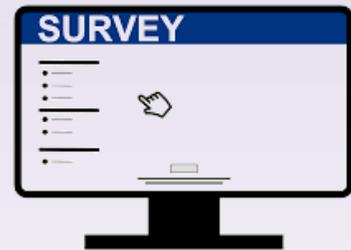


## Evaluating The Impact of COVID-19 on PEOLC

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the patients and families, healthcare system, healthcare providers, and . At the request of the PEOLC Operational Dyad Group, the provincial PEOLC team is leading an evaluation of the impact of COVID-19 on PEOLC.

This includes electronic health record data for hospice and home care. For example, since the outbreak of COVID-19, there has been an overall decrease in hospice occupancy of 20% (from March – May, 2020), likely due to visitation policies and outbreak precautions at some sites.

An online qualitative survey is being completed for hospice, home care and palliative consult healthcare providers. This includes questions regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the utilization of PEOLC (number of clients, workload, client complexity, etc.), the impact of visitation guidelines, and barriers and facilitators to providing high quality PEOLC during this pandemic. The survey results will be used to inform current work as well as planning for a potential COVID-19 surge.



Stay tuned for additional data in the next newsletter!



# The Provincial PEOLC Website

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/palliative-care>

There were 58,722 page views of the public facing PEOLC webpages in 2019/20 – which is over 150 per day! This is a 50% increase from the 2018/19.

Several improvements to the PEOLC healthcare provider webpage (<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page14559.aspx>) have been completed or are underway:

- The move of relevant palliative.org content to the provincial PEOLC website is now complete.
- Headings have been added to the resources page to make it easier to find and use information.
- Work is underway to post Cancer Guideline (GURU) palliative care tips and Calgary Zone Palliative Facts of the Month.
- The provincial PEOLC team is working with the Palliative Institute and AHS Communications to get the discipline specific palliative competencies branded and posted online.



## The Palliative and End-of-Life Care Alberta Provincial Framework Addendum

In 2014 the Palliative and End-of-Life Care Alberta Provincial Framework was published to identify and coordinate initiatives to fill gaps in Palliative and End-of-Life Care (PEOLC) programs and services in Alberta and to improve the quality of existing PEOLC program and services: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/seniors/if-sen-provincial-palliative-end-of-life-care-framework.pdf>. The Framework recommended 36 initiatives to help fill gaps and to enhance the quality of PEOLC in Alberta.

Since the development of the Framework, and under the guidance of the Provincial Palliative and End-of-Life Innovations Steering Committee (PPAL/EOL ISC), there have been great strides in improving access to high-quality PEOLC across Alberta. PPAL/EOL ISC has implemented 20 of the 36 initiatives and Alberta is recognized by other provinces and nationally having innovative and integrated PEOLC programs and services.

In addition to implementing the Framework initiatives, a need was identified for information on leading practices to support additional improvements in PEOLC in Alberta. A Health Technology Assessment (HTA) report was completed in 2018 through Alberta Health/AHS processes which looked at leading practices in other jurisdictions and made recommendations to support ongoing improvements in Alberta.

PPAL/EOL ISC requested an addendum to the Framework in response to the HTA and to reflect the current state and progress made in PEOLC in Alberta. Members also felt it was time for a refresh after 6 years. The provincial PEOLC team met with zones and key PEOLC programs to discuss current state, gaps and challenges. They then validated their notes back with those teams. This addendum summarizes how Alberta is currently meeting the majority of the HTA quality statements and describes the plan moving forward to meet the outstanding gaps in the Framework initiatives and HTA quality statements.

The addendum incorporates updated and broadened definitions for hospice care and the palliative approach to care. It also includes a 6 month prioritized work plan for the provincial PEOLC team (from October 2020 – March 2021), which focuses on critical program activities as well as leaving room for responding to a possible COVID-19 surge.

The draft Framework Addendum is currently under review by the PPAL/EOL ISC. Their feedback will be incorporated and the revised addendum will be brought forward for potential endorsement at the September 17, 2020 meeting.

This addendum will be used to refocus and reframe the work needing to be completed in the years ahead to continue to improve the quality and access to PEOLC care for all Albertans regardless of their geography. PPAL/EOL ISC will utilize the prioritized themes within the addendum to guide long term action plans to better care for patients & families and support health care providers.



