

OPCN Briefing Note

December 2017

Prepared For:

- Regional Palliative Care Network Leads and Multidisciplinary Clinical Co-leads to support the launch of the **OPCN Action Plan 1: 2017 – 2020**

Background

The Ontario Palliative Care Network (OPCN) was officially launched in March 2016 with a mandate to ensure equitable access to high-quality hospice palliative care for people living with life-limiting illnesses. It is a new governance structure for overseeing hospice palliative care under the leadership of CCO, the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), Health Quality Ontario, and the Quality Hospice Palliative Care Coalition of Ontario with accountability to the Ministry.

The OPCN is a partnership of community stakeholders, health service providers and health systems planners who are developing a coordinated, standardized approach for delivering hospice palliative care services in the province. Building on the [*Advancing High Quality, High Value Palliative Care in Ontario: A Declaration of Partnership and Commitment to Action*](#) (the Declaration), the role of the OPCN is to ensure that all Ontarians receive optimal palliative care at both the provincial and regional levels. This work will support and align with *Patients First: A Roadmap to Strengthen Home and Community Care*, which highlights a commitment to improved access and equity in hospice palliative and end-of-life care at home and in the community.

Accomplishments to date

The OPCN has made significant progress since its inception in March 2016 by establishing some of the foundational work required to move forward with the mandate. This includes establishing a strong governance structure with the partners. Some of the key accomplishments include:

- The OPCN provided funding for two clinical leaders in each LHIN, as well as standardized role descriptions for administrative leaders and regional palliative care governance structures. A provincial structure has been established where the 28 palliative Regional Multidisciplinary Clinical Co-leads and Regional Palliative Care Network directors can collaborate.
- The OPCN Clinical Advisory Council (CAC) has: led education and mentorship activities across the network to increase health service provider capacity in palliative care; led education on change management, and recently brought regional leaders together to reinforce the connections between Advance Care Planning, Goals of Care, and Health Care Consent, and how these concepts relate to the legal framework in Ontario.

- The OPCN's Data and Information Council (DIAC) provided evidence- and needs-based recommendations on the expansion of residential hospice beds to MOHLTC, with LHIN CEO input; these recommendations were funded and are in the process of being implemented. The DIAC also delivered regional profiles to each LHIN outlining what services patients in their region are currently receiving in their last year of life and provided sub-region analysis. This work supports the LHINs, for the first time, in understanding how patients are accessing palliative care services, year over year, and will enable them to identify and fund service gaps in their LHINs.
- The Clinical Advisory Council, together with the Partnership Advisory Council, has put processes in place to support physicians to prescribe high-strength long-lasting opioids to patients in need.

The OPCN Action Plan 1: 2017 – 2020

Over the past several months, more than 200 OPCN stakeholders including patients and family advisors, provided their input into the development of the [Ontario Palliative Care Network Action Plan 1: 2017 – 2020](#) (the Action Plan) that aims to deliver on its mandate. The Action Plan outlines how the partners will work together to improve availability of, and ease of access to equitable, high quality, sustainable palliative care services for all Ontarians. It aims to address the concerns and [needs of Ontarians](#) including:

- The desire for better access to care
- Knowing where to get help and understanding the pathway to obtain hospice and community services
- Understanding how care will be improved as a result of the work of OPCN

The Action Plan includes core action areas and specific recommended actions needed to present a way forward for hospice palliative care in the province. It aligns with key policy and foundational documents: *The Declaration of Partnership and Commitment to Action: Advancing High Quality, High Value Palliative Care in Ontario (the Declaration)*; the Auditor General of Ontario's Annual Report 2014; *Patient's First: A Roadmap to Strengthen Home and Community Care Palliative* and *End-of-Life Care Provincial Roundtable Report*.

Regional consultations were conducted between July and August 2017 with all 14 Regional Palliative Care Networks (RPCN) to seek their input into the approach, measures, targets and actions. Each RPCN worked with their respective stakeholders/regional palliative care network, to provide feedback into the list of proposed actions and identify areas of alignment to regional activities; propose appropriate regional targets for each system level measure; and obtain endorsement on this feedback from the LHIN CEO and Regional Cancer Program Vice-Presidents prior to submitting to the OPCN.

High level regional feedback included:

- Many of these actions aligned with work underway in some regions,
- Confirmation that the identified actions are needed to set the groundwork to improve hospice palliative care provincially,

The list of proposed 38 actions has been organized into the following seven themes:

- A. Enhancing Patient and Caregiver Engagement in Hospice Palliative Care
- B. Aligning the Planning for Hospice Palliative Care Across the Province
- C. Enabling Early Identification of those Who Would Benefit from Hospice Palliative Care
- D. Establishing Palliative Models of Care to Increase Access and Enable Adoption of the Quality Standard
- E. Identifying and Connecting Hospice Palliative Care Providers
- F. Building Provider Competencies in Hospice Palliative Care
- G. Measuring and Reporting on our Progress