



Briefing Note

Release & Implementation of the Provincial Strategy and Action Plan for End-of-Life Care in British Columbia

To: Honorable Kevin Falcon, Minister of Health Services for British Columbia
From: BC Hospice Palliative Care Association (BCHPCA)
Date: November 3, 2009

We envision BC as being the Best Place on Earth -- not only to live, but to die.

Imagine if every person in BC could have access to high-quality end-of-life care, regardless of their location or their medical diagnosis. Imagine patients and their families receiving this care from the interdisciplinary teams that normally care for them, in their own communities. And imagine specialist palliative services being available to those requiring complex care.

This vision is absolutely reachable -- and it can be done without undue cost. All we have to do is work together.

Background

The British Columbia Hospice Palliative Care Association (BCHPCA) has worked closely with your predecessors in the Ministry of Health Services to improve access to high-quality end-of-life care throughout the province. This includes development and release of the *Provincial Framework for End-of-Life Care* in May 2006, and development of the *Provincial Strategy and Action Plan for End-of-Life Care in British Columbia* in the summer of 2008.

We eagerly anticipated the release of the latter document, which was originally planned for spring 2009. The release was delayed by the Provincial election in May 2009.

How can the BC Government help?

We have already jointly articulated the strategy and actions for end-of-life care in BC. We need to be allowed to share it.

Minister Falcon: The single most important thing you can do for dying patients and their families is to release the *Provincial-End-of-Life Strategy and Action Plan for End-of-Life Care in British Columbia*.

We recommend that you do this in strategic partnership with BCHPCA. We have the expertise and the experience to provide provincial leadership required to implement essential elements of the plan, including the development of educational programs and provincial standards. Through our members, we can readily communicate with 3,000 health care providers and 5,000 volunteer care-givers who are involved with hospice palliative end-of-life care.

We know that if we point everyone in the same direction, and we facilitate the pooling of people's time, expertise, money, and volunteer efforts -- we will achieve our dream of making BC the Best Place on Earth; not just to live, but to die.