



## Family Caregivers of British Columbia

### Palliative Care Resources

Palliative care focuses on care and comfort at end-of-life and consists of medical care and personal care along with social, emotional and spiritual support. As a family caregiver, you play a significant role in ensuring both physical and emotional quality of life for your family member who is ill. You may also need to learn about many aspects of physical care (such as feeding, bathing, and safe management of medication) if you decide to care for your family member at home. Regardless of whether they choose to die at home, in hospice or in hospital, this can be a very stressful and emotional time for everyone involved. There are many resources available to help support you and your family during this time.

A key resource in our community that provides palliative care is Victoria Hospice. Hospice provides an integrated program which includes expert physical care and social, emotional and spiritual support to patients and their families facing death and bereavement. Care is provided in patients' homes, on Hospice's in-patient unit, and in other hospital settings throughout our community. Hospice offers a Palliative Response Team (PRT) that is on call 24 hours a day for short-term crisis consultation and treatment in patients' homes. PRT is also available to support death at home. For more information contact Victoria Hospice at (250) 370-8715 or visit [www.victoriahospice.org](http://www.victoriahospice.org). To find hospice services in your community visit the Directory of Hospice Palliative Care Services website at [www.chpca.net/canadian\\_directory\\_of\\_hospice\\_palliative\\_care\\_services.htm](http://www.chpca.net/canadian_directory_of_hospice_palliative_care_services.htm).

Through your local health authority, a Home and Community Care Case Manager can visit to set up home support for clients who need personal care or respite at home. Clients in hospital who want to go home with services in place may receive assistance from Community Access Case Managers who work in Acute Care. On South Vancouver Island call 250-388-2273 or 1-888-533-2273 for more information.

The B.C. Palliative Care Benefits Program covers the costs for equipment, medical supplies and drug costs. This program supports individuals of any age who have reached the end stage of a life-threatening disease or illness and who wish to receive palliative care at home. Benefits under the program continue for as long as the person is diagnosed as requiring palliative care. All BC residents who are enrolled in the Medical Services Plan and who wish to receive palliative care at home can request their physician to assess their medical eligibility for the program and submit an application on their behalf. For more information call the Ministry of Health Services InfoLine at 250-952-1742 or 1-800-465-4911 or visit [www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharme/outgoing/palliative.html](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharme/outgoing/palliative.html)

If you need to take time off work to help care for a dying relative, Compassionate Care Benefits for up to 6 weeks are available for this purpose. Contact your local Employment Insurance Office for more information.

Also, family caregivers can pick up free copies of "A Caregiver's Guide: A handbook about end-of-life care" at the Family Caregivers Network office at 526 Michigan Street. This is a very informative and practical book produced by the Canadian Hospice and Palliative Care Association.

*By Barbara Small, Program Development Coordinator, Family Caregivers' Network Society*