



# Provincial Palliative and End-of-Life Care

February 2021

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

The Provincial Palliative and End-of-Life Care (PEOLC) team hopes that you and your families are staying well and healthy. We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to PEOLC work and initiatives in 2020. We would also like to acknowledge the continued hard work to respond to COVID-19.

The Provincial Palliative and End-of-Life Innovations Steering Committee (PPAL/EOL ISC) met in January. The focus of this meeting was a discussion led by the Ministry of Health on the Continuing Care Legislative Framework.

The Palliative Review led by MLA Dan Williams remains in progress and a report is expected in the Spring/Summer of 2021. MLA Williams and his team are currently meeting with patients and families across the province.

### Team Changes

Kristin Solowoniuk has taken a leave of absence resulting in a wonderful new addition to her family. The new member of the Solowoniuk team was born on January 20th just in time for afternoon tea. Our congratulations go out to her and the whole family.

## Covenant Health Palliative Institute

This winter the Palliative Institute has been focused on a project charter, advisory committees, stakeholder engagement, and hiring staff for the **Palliative Care Public Awareness and ACP Alberta grants**. Led by Melanie Doiron, they have hired nine staff with a rich array of background and experience in the public sector to lead the activities of the grants. The team is looking forward to sharing progress and receiving input from Alberta colleagues as the work progresses.

The team is pleased to share that Jessica Simon with Konrad Fassbender (ACP Alberta), and Kristi Puchbauer with Carleen Brenneis (Palliative Care Awareness) will be the Co-Chairs the Advisory committees, responsible for overseeing and providing direction for each of the grants. They are currently recruiting membership for the Public Awareness Advisory committee.

The Palliative Institute is working on knowledge translation for the **palliative care competencies** for 23 disciplines and volunteers, with ideas for uptake and use. The competencies are the basis for their educational programs and help health care professionals determine their educational needs.

### Thank You!

For your interest and questions about the direction and activities of the grant.  
For further information please contact :

**Carleen Brenneis:**

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### Recent Publications of note:

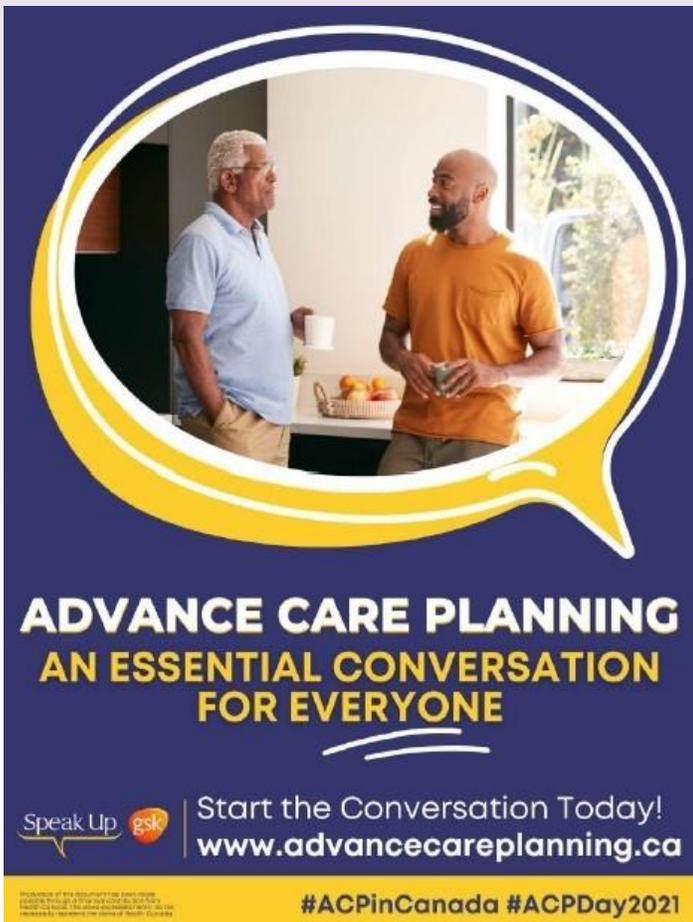
- ◆ Xiao Jingjie, et al. *Definitions of Palliative Care Terms in Canada: Consensus-oriented Decision Making Process*. Journal of Palliative Medicine. This work updates seven palliative care definitions for palliative care health standards, to be used for accreditation
- ◆ Douglas Maureen et al. *Efficacy of an Advance Care Planning and Goals of Care Designations Patient Video in Alberta*. Medical Decision Making. Further evidence that ACP videos alone, without other modalities, do not impact decision making.

