

**Volunteer Standards  
for Hospice Palliative Care  
in British Columbia  
2007**



British Columbia  
**HOSPICE**  
PALLIATIVE CARE  
Association



# Acknowledgements



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United Way of the Lower Mainland

The hospice organizations and members of BCHPCA

The focus group participants

Building Better Boards

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Janice Waud Loper, Executive Director



VANCOUVER  
FOUNDATION



United Way  
of the Lower Mainland



# Introduction from the President

The BC Hospice Palliative Care Association is committed to ensuring quality hospice care in BC by providing strategic leadership in the field and by supporting the capacity of the hospice palliative care community in the province. The introduction of these Standards for Volunteer Hospice Palliative Care is a definitive step forward in this endeavour.

Consistent with its values, aims and purposes, BCHPCA is proud to lead the province into a new era of hospice palliative care. The introduction of a shared set of standards will guide the delivery of hospice palliative care into the future and create a new benchmark of performance and credibility. These standards will advance the Association's work by supporting our core values of:

- Excellence:** These standards will affirm our professionalism, expertise and creativity helping us achieve the best at what we do.
- Collaboration:** We have developed these standards in a spirit of partnership and teamwork with cooperation and involvement of our membership and colleagues.
- Accountability:** These standards will help demonstrate that we are accountable, committed and responsive to our members, stakeholders and the people we serve.
- Integrity:** These standards help to illustrate that we are respectful of the people we serve, that we honour the hospice palliative care network and that we uphold the highest ethical and practice standards.
- Diversity:** These standards reflect the reality that while we hold ourselves accountable to the highest possible level, we recognise and celebrate the wide-ranging diversity within our membership.

BC has long been a leader in Canada's hospice palliative care movement. We were one of the first provincial associations ever to be established and, in fact, came into being some seven years before the first national association was formed. We continue to be leaders in the country. Of the one hundred and fifty-eight Canadian charities registered under the hospice banner, sixty-five of them are in British Columbia. The BCHPCA is proud to list most of them as members of this Association.

The BCHPCA is a member of the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) and endorses the *Model to Guide Hospice Palliative Care: Based on National Principles and Norms of Practice*. This model provides a lexicon of commonly used terms and users of this document are referred to [www.chpca.net](http://www.chpca.net) for further information.



## Introduction from the President cont'd

These standards have been developed with the full cooperation and generous input from hospice organizations throughout the province. Nearly one hundred individuals participated in focus groups held in every region of the province. We are particularly grateful, however to the dedication and leadership of the BCHPCA Review Committee for overseeing the creation of this document. They are: Regional Directors Meg Milner and Sandra Castle and BCHPCA's Executive Director Janice Waud Loper.

A province-wide survey drew additional input from hospice palliative care stakeholders in nearly every community. The declared support for the introduction of provincial standards for volunteer hospice care was overwhelming. This document is our initial response to that overwhelming support.

**It is our intention that this discussion paper will spark debate around those fundamental elements of volunteer hospice palliative care that are most important to us all. We encourage that discussion and welcome your further input into the refinement of these standards.**

**Please submit your comments in writing at [www.hospicebc.org](http://www.hospicebc.org) or email [bchpca@hospicebc.org](mailto:bchpca@hospicebc.org) by November 1, 2007.**

Please join with us in celebrating the value of the ongoing and important work of hospice palliative care volunteers throughout British Columbia.

Thank you to all of you who have made this document a reality.

Carolyn Tayler  
President



# British Columbia Hospice Palliative Care Association

## **The aims of the BCHPCA include:**

- Encouraging the study and promotion of Hospice Palliative Care in British Columbia, through advocacy, public awareness and support of new and developing programs;
- Providing education resources for the establishment and maintenance of institutions and organizations devoted to providing Hospice Palliative Care;
- Promoting recognized standards of Hospice Palliative Care;
- Providing a network of communication and shared resources for all those concerned with the care of the dying in British Columbia.

