



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



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The Provincial Palliative and End-of-Life (PEOLC) team is excited to publish their June Newsletter and Education Bulletin, as it has been a year since the last distribution! Since the last publication, the team has been busy supporting the ongoing pandemic response, participating in government activities, and so much more. The team is looking forward to the year ahead!

### Changes to the PEOLC Team

Welcome to Alyssa MacKay who is the Senior Practice Consultant for Advance Care Planning and Goals of Care Designations. Alyssa works part-time with the Provincial PEOLC team and continues to work casually with palliative home care in Calgary Zone.

Welcome to Judy Schimanski who is providing administrative support for Michelle Peterson Fraser and the Provincial PEOLC Team. Judy also supports the Program Management Team in the Provincial Seniors Health and Continuing Care portfolio.

The Provincial PEOLC Team would like to congratulate Tracy Lynn Wityk Martin who has accepted a permanent position as the Incremental Dialysis Practice Lead with the Medicine Strategic Clinical Network. A big thank you to Tracy Lynn for her years of service with the Provincial PEOLC team. Emma Buzath who has been providing support as the PEOLC Lead in Tracy Lynn's absence has now transitioned to this role in a permanent full-time capacity.

### Provincial Palliative and End-of-Life Innovations Steering Committee (PPAL/EOL ISC)

At the May 19th meeting, the Provincial PEOLC team's draft prioritized work plan for the 2022-2023 fiscal year was endorsed. The annual work plan prioritizes the initiatives to be completed for the upcoming fiscal year and identifies other key priority work for the team.

### Alberta Health's Provincial PEOLC Review

Over the last year, Alberta Health has been conducting a Provincial PEOLC Review, led by MLA Dan Williams. On November 19th, 2021 Alberta Health published their final report from their PEOLC engagement "[Advancing Palliative and End-of-Life Care in Alberta](#)" and announced a public call for grants. The recipients of those grants will be announced soon.

### National Hospice and Palliative Care Week

May 1-7th was National Hospice and Palliative Care Week. The Provincial PEOLC team had social media posts occurring throughout the week on AHS's Facebook and Instagram pages. Some wonderful health care professionals were featured that work in PEOLC across the province. There was also a story on [AHS.ca](#) featuring a family from the Alberta Children's Hospital. The Provincial PEOLC team would like to thank and celebrate all of the incredible people that work in PEOLC across the province.



Lori Brown lost her son Daniel in 2021, but drew great comfort from the compassionate hospice care he received at the Rotary Flames House in Calgary. Photo by Leah Hennel.

For PEOLC education opportunities, review the Provincial PEOLC Education Bulletin link.

[www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page14438.aspx](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page14438.aspx)

# National Advance Care Planning Day



Alberta Health Services volunteer Gwenn Boryski is reminding Albertans to talk with their families and loved ones about advance care planning. *Photo by Leah Hennel.*

National Advance Care Planning (ACP) Day was April 16th. The Provincial Palliative and End-of-Life Care (PEOLC) Team was able to promote this year's ACP Day with various activities and promotional items. The PEOLC Team had a slide posted to the Health Unlimited TV (HUTV) which was displayed at over 93 AHS sites provincially. The team was also able to share two moving and impactful stories about the importance of ACP, one on [AHS Social Media pages](#) and one on [AHS.ca](#). These activities help promote the conversation about ACP and provide increased awareness. ACP is so valuable and important to have these conversations early with your family/loved ones. You may never need your advance care plan - but if you do, you'll be glad that it's there and that you have had these conversations, to make sure that your voice is heard when you cannot speak for yourself.

## The Alberta Hospice Palliative Care Association (AHPCA)



The Alberta Hospice Palliative Care Association (AHPCA) spent the last six months growing their new programs and expanding an existing program.