For PEOLC education opportunities, visit:

[Palliative and End-of-Life Care Education Bulletin \(albertahealthservices.ca\)](http://Palliative and End-of-Life Care Education Bulletin (albertahealthservices.ca))



# Advance Care Planning Day 2021



April 16<sup>th</sup> is National Advance Care Planning (ACP) Day in Canada. ACP day promotes conversations amongst Canadians about their wishes and values for their future health care should they be unable to speak for themselves. The theme of this year's ACP Day is *An Essential Conversation for Everyone*. In these unprecedented times, it's important for Canadians to have essential conversations about their values, wishes, and what matters to them.

Visit the ACP in Canada Website:  
[Advance Care Planning - ACP Day](http://www.advancecareplanning.ca)

Featuring downloadable resources, including a press release, posters and social media graphics for organizations and individuals across Canada to promote the ACP Day campaign. ACP in Canada will also be hosting an exclusive online movie screening on April 16 for members of the public.

As part of ACP Day, ACP in Canada is proud to feature the recently produced animated music videos for the song "Say", which was created exclusively for the ACP project. The goal of the song is to serve as an entry point to engage Canadians in starting difficult conversations around ACP.

The English version of "Say" was performed by Ottawa-based singer Tara Shannon. Franco-Ontarian singer Jessy Lindsay performs "Dis-moi" providing a compassionate way for our francophone audiences to start ACP conversations. Both videos have been especially well received on social media, attracting thousands of views and many positive comments.



## SAY (Animated Video in English)

Tara Shannon's 'SAY', which speaks to the importance of Advance Care Planning in Canada, featured in Animated Video by Brendan Huza.

Watch the Videos

[\(Animated Video\) SAY - Tara Shannon - YouTube](#) - English  
[\(Vidéo animée\) Dis-moi – Interprétée par Jessy Lindsay - YouTube](#) - French



# Alberta Hospice Palliative Care Association (AHPCA)

The Alberta Hospice Palliative Care Association (AHPCA) has been working with MP Matt Jeneroux since January 2020. MP Jeneroux has taken the issue of extending compassionate care benefits for up to three weeks after a death, and used it as the basis of his [Private Member's Bill C-220](#), which will soon go to committee. This issue was originally raised by AHPCA in an advocacy In September 2020, AHPCA [received grant funds](#) from the Alberta Government to develop two programs and expand the existing AHPCA Roadshow.

The first program, [You're Not Alone – Grief Connection](#) (YNA), provides a safe environment for grieving people to speak openly with a trained volunteer. Volunteers are matched with participants in a partnership that can last up to 18 months. Participants will receive a weekly phone call from their mentor, once a match is made. Matches are based on common experiences, not geography. YNA is a friendly support program; it is not professional counselling nor is it a crisis line or a 24-hour service.

[Living Every Season](#) (LES), AHPCA's second new program. This program offers in-person and online support for Albertans with a palliative diagnosis. For in-person support, AHPCA provides the program resources and works with community partners to create LES programs that fit the needs and circumstances of the local population. The online version is for individuals who are unable to attend an in-person LES group. The online LES program mirrors the in-person, offering a safe, confidential, and non-judgmental check-in space and diverse programming. The grant also allowed AHPCA to expand its Roadshow from five to ten locations each year.

The AHPCA Roadshow provides full-day workshops, which are developed in response to an identified need throughout rural Alberta. Roadshows strengthen community, through networking and through increasing knowledge and skills related to hospice palliative care. Being mindful of public health restrictions, AHPCA is working on the 2021 Roadshow plan. Please stay tuned!

In November 2020 AHPCA hosted the Calgary Zone Interagency Hospice Palliative Care Volunteer Education program with the cooperation and support of Agape Hospice, AgeCare Skypointe, Alberta Health Services, Covenant Care, Foothills Country Hospice, Intercare, and Hospice Calgary. As In-person training was not possible, AHPCA was pleased to host these online training sessions. As a result of this training, sixty-five volunteers are now ready for service.

