



Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association

Association canadienne de soins palliatifs

MEDIA RELEASE

Let's Talk about the Right to Hospice Palliative Care First

(December 11, 2012) As the Rasouli case is heard in the Supreme Court of Canada this week, some critical questions have surfaced over the debate for quality hospice palliative care versus sustaining life at all costs. What will I want or need at the end of life? Will I suffer pain and need medication to manage my symptoms? How can I let my family & friends know my wishes and preferences for end of life care? What help is available to me? If I am ill, will I be a burden to others? What decisions will I have to make?

Many Canadians are unsure what to expect at the end-of-life. This uncertainty often leads people to question how they want to die, and whether they should have more control over their dying. In our society, it can lead to a focus on controversial issues, such as those being debated in the Rasouli case.

The Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) believes it's time to refocus the debate on the right to have high quality hospice palliative care for all Canadians at the end of life.

Hospice palliative care aims to relieve suffering and improve the quality of living and dying. It strives to help patients and families deal with important physical, psychological, social, spiritual and practical issues, and their associated expectations, needs, hopes and fears as these occur; promote opportunities for meaningful experiences and personal and spiritual growth as they prepare for dying and death ; and cope with loss and grief.

Hospice palliative care is most effectively delivered by a team of skilled healthcare providers who are both knowledgeable and skilled in all aspects of hospice palliative care. Euthanasia, physician assisted dying or assisted suicide are not considered a part of the practice of hospice palliative care.

We also believe that every Canadian should develop an advance care plan way ahead of being diagnosed with a life-limiting illness. Advance care planning is not necessarily about creating a document or writing things down, it's more about having conversations with family, friends, health care professionals, and maybe even financial/legal professionals about preferences for care. The most important part of advance care planning is having a conversation with a Substitute Decision Maker, someone who will speak on your behalf and make decisions for you. To learn more about advance care planning and free resources through the "Speak Up: Start the conversation about end-of-life care" campaign, please visit www.advancecareplanning.ca.

Annex/Annexe B • Hôpital Saint-Vincent Hospital • 60 rue Cambridge Street N. • Ottawa • Ontario • K1R 7A5 • CANADA
Telephone/Téléphone : 613-241-3663 or/ou 1-800-668-2785 • Fax/Télécopieur : 613-241-3986

E-mail : info@chpca.net or/ou Courriel : info@acsp.net
Web Site : <http://www.chpca.net> or/ou Site Web : <http://www.acsp.net>

Charitable Registration Number/Numéro d'organisme de bienfaisance : 13760 4195 RR0001

Each year, more than 259,000 Canadians die¹ and, with our aging population, that number will grow. By 2026, 330,000 will die each year. By 2036, more than 425,000 will die.²

Will all those Canadians receive high quality hospice palliative care? Right now, only 16% of Canadians who die have access to or receive hospice palliative, and quality end-of-life care services.³ Too many Canadians die with suffering that could be addressed in a more effective manner.

The CHPCA believes it is time to shift the focus to the right to high quality hospice palliative care at the end of life. Let's talk about hospice palliative care first.

To learn more about our "Let's Talk About Hospice Palliative Care First" campaign, please go to www.chpca.net/

-30-

For further information or to arrange an interview, **please contact:**

Vanessa Sherry
Communications Officer
Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association
E-mail: vsherry@bruyere.org
Phone: 613-241-3663 ext: 229

The CHPCA -- the national voice for hospice palliative care in Canada – is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in care for persons approaching death so that the burdens of suffering, loneliness and grief are lessened. The CHPCA operates in close partnership with other national organizations and continues to work to ensure that all Canadians, regardless of where they may live, have equal access to quality hospice palliative care services for themselves and their family.

^{i i} Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association, *A Model to Guide Hospice Palliative Care: Based on National Principles and Norms of Practice*, Canada: 2002.

¹ Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories – 2000-2026, Statistics Canada, Catalogue #91-520, p.110

² Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories – 2000-2026, Statistics Canada, Catalogue #91-520, p.124

³ Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2007). *Health Care use at the End of Life in Western Canada*. Ottawa: CIHI.