*You're Not Alone – Grief Connection (YNA)* matches grieving Albertans with a trained volunteer with a similar grief experience in their past. The pairs meet regularly by telephone for up to 18 months. Participants get friendly, empathetic support and can openly share with their volunteer with complete confidentiality. Several YNA matches are approaching their one-year anniversary. To learn more about YNA, how to become a volunteer or a participant, or if you would like information to share with colleagues, please visit [GriefHelp.ca](#).

*The Living Every Season (LES)* program provides safe, confidential support in a social setting designed for Albertans living with a terminal diagnosis. The LES online program has robust weekly attendance. In-person LES programs are launching in the following communities: Airdrie, St. Albert, Stettler, Sturgeon County, Sunde, and soon, a community in the AHS South Zone. Both versions of the program create an empathetic community for participants to connect with others in similar circumstances, learn from speakers, and continue to live a good life while also living with a life-limiting diagnosis. To learn more about the LES program, please visit [LivingEverySeason.ca](#).

*The Roadshow* is a series of full-day educational workshops designed to further palliative care training and development in Alberta. Between April and June, the Roadshow visited High River, Cochrane, Edmonton, Rocky Mountain House, Wainwright, and Manning. Registration is still open for Medicine Hat on September 13, 2022. The Roadshow is in its 12<sup>th</sup> year. Please visit [AlbertaRoadshow.ca](#) for further information.

The [AHPCA website](#) received a refresh in March 2022. The [Resource Directory](#) has been updated and is ready for your submissions, as is the AHPCA [Events Calendar](#). AHPCA can promote your event on our social media channels — just let them know.

## North Zone

The North Zone (NZ) Palliative Care team said goodbye to Terri Woytkiw, Manager of Specialty Programs, Seniors Health— who retired on September 30, 2021. Terri worked in the nursing profession for 40 years, with her last 25 years in different positions within Alberta Health Services. Terri was instrumental in bringing the Palliative Care program to fruition, which began in September 2017 with 1 PCRN and an Admin Support. Terri instilled her passion for palliative care into each of her staff. She was always challenging staff to “look outside the box”. She continuously sought team input and always had an ear to listen to any challenges. Everyone will miss Terri!

They would like to *welcome*, Shannen Sinclair, as Interim Manager for the Palliative Team in NZ.

Shannen has worked with Alberta Health Services for 18 years as a Registered Nurse, with clinical experience in the Emergency Department, Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, and Home Care settings. Shannen’s most recent experience includes working as a Clinical Coordinator with Fort McMurray Home Care, Home Care Clinical Operations Manager with Leduc Home Care, and NZ Interim Self Managed Care Lead. Shannen currently works as a Senior Practice Consultant for NZ’s Seniors Health, providing support to the Home Care and Designated Supportive Living programs. She has experience working with many AHS healthcare departments, stakeholders, staff, and clients, as well as external partners in the delivery of health care. Shannen is pleased to now be supporting the NZ Palliative Care team and is located in Leduc.

The North Zone Palliative Care team will be expanding with one new team member- a PCRN position which will be based in the Hinton/Edson area.

## Central Zone

Central Zone’s palliative care team has seen some changes since the last newsletter was published. They are sad to announce that Dr. Maureen McCall retired from her position as the Medical Lead for palliative care in May. Dr. McCall has been a very valuable part of the palliative care team and will be missed! The team would also like to congratulate Mary Sabbe on her new role as Manager of the palliative care and end-of-life specialty team and Tina-Marie Schwab on her new role as Practice Lead.

