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## Local health charities applaud new funding agreement Promise of enhanced palliative care support in rural communities

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

**WINNIPEG** – A coalition of four Manitoba health charities engaged in palliative care applaud a new bilateral funding agreement that includes additional support for palliative care in rural communities.

A 10-year funding agreement between the provincial and federal governments announced yesterday will invest \$400 million into a range of health care initiatives and will address palliative care service needs in rural Manitoba.

Manitoba has no residential hospices beds outside of Winnipeg, which has the lowest number of hospice beds per capita of all major Western Canadian cities. Most rural health regions operate without any local palliative care doctors.

“We support this agreement and believe the province is addressing an important disparity by dedicating new resources to much needed palliative care support in rural Manitoba,” said Sarah Hawkins, Health Policy Analyst for the Canadian Cancer Society in Manitoba. “Our Society’s goal is to improve the cancer experience and we believe effective and accessible palliative care is an important part of that goal. This agreement is a positive signal because it demonstrates a commitment to equitable access to palliative care services for all Manitobans.”

Palliative care is designated as a core health service in Manitoba and should be accessible to all Manitobans. Many hard-working volunteers dedicate time and raise funds to provide palliative care programming and services in communities throughout the province. Health charities like the Cancer Society believe provinces could and should play a bigger role in rural communities to ensure core palliative care services are available and that local medical staff have palliative training.

“Death is a subject nobody wants to talk about, but it is a reality we are all going to face,” said Jennifer Gurke, Executive Director of Palliative Manitoba, “All Manitobans deserve the right to a death that is free of pain and suffering, in an environment that brings them comfort.”

The need for palliative care services in rural and remote settings will increase significantly over the next decade as Manitoba’s population ages. New investments are critical to meet the growing demand for equitable access to quality palliative care services.

“Manitobans with a life-limiting illness, regardless of where they live, should have access to the quality symptom management and the holistic person and family centred approach that early referral to palliative care provides,” said Shelly Cory, Executive Director of the Canadian Virtual Hospice.

“We are looking forward to working closely with the provincial government as it continues to plan and implement initiatives in relation to this new funding,” added Hawkins. “Palliative Care service provision is complex and challenging at times, but it just may be the most noble and humane service that a government can offer to its people.”

Contact:

Sarah Hawkins @ 204-975-9218

Jennifer Gurke @ 204-889-8525 ext. 222

Shelly Cory @ 204-477-6285

**About us**



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The Canadian Cancer Society is a national community-based organization of volunteers whose mission is the eradication of cancer and the enhancement of the quality of life of people living with cancer. When you want to know more about cancer, visit our website [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca) or call our toll-free, bilingual Cancer Information Service at 1 888 939-3333.



Palliative Manitoba is a non-profit charitable organization that aims to ease the suffering of the dying, the bereaved and caregivers through supportive services and education. Our vision is that people throughout Manitoba are connected with information and support when facing death or grief.



Canadian Virtual Hospice is a digital health care leader and the world's most comprehensive online portal for information and support on advanced illness, palliative care and grief. It serves the information and support needs of people living with life-limiting illness, families and caregivers, health providers, researchers and educators. It operates: [VirtualHospice.ca](http://VirtualHospice.ca), [PortailPalliatif.ca](http://PortailPalliatif.ca), [MyGrief.ca](http://MyGrief.ca), [LivingMyCulture.ca](http://LivingMyCulture.ca), [Methadone4Pain.ca](http://Methadone4Pain.ca), [KidsGrief.ca](http://KidsGrief.ca), [DeuilDesEnfants.ca](http://DeuilDesEnfants.ca) and numerous social media platforms.



The Lung Association, Manitoba has been in existence for over 100 years. As the recognized leader and primary resource in lung health, our mission is to enable all Manitobans to breathe with ease through a variety of supports and programming.