## **Mission Statement**

The British Columbia Hospice Palliative Care Association (BCHPCA) is an umbrella organization whose purpose is to ensure quality of life for all British Columbians affected by life-limiting illness, death, and bereavement. BCHPCA serves its members in British Columbia and the Yukon by:

- Building and supporting the capacity of the hospice and palliative care community, and;
- Providing strategic leadership for, and advocating at all levels as the collective voice of, hospice and palliative care in BC.

## **In fulfilling this mission, BCHPCA is guided by these Core Values:**

Excellence	Our professionalism, expertise and creativity ensure our best at what we do.
Collaboration	We work in partnership and teamwork in a spirit of cooperation and involvement.
Accountability	We are accountable, committed and responsive to our members and stakeholders.
Integrity	We are clear and respectful and uphold the highest ethical standards.
Diversity	We honour and respect diversity.



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# Standard One: Competence

**As a hospice palliative care volunteer, you feel safe, supported and competent in carrying out your responsibilities.**

**A. Training:** The training you receive is current and comprehensive and supports you at your level of responsibility.

1. Trainers are competent in their ability to design and deliver volunteer training.
2. Your training has prepared you to offer and support a choice of care options for the people you serve.
3. The organization orients their trainers to the BCHPCA volunteer training manual and supports the integration of their own organization's training material into the BCHPCA modules.
4. The organization provides basic volunteer training that includes: a minimum of 30 hours similar to the format and content of the BCHPCA volunteer training manual; the integration of existing and new materials into the BCHPCA training modules.
5. The organization provides ongoing learning opportunities for volunteers. To refresh or advance their knowledge, volunteers are given opportunities to participate in seminars, workshops, courses, etc. throughout the year.
6. Mentorship is considered a valuable support to volunteers.
7. Volunteers will have access to resources in a variety of forms including: literature, video, web-based information, etc. Volunteers are supported to participate in informal sessions that provide opportunities for networking, team building and learning.

**B. Self-Care:** In your work as a hospice palliative care volunteer you understand the importance of self-care and feel secure in the knowledge that personal support is available when you need it. The hospice organization prepares volunteers to support and assist clients and families who are dealing with illness, death and bereavement by:

1. Supporting volunteers to explore their own feelings and behaviour around illness, death and bereavement;
2. Having safeguards in place to support volunteers if a crisis should arise;
3. Making volunteers aware of counsellors, ministers, mentors and resources they may wish to access for support;
4. Providing time for volunteers to process their experiences with a client who has died before being assigned to a new client/family.



# Standard One: Competence

- C. Ethics:** You are confident that you are carrying out your responsibilities within the ethical guide lines of your organization and the setting in which you volunteer. Volunteers are oriented to and understand all ethical guidelines related to hospice palliative care including:
1. Confidentiality and privacy;
  2. Boundaries to the relationship between volunteer and client/family;
  3. Ethical guidelines specific to each of the settings in which they volunteer.
- D. Acknowledgement, Recognition, Experience:** You feel valued for the experience you bring and contribution you make to hospice palliative care in your community.
1. The hospice organization upholds the standing of the volunteer component within the hospice palliative care team.
  2. The organization values the experience and skills of its volunteers by encouraging and supporting them to:
    - be participating members of their hospice palliative care team;
    - share previous and new skills and experience;
    - share ideas for training and resource material.
  3. The organization formally acknowledges volunteers, individually and collectively, for the contributions they make to hospice palliative care.
- E. Supervision:** The supervision you receive is adequate, reassuring and constructive.
1. Staff have the qualifications, experience and ongoing training to effectively supervise volunteers.
  2. Volunteer coordinators, supervisors and facility staff encourage volunteers to ask questions and feedback is provided in a constructive way.
  3. There is a formal mechanism in place for volunteers to express concerns about their supervision or issues related to their responsibilities.