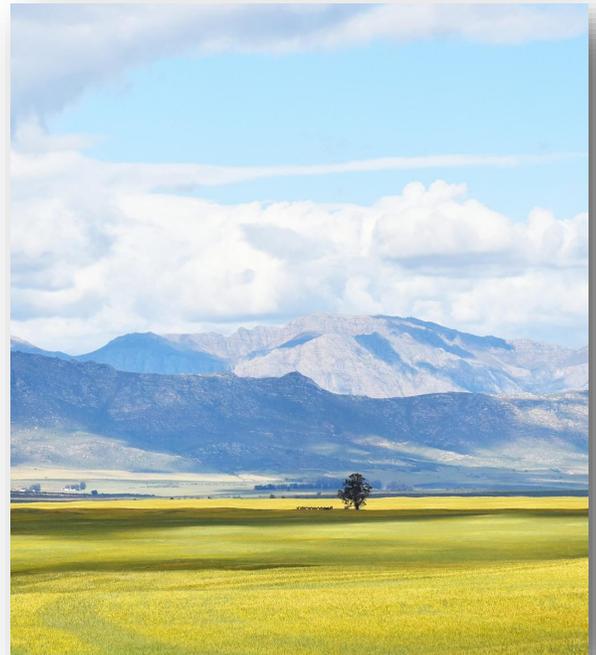
Central Zone would also like to announce the following vacant positions:

Medical Lead - Palliative Care

<http://r.rfer.us/ALBHEALTH2FcG>

Palliative Care Consultant

<http://r.rfer.us/ALBHEALTHQwpH>



<https://pixabay.com/photos/tree-single-fields-meadow-grass-5662370/>



## Pain and Mood Toolkit Feature- Consistent Staffing Assignment

### Clinical Innovation and Practice Supports, Provincial Seniors Health and Continuing Care



Consistent staffing is more than just an assignment. Care is more relational when familiar staff members are assigned to a resident's care. This approach supports a team culture, communication, problem-solving, and trust between staff, residents, and families.

In Harmony's Story, consistency was a game-changer for Carol. Harmony stopped receiving frequent anxious calls from her mother Carol when consistent staff members supported her comfort and enjoyment of singing.

Marfe, a team manager at **Father Lacombe Care Centre (Calgary)**, shares an administrator's view in [The Big Leap](#). Family concerns became commendations as Marfe supported staff through fears and questions while transitioning to a new care model of consistent staffing assignments. She touches on planning and implementation, partnering with families and the team, and the impact on care.

With familiar care providers, residents at Father Lacombe were less likely to respond with fear and anxiety, or communicate distress through verbal and physical aggression, and resistance to care. Outcomes included:

- 50% decrease in residents with *some* aggressive behaviours
- 50% *increase* in residents with *no* aggressive behaviours

#### Looking for more resources? Check out:

- [Consistent Assignment Tip Sheet](#)
- [Huddles Tip Sheet](#)
- [Consistent assignment in long-term homes: Avoiding the pitfalls to capitalize on the promises](#)



## Palliative Care, Early and Systematic (PaCES) Update: Automatic Palliative Care Referrals Are Acceptable to People Newly Diagnosed with Advanced Lung Cancer

Ever wondered why palliative care isn't automatically offered to all people newly diagnosed with advanced cancer? The PaCES program recently undertook a study to test the **acceptability** of automatically offering a supportive and palliative care consultation to all people newly diagnosed with advanced (stage IV) lung cancer. The "PaCES-Automatic" study was co-designed with patients and providers to learn about the acceptability of an "automatic" offer of a supportive and palliative care consultation, without the need for referral by their oncologist. Over ~9 months (May 2021-Jan 2022), two palliative care nurse specialists called all eligible patients newly diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer in Calgary to offer them a supportive and palliative care consultation. A member of the research team then called these patients to survey them about the acceptability of the "automatic" phone call offering them palliative care consultation.

**What did they find?** The palliative care nurse specialists reached 81 eligible patients to offer an in-home supportive and palliative care consultation. The majority of patients (72%) accepted the consultation. The research staff completed surveys with 48 people, and **94%** rated the acceptability of receiving an automatic call from the nurse specialist as somewhat or completely acceptable! The findings from this study suggest that an automatic offer for a supportive and palliative care consultation, made by a skilled palliative care clinician, is acceptable to people newly diagnosed with advanced cancer. Routine calls offering a supportive and palliative care consultation are one way to ensure **all** patients are offered access to supportive and palliative care services.



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For more information on PaCES visit [www.pacesproject.ca](http://www.pacesproject.ca).

## Contacts

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



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