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

Are you curious to know what impact the PaCES Early Palliative Care Pathway for Advanced Colorectal Cancer Care has had on patients and families? Sadia Ahmed, MSc, interviewed patients living with advanced colorectal cancer and their caregivers before and after implementation of the PaCES pathway to explore their experiences. Compared to pre-pathway implementation, patients and caregivers receiving early palliative care supports described improved understandings of palliative care, referring to it as broad, holistic care that improves quality of life. They also described improved teamwork and communication between their healthcare providers, increased involvement of their family physician, and initiation of advance care planning conversations. This work was conducted in the context of colorectal cancer but may have relevance for the care of other advanced cancers. The PaCES program continues to explore opportunities to scale and spread the early palliative care pathway.

*"I think the earlier the better...For myself and my wife, the sooner we understood what was happening and what services were available, it gave us a peace of mind and it didn't diminish the hope for best quality of life and what's ahead. It did give us a chance to be a bit more prepared in our minds of what to expect and to know there's services out there" – PaCES study participant*



## Calgary Zone

In November Calgary Zone's palliative and end-of-life care (PEOLC) leadership team hosted a wellness event for their teams in appreciation, gratitude, and acknowledgment of their ability to be nimble, creative, adaptive, and remain dedicated and compassionate during the changing environments and restrictions of the pandemic which has impacted their foundational holistic approaches to palliative and bereavement care. Matt Day, a professional musician, speaker, musical humorist, and music-care professional, led staff through a virtual humorous and meaningful music presentation 'The Crescendo Effect'. It was a rejuvenating, inspiring, and fun hour for everyone!

One example of the adaptability of Calgary Zone's PEOLC teams is their Grief Support Program, who continue to offer individual and group grief counselling virtually. To date, they have offered 12 grief groups, through zoom, which have been very well received. Clients have been grateful that the program continues their service in this way, and for the team's work to adapt and be responsive during this pandemic.



In December the Calgary Zone palliative teams were gifted a very special message from one of their Palliative Home Care clients. Calgary Zone's Spiritual Health Consultant worked with a client whose journey of acceptance had been difficult and long. At one of the Consultant's last visits shortly before he died, this client focused on a singular spiritual truth he had come to believe. He wanted to share a message of love, but worried he would not live long enough to share with others:

***“We just need to love each other more and be truly kind to each other. This is what the world needs.”***

The Spiritual Health Consultant shared this man's message of love and kindness with the palliative services teams, and this has now been shared widely across many platforms in support of his dying wish. It is such a beautiful message and a reminder of the precious gifts from those we serve.

It is recognized that there is an underserved need for community based, professionally trained spiritual health practitioners to attend to spiritual and existential themes that arise through the dying experience. Having a Spiritual Health Consultant within Palliative Home Care to engage with staff, clients, and their families around spiritual, existential and/or religious issues has highlighted the importance of attending to the spiritual dimension of the human experience as our clients grapple with the meaning of living and dying.



# Grief Support Program

The Calgary Zone AHS Grief Support Program continues to provide individual and group bereavement counselling to adults 18 and older in the Calgary Zone. Clients can still access the program through self-referral by calling 403-955-8011.

It is important to note that the Grief Support Program is not an immediate crisis intervention program. Those in need of immediate/urgent support will be directed to seek a more crisis-based service such as the Distress Centre, while being offered an appointment with one of our specialized counselors.

Grief counselling is provided through zoom (or by phone if required). In addition, loss specific Grief Support Groups are also now running via zoom. Clients interested in group must first attend individual counselling for assessment of needs.

In addition, two webinar presentations are now available for anyone experiencing bereavement loss. Please refer people to the Grief Support Program homepage (link at bottom of memo) and direct them to look under "Support Videos". Below are the links if you wish to share directly.

## Grief and Loss During a Pandemic

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYvz-HUWlsc&feature=youtu.be>

This presentation outlines supports, tools and approaches to grief and loss during a pandemic when in-person classes are not available.