# Standard One: Competence

- F. Confirmation/Evaluation:** You are reassured that you are volunteering for an organization that continually strives to remain current and improve in all areas of its organization. Formal and informal evaluation of the volunteer program is built into the organization's planning and includes:
1. Volunteer participation in evaluation of the volunteer program;
  2. Evaluation of individual volunteers including self-evaluation;
  3. Opportunities for palliative care team members to provide feedback to individual volunteers;
  4. Supports for volunteers to participate, whenever possible, in evaluation of programs and procedures in the settings where they volunteer;
  5. Mechanisms for clients and their families to participate in evaluation of hospice palliative care volunteer programs;
  6. Welcoming informal feedback from clients and their families.
- G. Governance:** The hospice organization for which you volunteer is governed by a competent board of directors. The organization's board members are familiar with and support:
1. The organization's volunteer management plan that includes recruitment, training and support;
  2. The hospice palliative care volunteer standards adopted by BCHPCA.



## Standard Two: Accessibility

**As a hospice palliative care volunteer you are confident that your organization has a reasonable community profile based on a reputable history of quality care.**

- A. Availability:** Hospice services are readily available in the community and are adequately resourced with knowledgeable staff and trained volunteers.
  - 1. Prospective clients and referring agents have reasonable access to accurate information about hospice services.
  - 2. The hospice organization has systems in place to receive and process incoming inquiries and referrals in a timely manner.
  - 3. A reasonable number of volunteers are available and ready for placement proportionate to service demands.
  - 4. The hospice organization for which you volunteer allows you to encourage and support the clients you serve and to advocate on their behalf.
  
- B. Public Awareness:** The hospice organization maintains an ongoing public awareness campaign and keeps other agencies informed about its services and programs.
  - 1. Reasonable resources are applied to an ongoing public awareness campaign including the use of brochures, service notices, public service announcements and other means of promotion.
  - 2. Referral agencies and hospice palliative care partners are kept current on program and service developments.
  
- C. Accommodation:** Cultural minorities and marginalized individuals and groups in your community are reasonably accommodated. The hospice organization:
  - 1. Provides for religious and cultural differences in its programs and services;
  - 2. Ensures that volunteers are trained to be sensitive to religious and cultural differences, to those with disabilities and other special needs;
  - 3. Makes provision for multi-lingual or interpretive services where numbers warrant.



## Standard Three: Client/Family Perspective

**As a hospice palliative care volunteer, you are confident in your ability to respect and respond to the concerns and needs of the clients and families you support.**

**A. Assessment:** You are supported to be involved in and/or receive information about client needs. The hospice organization ensures that:

1. The role of the volunteer in client/family assessment is considered and included;
2. Volunteers receive appropriate information about the clients and/or families they are helping;
3. Volunteers are competent in their ability to participate and respond to the needs of the clients and/or family they are helping.

**B. Boundaries:** You understand the importance of being attentive to the clients' needs while respecting their individual preferences.

The hospice organization ensures that in their relationships with clients and families, volunteers:

1. Understand and respect the concept of boundaries;
2. Respect the client's and family's need for privacy;
3. Become comfortable just "being with" the client, knowing their role is not to "fix";
4. Are confident in their ability to support the client's family;
5. Have access to training and/or resources on how to support families dealing with illness, grief and loss.

**C. Client/family participation:** You are able to support full participation of the clients and their families in planning and decision-making around the client's needs.

The hospice organization prepares volunteers to be capable and comfortable in their capacity to:

1. Listen;
2. Hear and respond to feedback from the client and family;
3. Communicate client/family feedback to their supervisors and staff;
4. Acknowledge and support the caregiver's role;
5. Respond to cultural differences and the needs of those clients who are marginalized;
6. Support both children who face life-limiting illnesses and children who are dealing with illness, grief and loss;
7. Share information with client/family about programs, services and resources available to them within and beyond their community and, when required, advocate on their behalf.



