

CFHI Spotlight Discussion Summary

Advance Care Planning and Serious Illness Conversations – Lessons for Improvement

Summary

- **Advance Care Planning (ACP)** is a time for you to reflect on your values and wishes, and to let people know what kind of health and personal care you would want in the future if you were unable to speak for yourself. The ideal time to begin ACP discussions is when we are healthy and at home. Discussing and documenting wishes, values and beliefs as they relate to treatment choices is something that care providers and recipients can do to ensure that care provided is consistent with patients wishes.
- **COVID-19** has heightened awareness of the need for people of all ages and all states of illness or health to reflect on what matters to them and what kind of care they would want should they become seriously ill.

Lessons for Improvement

Successful models and approaches – It's ever-more important during the time of pandemic to share 'what works' for improving conversations about care planning and treatment decisions with a goal of ensuring that care providers and recipients work respectfully and in culturally appropriate ways to, in partnership, communicate, set goals of care and make informed treatment decisions. Our webinar panelists shared their experiences of what works for their communities.

- The [Compassionate Community Start-up Toolkit](#) provides essential information, resources, and templates to rally people in your community to provide important physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and practical support to patients facing life-limiting illnesses and their families and caregivers. Additionally, [Pallium Canada](#) has a set of online learning tools and resources for healthcare professionals.
- The [Champlain Hospice Palliative Care Program](#) works to bring together a wide range of expertise to help coordinate care, assist with planning, develop performance measures, provide education and collaborate with health service providers to improve the quality of life for individuals and their loved ones at end-of-life.
- The [BC Centre for Palliative Care](#) provides palliative care education for healthcare professionals, collaborates to spread best practices in palliative care across the province, and develops information materials and resources about palliative care and ACP for British Columbians.

Patients and care partners – Although many are thinking about ACP and identifying their substitution decision maker, few are having discussions with healthcare providers about it. This gap occurs because 1) people are waiting for their clinicians or healthcare providers to start serious illness conversations and 2) more support is needed for healthcare providers to feel better prepared to have these conversations.

- The [Canadian Virtual Hospice](#) provides support and personalized information about palliative and end-of-life care to patients, family members, health care providers, researchers and educators.
- [Speak Up Canada](#) has resources and information by Province and Territory, for you and your family, healthcare professionals, community organizations, and educators.

Clinicians – People want to talk about their health and their wishes. Clinicians have a unique opportunity to support patients along their care journey. Conversations should start early and occur on an iterative basis so that ongoing treatment is concordant with the individual's wishes.

- The [Serious Illness Care Program](#) was created by a team of palliative care experts at Ariadne Labs. At the center of the program is the [Serious Illness Conversation Guide](#), which offers clinicians language to ask patients about their goals, values, and wishes.

Learning opportunities – ACP workshops and training programs for difficult and serious illness conversations are being implemented provincially and nationally. Organizations are adapting their delivery modalities in response to the new realities of COVID-19 (e.g. virtual workshops, online education).