

PALLIATIVE CARE EMERGENCIES IN THE HOME

A Checklist for Providers

As a result of declining health and progressive illness, it is likely that patients receiving palliative care in the home could potentially experience a palliative care emergency. Emergencies in the home can be very distressing for patients and their family and friends who provide care.

This checklist helps guide care providers in anticipating and preparing for a palliative care emergency in the home.

KNOW YOUR PATIENT'S GOALS AND WISHES FOR CARE

- Ask the patient if they have an Advance Care Plan
- Confirm whether a Do Not Resuscitate order is in place

KNOW WHICH EMERGENCIES A PATIENT MAY BE AT RISK FOR (BASED ON THEIR DIAGNOSIS)

- Ask the patient's primary care provider or palliative care specialist what emergencies they anticipate

KNOW HOW TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF COMMON EMERGENCIES

- Assess the patient's symptoms during every visit
- Consider the signs and symptoms specific to the emergencies the patient is at risk for

HELP THE PATIENT AND CAREGIVER UNDERSTAND THAT EMERGENCIES MAY HAPPEN AND WHAT TO EXPECT

- Find out the caregiver's ability to cope with an emergency
- Help the caregiver build confidence to respond to emergencies
- Approach the conversation sensitively and be aware that it might make them more worried

ENSURE ALL MEMBERS OF THE CARE TEAM KNOW WHO TO CALL FOR HELP

- Note who to contact during normal working hours and after hours

ENSURE THE PLAN FOR DEALING WITH POTENTIAL EMERGENCIES IS CLEAR AND ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE

- Organize non-pharmacological measures for patients at risk of palliative care emergencies

The **Palliative Care ECHO Project** is a 5-year national initiative that supports the creation of communities of practice, supporting continuous professional development among health care providers across Canada who care for patients with life-limiting illness. Led by Pallium Canada and partners from across Canada, the Project will deliver a continuous learning journey for health care providers to build local capacity to provide a palliative care approach to patients and their families. The Palliative Care ECHO Project is supported by a financial contribution from Health Canada.

The **Canadian Home Care Association (CHCA)**, incorporated in 1990, is a national not-for-profit membership association representing home and community care stakeholders from governments, health authorities, administrators and providers.

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