

Palliative Care in Practice: Strategies for community management and referral insights for Family Physicians | Pearls for practice

Community Palliative Care Resources
Dr. Ingrid de Kock



Palliative Care Approach

- Utilizes the principles of palliative care - the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects of holistic care - to meet the needs of the person/caregivers at all stages of chronic diseases, not just at the end of life. (Gamondi, Larkin, & Payne, 2013, Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association, 2015)
- Can be delivered by health care practitioners regardless of training, role, and work setting (Touzel & Shadd, 2018)
- Is provided at any stage of a life-limiting illness, regardless of age, setting or medical diagnosis
- Is beneficial from the time of diagnosis to end-of-life and bereavement

Home Care Services

- Palliative/End of Life care services in community both urban and suburban/rural areas of Edmonton and Calgary
- Teams vary across Alberta: Integrated and Palliative Home Care
- Services delivered by interdisciplinary team all with palliative care focus
- 24 hour on call nursing support
- Need to complete Prescriber Orders for Admission to Adult Care for Palliative Patients

Home Care Services

- North:
1-855-371-4122
 - Edmonton:
1-780-496-1300
 - Central:
1-855-371-4122
 - Calgary:
1-403-943-1920 or
1-888-943-1920
 - South Zone:
1-866-388-6380
- Patients, family, friends, neighbours and health professionals can call on patient's behalf

Edmonton Zone Palliative Community Consult Team (PCCT)

- Specialized team of MDs, NPs, RN Consultants
- Provides palliative care consultation (symptom management and hospice assessment) for patients in any EZ community setting, including community hospitals
- Collaborates with referring MD/NP by providing suggestions for management of symptoms/issues; does not take over care
- Works closely with Home Care/facility staff
- Stays involved until symptoms/issues stabilized
- An EZPCP palliative physician available 24/7 to provide support

When to call PCCT

- Difficult to manage symptoms related to the underlying illness
- Complex family issues/conflicts relating to the patient's illness
- Complex or complicated goals of care discussions
- Complex care/symptom situation that might need to be dealt with in a hospice

How to refer to Edmonton Zone PCCT

- Physician or Nurse Practitioner can do referral
- Central Access number for referrals: 780-496-1300
- PCCT will contact the site within 24-48 hours and arrange to do consult

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Palliative Care advice/consultation after hours

Palliative Care MD on call 24/7 for each Zone through RAAPID or SpecialistLink, or directly with local programs

Edmonton:

- Weekdays: PCCT MD available 24/7 for community advice
- Weekends: Zone-wide PC MD available for urgent issues

Call:

- Community Care Access (780)496-1300
- OR alternatively through RAAPID

Mobile Integrated Health MIH

- Pre-booked (including IV meds, such as antibiotics and pamidronate), urgent lab tests
- Involvement dependent on MIH availability
- Not emergency service
- [Alberta Referral Directory](#)
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page14282.aspx>

Dying at Home EDITH

- Palliative and End-of-Life Care Alberta Provincial Framework 2014
- “Expected Death In The Home (EDITH) Guidelines for Home Care Staff
- EDITH only if Healthcare provider is involved
- Needs to be in place to obviate the need for pronouncement in the home
- Able and 24/7 available family members (more than 1 preferably)
- Patient and family education: what to expect
- Undetermined length of care/dying process
- Symptoms often present at the end-of-life e.g. dyspnea, delirium, constipation
- Medications for EDITH: glycol, haloperidol, sc meds (be proactive)

Process after death

- Home Care as first contact
- Home Care will contact Family Practitioner
- If EDITH process in place, no need for HC pronouncement in the home
- Family to contact funeral – will collect body
- If tissue donation, family calls CTC
- Death certificate

ATR AHS EMS PEOLC Assess, Treat, Refer Program

- Supports Palliative End of Life Care PEOLC) patients/their families in community
- Non-lights and sirens response
- Collaboration between paramedics and patient’s HCP - medications
- Can help with transferring onto hospital bed in home or assist with falls
- Aims to avoid transfer to the ER
- Not as well covered in rural areas

Thoracentesis/Chest PleurX

- ATOP (Alberta Thoracic Oncology Program) in Edmonton and Calgary – referral details available on internet

Alberta Health Services

Expected Death in the Home

Home care case manager completes this form with the patient and family.

Page 1 is required and page 2 is optional. Page 1 is to be placed on the Home Care Chart and yellow copy in Green Sleeve which remains with the patient. The patient/family can give the yellow copy of page 1 to a funeral home in advance (if desired by patient/family and if a funeral home has been pre-selected) or give the yellow copy of the form to funeral home staff after death has occurred. Page 2 is for the family. Pre-selection of a funeral home is not required.

Funeral Home, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Law Enforcement and/or Office of the Chief Medical Examiner refer to this section.

Information: Do not call 911 to notify the ambulance or police for patients with an M1, M2, C1, or C2 GCD. Call 911 for patients with an R1, R2, R3 or no GCD order!

For pediatric patients, please contact Pediatric ADSSIT (Aut for Symptoms and Serious Illness Support Team) north@edmonton (780-407-4822) or south@calgary (403-955-5002) or primary care provider as below.

In Alberta, when expected deaths of palliative and end-of-life patients occur at home as a natural result of their progressive, life-limiting illness, it is not necessary to involve the police or medical examiner. It is also not necessary for a healthcare provider to pronounce death at home. Death is an expected or natural outcome of this patient's illness. Home is the preferred location of death.

This form will enable the funeral home to remove the deceased body prior to signature of the Medical Certificate of Death.

Palliative and end-of-life care options

Is this patient known or suspected to be infected with a communicable disease?

Attending Physician Contact Information

Home Care Case Manager

Other Resources

- [Palliative care Health Benefits Alberta](#)
- [Alberta Organ and Tissue Donation Registry](#)
- [Medical Certificates and Death certificates](#)
- [OneCarePath](#)
- [Virtual Hospice](#)