The Way Forward: An Integrated Palliative Approach to Care

**Talking about Advance Care Planning (ACP)**

**Less than one quarter** of Canadian general practitioners and family physicians (GP/FPs) and nurses are experienced and comfortable talking about planning for illness and end of life with their patients through advance care plans.

- 24% of GP/FPs and 32% of nurses have NO experience and are not comfortable with conversations.
- 52% of GP/FPs and 51% of nurses have SOME experience but are not very comfortable with conversations.
- 24% of GP/FPs and 18% of nurses ARE experienced and comfortable with ACP conversations.

**Perceptions of When People Should Start Advance Care Plans**

- 41% of FF/GPs Believe people should start Advance Care Plans when they are healthy.
- 31% of FF/GPs Believe people should start Advance Care Plans when they are diagnosed with a chronic illness.
- 22% of FF/GPs Believe people should start Advance Care Plans when they are diagnosed with a life-threatening illness.

**WANTED: Tools and Resources**

Based on the research, there are several gaps to fill with support, education and resources that would benefit family physicians, nurses and their patients:

- Overall comfort level in discussing palliative care and end-of-life issues;
- Providing end-of-life care independently and with confidence;
- Initiating discussions about a palliative approach and hands-on experience with advance care planning;
- Managing the non-medical needs related to end of life (e.g. accessing services; probing wishes after death);
- Managing challenging issues such as control of pain and depression; and
- Identifying resources in the community to provide support to patients and families.

Many of these resources are already available at the websites below:

- To learn more about The Way Forward and the palliative approach: [www.hpcintegration.ca](http://www.hpcintegration.ca)
- To learn more about Advance Care Planning including workbooks and tools by province: [www.advancecareplanning.ca](http://www.advancecareplanning.ca)
- To learn more about hospice palliative care: [www.chpca.net](http://www.chpca.net)
- To learn more about palliative care education and resources: [www.pallium.ca](http://www.pallium.ca)

**All of the above statistics** were drawn from the Harris/Decima opinion poll of Canadians and the Ipsos Reid survey on primary care nurses and general practitioners/family physicians. To read the full reports, please visit: [www.hpcintegration.ca/resources.aspx](http://www.hpcintegration.ca/resources.aspx)