BACKGROUNDER

Synthesis of Recommendations from National Reports on Hospice Palliative Care

About “The Way Forward” Initiative:
In 2012, the federal government announced one-time funding of $3 million over three years to support the development and implementation of a framework for community-integrated hospice palliative care models in Canada. “The Way Forward: An Integrated Palliative Approach to Care” (The Way Forward initiative), led by the Quality End-of-life Care Coalition of Canada and managed by the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association, aims to improve access to hospice palliative care in a broader range of settings.

A number of discussion documents have been developed to seed stakeholder dialogue, and help inform the development of the framework. This Backgrounder on the discussion document Synthesis of Recommendations from National Reports on Hospice Palliative Care summarizes the 85 recommendations stemming from nine government-led public consultations over the last two decades.

The Context for Action:
The consultations and ensuing reports contain recommendations on hospice palliative care that can be grouped into five broad themes: access to care; supports for family caregivers; quality of care; advance care planning and public awareness; and federal responsibility. As illustrated in the discussion document, many of those recommendations may help inform the work of The Way Forward initiative. Highlights are below.

Areas of Opportunity:

Access to care
- Establish common data definitions, technologies and policies within health-care regions, and standards of care nationally, to facilitate smoother transitions between care settings and jurisdictions.
- Cover hospice palliative care services under all jurisdictional health insurance plans.
- Develop rural hospice palliative care delivery utilizing home care services and long-term care homes.

Supports for family caregivers
- Amend the Compassionate Care Benefit to improve access and eligibility, and amend the Canada Pension Plan to allow for a drop-out provision or a credit for family caregivers.
- Create a national strategy to reduce the burden faced by family and informal caregivers through respite care, system navigation, information and education, home care supports and bereavement care.

Quality of care
- Support additional research in areas such as socio-economic impacts and models of hospice palliative care.
- Develop multi-disciplinary education and training to support community-integrated hospice palliative care.
- Build health human resource (HHR) capacity through activities such as creating an HHR workforce plan, disseminating best practices, and cross-cultural training and materials.
- Develop and report on indicators for quality end-of-life care.

Advance care planning and public awareness
- Continue raising awareness of end-of-life care issues and services, and expand the advance care planning discussion to include the role of hospice palliative care throughout the course of a life-limiting illness.
- Support ongoing research, development and measurement of advance care planning tools and resources.

Federal responsibility
- Encourage appropriate programs and funding for populations that receive direct health-care service delivery from the federal government, particularly First Nations on reserve and the Inuit.

To access the full discussion document visit: http://www.hpcintegration.ca