## Health Care Provider—Spotlight

My name is Devonna, I am a palliative care nurse consultant in Medicine Hat and have been in this job for 16 years. Prior to this, I worked on a medical unit with a strong focus on palliative care. I have always enjoyed working with patients and their families, who are transitioning into or are already in the end-of-life process. By offering support and compassion, we are able to give them the strength and the support they need to pass from this world peacefully.

I have had family, friends and coworkers ask me, how I can do this every day. I tell them that this is my job and I do it to the best of my abilities. I put resources into place, support the patients, laugh with them and cry with them and then I go home to my life. I have grandchildren to play and to laugh with. I have many hobbies like creating projects and these are very de-stressing and satisfying for me. My husband and I also love to camp. Then there is Rocky, my very large dog that thinks he is a little guy. He loves unconditionally and he has a huge personality.

It truly is an honor to be present in someone's journey of life but even more of an honor to provide the support needed to transition into end-of-life and eventually death. We offer support for pain management and symptom control. When we manage a patient's pain

and control their symptoms, we improve their quality of life, and with good or improved quality of life, their longevity can be increased. We consult with patients and their families in hospital, home and the community and provide support, lend an ear or supply a shoulder to cry on.

### Information on our program:

We have five consultants in our region. We work 0800-1615hrs, 5 days a week and are on 24-hour call for the on-call doctor and Home Care. We have 8 physicians that rotate one week at a time and they assist with patient support in the community, the hospital, at the hospice, and occasionally they will do home visits. We also work closely with Home Care so the patient and their families receive well rounded care.

Devonna Sannachan RN  
Palliative Care Nurse Consultant  
Alberta Health Services  
Medicine Hat Regional Hospital

## Calgary Zone



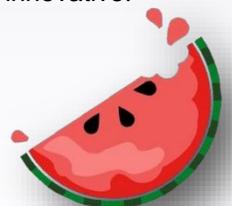
On Dec 1 we welcomed Dr. Charlie Chen as our Medical Director of Palliative Care. Dr. Chen brings a wealth of experience to the program with previous leadership roles in British Columbia in both clinical and academic aspects of Palliative Care. His strength of clinical knowledge, leadership experience, and engaging and personable style will be a strong support to this remarkable program and team, and we are enjoying working with him.

This year we had a change in our Hospices. Sarcee hospice (15 beds) closed as Carewest moves forward with supporting AHS with Continuing Care priorities. We are pleased to announce that AgeCare, SkyPointe is our new hospice partner. SkyPointe is in the north east quadrant of the city where there has been a demonstrated need for hospice care. The hospice opened 15 beds. We welcome AgeCare as a hospice partner and commend all of the teams on moving forward during this pandemic.

Our Grief Support program has developed a Trauma Informed Palliative Care workshop for our portfolio. The intention of the course affirms the great work that is already being done and to expand our portfolios' knowledge of trauma informed care and considerations specific to the

At the time of submission our palliative teams have come together in exceptional ways to support our patients/families and teams with our Palliative & End of Life Care Pandemic response with COVID-19.

As always, a dedicated Patient and Family Centered Care approach guides our care and decision-making in these unprecedented times. Now, more than ever, our teams have come together to evolve our services to meet the needs of those we serve in the moment, and planning for the weeks and months ahead. From our administrative teams who are the backbone of our services; to our frontline caregivers who are balancing the care of our clients and families with the care of themselves and their own families; and our leadership teams who are working together across teams, programs and with external partners to ensure our response to COVID 19 remains fluid and innovative.



## Upcoming Awareness Campaigns:

### October 2020: The First National Pediatric Hospice Palliative Care Day in Canada

The Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) and the Canadian Network for Palliative Care for Children (CNPCC) are proud to mark **October 13th as the first National Pediatric Hospice Palliative Care Day in Canada**. The campaign aims to raise awareness about the importance of pediatric hospice palliative care and improve the quality of living and dying for infants, children and youth with life-threatening conditions and their families.

### November 2020: The National Bereavement Day 2020 in Canada

*Third Tuesday of November (November 17th, 2020)*

Throughout the month of November, culminating on November 17, CHPCA would like to help promote resources and tools to help Canadians throughout their grief journeys – for those dealing with grief, bereavement, anticipatory grief, ambiguous grief, and chronic sorrow. This year, more than ever, grief and bereavement are top-of-mind and important to all of us. COVID-19 has certainly influenced experiences of grief and bereavement and we recognize palliative care and hospice team responses to these challenges.