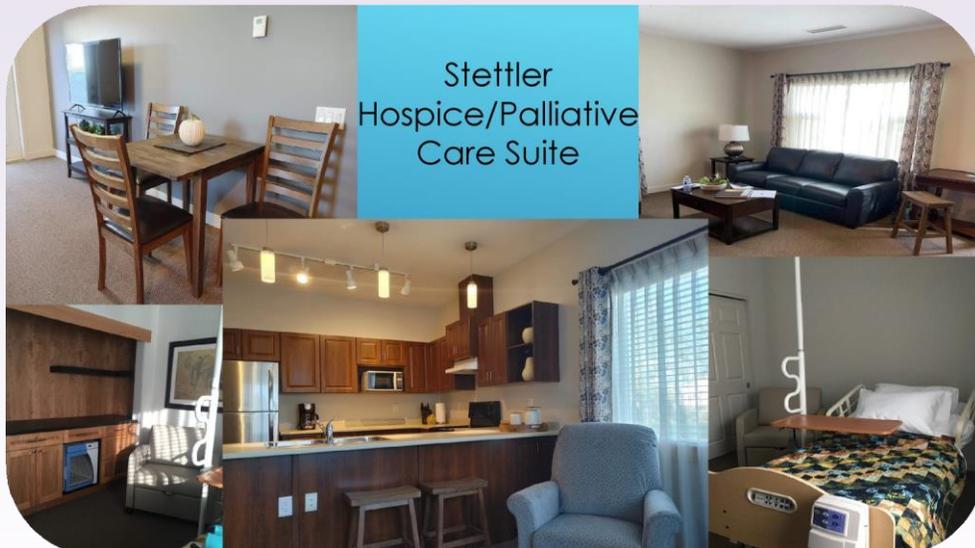
## Grief and Loss, Managing the Holidays During Covid-19

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zV9J3P04oMM&feature=youtu.be>

Tips and stories are shared to help those during the holiday season which is often a difficult time of year for those grieving the loss of a loved one. The experience of grief may be even more complex this year as it is difficult to connect with community and natural supports during the pandemic.

# Central Zone

Central Zone's palliative care team has seen some changes in 2021. They are sad to announce that both May Barr and Kerensa Pidwerbeski have left the palliative care team. May has been a valuable part of the palliative care team as a Palliative Care Resource nurse and has retired. Kerensa Pidwerbeski, a Palliative Care Resource Nurse, will also be leaving the palliative care team to follow endeavors outside of Alberta Health Services. Kerensa and May both have contributed greatly to the growth of the team and both will be greatly missed. The successful candidates into these roles will be announced soon.



The Central Zone Palliative Care Team would also like to announce some exciting news with the opening of a hospice bed in Stettler, Alberta. In collaboration with Points West Living, Stettler Hospice Society and Alberta Health Services, a one bed unit will be designated for hospice use. With their hard and eager work, they should have their first guest within the next weeks to come.



# North Zone

North Zone's Palliative Care Team continues with preparations to ensure a smooth launch for Connect Care Wave 3 on April 10<sup>th</sup>, with staff training and team planning. They've also added some new members to their team:

- Travis Johnson joined the team as a Social Worker based out of Westlock. He supports both the Palliative Care and Complex Care teams. Travis' recent experience includes working with the Pediatric Home Nutrition Program at the Stollery, as well as supporting NICU families. Travis has an interest in ACP and legacy work, and has identified several grief and bereavement supports available to clients.
- Drew Finsson also joined the team as a Recreation Therapist based out of Spirit River. She too supports Palliative Care and Complex Care teams in her new role. Drew brings a wealth of experience with her from her previous position on the recreation team at MacKenzie Place in Grande Prairie. Drew has developed a legacy resource for team members and is actively working with community clients who would not otherwise be able to access recreation therapy interventions.
- One of the Grande Prairie Palliative Care Resource Nurses, Tanya Smith, recently obtained her CNA Certification in Hospice Palliative Care Nursing. CNA certified nurses are recognized nationally for their practice excellence and commitment to lifelong learning. They demonstrate specialized knowledge and are viewed as having enhanced professional credibility. Congratulations Tanya!

Some of the members of North Zone's Palliative Care Team recently collaborated with the e-Sims Team to bring Hinton the Palliative Emergency Scenario - Exsanguination. This was facilitated over Zoom starting with North Zone's Palliative Care Team presenting a PowerPoint on exsanguination, and then the team of physicians and nurses worked through an exsanguination scenario with the e-Sims Team. Overall it was a great experience and the team looks forward to collaborating with the e-Sims team to bring more palliative emergency scenarios to Hinton and beyond.

## Contacts

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



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