## Standard Four: Continuity of Care

**As a hospice palliative care volunteer you participate as a member of an inter-disciplinary team which is focused on meeting the overall care needs of the people you serve.**

- A. Teamwork:** The hospice organization works collaboratively with other service providers to meet the comprehensive needs of the clients you serve.
1. The hospice palliative care team is developed to best meet the needs of client/family within the limitations of available resources including hospice volunteers.
  2. The hospice organization is engaged early in the intake process to ensure the best allocation of resources.
  3. A common intake process provides easy access for the people being served.
- B. Access to Information:** The organization with which you work is actively engaged as a member of the case management team and has adequate access to information on the clients to whom you are assigned.
1. While ensuring confidentiality and protection of private information, all members of the hospice palliative care team are provided with the information they need to fully meet the needs of those being served.
  2. As a hospice palliative care volunteer you are familiar with the requirements for confidentiality and the protection of sensitive information.
- C. Communication:** Adequate lines of communication exist to allow for the sharing of appropriate information needed to meet the needs of the clients and their families/loved ones.
1. An individualized intake assessment is completed to include the client's personal, medical and service information and the individual's program plans.
  2. The hospice organization will support the volunteer in having access to the information needed to provide care at an acceptable level.
  3. As a hospice palliative care volunteer you have sufficient information to feel engaged and involved in supporting the people you serve and you have sufficient opportunity to share pertinent information to other members of the care team.
- D. Joint Evaluation:** The service partners have developed ways to evaluate the combined effects of the services they provide.
1. As a hospice palliative care volunteer you participate in the evaluation of the team's overall effectiveness in meeting the needs of the people you serve.
  2. The people being served are given ample opportunity to have their questions answered and to give and receive information.
  3. The people being served are provided with an opportunity to share their views on the services they have received or expected to receive.



## Standard Five: Safeguards

**As a hospice palliative care volunteer, you feel confident that the policies, procedures and practices in place encompass you and the people you serve in a blanket of security and safety.**

- A. Screening:** You and your volunteer colleagues have been thoroughly screened and selected based on clearly understood criteria that reflect the needs of the clients you serve.
1. Prospective volunteers are provided with comprehensive information about the organization and the nature and scope of volunteer responsibilities.
  2. Answers to the questions of prospective volunteers are readily available.
  3. A structured screening process is in place to ensure that volunteers are suited to the hospice environment and are appropriately placed.
  4. A probationary period provides both the organization and the volunteer an opportunity to determine whether or not hospice palliative care is the right fit for the volunteer.
  5. The recruitment, screening and selection process is positive and affirming for all concerned.
- B. Confidentiality:** Your personal information and that of your clients and their families is adequately protected by a written confidentiality policy that is easily shared and understood.
1. Confidential information is shared only on a need-to-know basis and even then information is released only with informed consent.
  2. Confidential information is stored in a secure manner and is retained only for the required period of retention before being securely destroyed.
- C. Scope:** You fully understand the scope of your role as a hospice palliative care volunteer and are familiar with the limitations of your involvement.
1. As a hospice palliative care volunteer you have confidence that your training has prepared you for what you are required to do and has informed you about what you are not to do.
  2. You know whom to contact if you are in doubt about how to respond to certain situations and any guidance you might require is reasonably available when you need it.
  3. The lines of communication are clearly established between you and other members of the hospice palliative care team.
  4. The hospice organization ensures that staff within all settings are made aware of the volunteers' roles and the limitations of their involvement.



## Standard Five: Safeguards

- D. Safety:** Adequate measures are in place to provide for the physical and emotional safety for you and the people you serve in whichever setting you are engaged.
1. As a hospice palliative care volunteer you have ready access to supervision and support as required.
  2. If a mentor program is in place, you have frequent contact with your mentor with whom you enjoy a positive and supportive relationship.
  3. A report mechanism is in place for incidents of harassment or abuse.
  4. You have ready access to written policies and procedures designed to protect the people you serve from physical and other hazards.
- E. Risk Management:** The organization for which you volunteer has adopted risk management policies and practices which protect you and the people you serve.
1. The hospice organization for which you volunteer has written policies and procedures in place to identify, prevent and reduce the incidents and impact of risk from a variety of sources.
  2. You are made aware of those risks which are tolerable and those which must be either eliminated or assumed by another agency or organization.



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