#GriefDay20 #CHPCA2020 #Grief #Bereavement #BereavementDay #SayingGoodbye

Learn more at: <https://www.chpca.ca/campaigns/bereavementday/>

#### **CHPCA—Advance Care Planning**

Who could speak for you if you couldn't speak for yourself? Laurel Gillespie, Director of the Advance Care Planning in Canada Initiative with the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association, was recently interviewed by renowned author and speaker Yvonne Heath on Rogers TV on the importance of having those vital conversations and taking action around advance care planning.

[Click here](#) for the full interview.

#### **Online Concert in celebration of National Bereavement Day November 2020**

For National Bereavement Day 2020, The Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association is bringing together an array of Canadian musical talent who believe in the importance of grief and bereavement. We hope to ease the pain of those experiencing grief during this unprecedented time. Performers will introduce their work, many with a personal story about why this cause is important to them. Some of the artists have written original material for this event. The Saying Goodbye concert will honour those who have passed during the pandemic period by running screens of names in between during the performance. The **“Saying Goodbye”** virtual concert features various Canadian artists including John McDermott, Alan Doyle and Tara Shannon. The concert airs on **Sunday November 15, 2020**.



## North Zone

### **The North Zone launched the new Rural Palliative Care In-Home Funding Program on March 2, 2020.**

This program supports our palliative clients to remain in their homes longer at end-of-life by providing special funding for direct care. These funds can be accessed when there is an assessed unmet need and all other sources of support and funding have been exhausted, and when the additional care will safely keep the patient at home longer.

### **Our Team is Growing!**

Ashley Wasnik joins us as a Palliative Care Resource Nurse (PCRN), covering a 1 year leave in Area 10/Fort McMurray. Ashley brings a diverse background that includes ER and ICU, as well as leadership and education to our team. Michael Wilson re-joins our team as our first Nurse Practitioner (NP). Based in Manning, Michael has most recently been in the NP role in Clinical Quality Improvement. Prior to this, Michael was a PCRN in Area 2 as well as a Case Manager in Manning.

We are delighted about his return to our team in this new capacity.

Amy Regnier, also a former Palliative Care Nurse in North Zone is also returning to the team as a Nurse Practitioner. Most recently Amy has been working as a hospitalist in Bonnyville and commences with the team on August 4. Janelle Kruger joins us bringing extensive Social Work experience working with clients in palliative care & mental health. Her talents will be shared between our team and the Complex Care Support Team based out of Redwater. Lori Roberts joined our team as the PCRN in Area 3 and is based in Valleyview. She brings a strong background in rural acute care nursing, and has spent a number of years as an instructor with an LPN program.



# Central Zone



Central Zone would like to welcome Jennifer Olson into the role of Manager, Central Zone Continuing Care Programs. Jennifer is a Registered Nurse who has a diverse background in various senior's health roles both in public and private care. She comes to us most recently from a position as Director of Operations with a supportive living provider in Calgary. Jennifer has a passion and love for seniors, and the programs in her portfolio (including the Central Zone Palliative Care Consulting Team) are very near and dear to her heart. She is eager to get started!

## Palliative Care, Early and Systematic (PaCES) Update

Check out a new PaCES-inspired digital story called [Bridges: Janet's Story](#). Janet Vandale, Clinical Nurse Specialist, is the early palliative care consultant for the PaCES program. In this story, Janet shares her professional and personal reflections on how palliative care, delivered early in the trajectory of a person's serious illness, contributes to meaning, comfort and calm as they live the last part of their life.

For more resources *you* can use for early palliative care visit [www.ahs.ca/guru](http://www.ahs.ca/guru). The early palliative care pathway and associated resources can be found under Palliative and Supportive Care (Metastatic Colorectal Cancer: Early Palliative Approach). For more info on PaCES see [www.pacesproject.ca](http://www.pacesproject.ca)

*"Every day, I make sure that people understand they **can** prepare, and they **can** make choices, and they can **live well** with their advanced disease as the end of their life unfolds."*

– Janet Vandale



## Contacts

General questions or comments email: [palliative.care@ahs.ca](mailto:palliative.care@ahs.ca)



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