

Palliative Institute

The Palliative Institute is committed to alleviating suffering for patients and their families by supporting excellence in palliative and end-of-life care.

Covenant Health launched the Palliative Institute in October 2012, envisioning a future where every Albertan can make informed choices about their palliative and end-of-life care and where caregivers have the knowledge, expertise and resources to support them. It is the Institute's distinctive role to serve as a knowledge-broker and problem solver for clinicians, policy makers, patients and families, and to lead informed public conversation about palliative and end-of-life issues.



Institute strategic focus

In order to advance the discussion of palliative and end-of-life care, and to find solutions to related challenges for clinicians and members of the public, the Palliative Institute supports **essential research and activities** in a variety of key areas.

Increasing palliative and end-of-life care capacity

- A consensus development conference planned for September 2016 will connect the public, experts and politicians in a discussion about palliative and end-of-life care. This valuable tool for public engagement will improve understanding and promote conversations about palliative and end-of-life issues and challenges among key stakeholders.

Continuing clinical pathway and performance management development/implementation

- Develop an end stage renal pathway for people who do not choose dialysis and pilot in Edmonton and Red Deer. Cost the use of this new pathway.
- Conduct an environmental scan of palliative care innovations used in Catholic facilities across Canada, and present the results to the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada national conference in May 2016.

Positioning Covenant Health as leaders and advocates for robust palliative and end-of-life care

- Conduct a social network analysis to create a list of people involved in research related to palliative care.
- Complete the Alberta portion of a home care analysis study that spans four provinces. The analysis evaluates palliative care for cancer patients by comparing practices across four provinces.
- Integrate a family satisfaction tool, Famcare2 into regular practice, following completion of the research study.
- Host the European Association for Palliative Care-Research Network 6th Annual International Conference in late 2016 and sponsor/support the Advanced Care Planning & End of Life 6th Annual International Conference in Vancouver (September 2017) to gather experts to further the conversation and share knowledge among researchers.
- Create an economic model for the Alberta Medical Association to establish a physician learning program on palliative and end-of-life care.
- Translate and validate an established French-language pain classification tool for use in a palliative care setting.
- Validate the translation of the Edmonton symptom assessment scale (revised) by clinicians into French for broader use of this well known tool.
- Evaluate a legacy project known as the Tile Tales program and evaluate hope-focused interventions like the male transition tool kit for spouses of women with breast cancer.
- Put in place a mechanism for navigation for older rural adults by creating an inventory to facilitate integration of health and social services in end-of-life care.

Institute strategic focus - continued

Promoting Advanced Care Planning (ACP) and Goals of Care designation

- A randomized controlled trial involving 120 patients each from Calgary and Edmonton will assess the effectiveness of an eight-minute video in promoting better understanding of the importance of both ACP and Goals of Care designations. The study involves patients in renal and heart failure and cancer populations.
- Conduct an economic analysis of costs/effects of the ACP/Goals of Care video; measure the related healthcare service costs for patients from Calgary and Edmonton who took part in the randomized control trial.
- Undertake a systemic review of the economic implications of ACP using the Joanna Briggs Institute Protocol.
- Continue developing and validating an online tool that will help healthcare providers assess patients' readiness to participate in ACP.
- Engage lawyers practicing in wills and estates, elder and health law, as well as other stakeholders from both the legal and medical communities, to determine exactly what types of resources would be useful to the legal community in assisting their clients with essential ACP services.
- Design, implement and evaluate the ACP protocol by using the Alberta improvement way quality improvement model in heart failure clinics in Calgary and Edmonton.
- Develop performance indicators for the Alberta ACP dashboard that will help identify best practices for care providers and medical practitioners.
- Analyze healthcare resources before and after the 2008 implementation of ACP and Goals of Care designations in the Calgary zone.
- Analyze the Calgary zone's electronic health record, which put into place a required field for Goals of Care orders to determine the timing, frequency and type of Goals of Care orders between 2008 and 2014.

Future projects

- Develop indicators for psychological and spiritual distress and evaluate appropriate interventions.
- Develop standardized assessments to identify patient distress and determine the most appropriate resources for maintaining patient dignity.
- Complete full grant proposal (PRIUS III) to undertake an economic analysis of home care provided to colorectal cancer patients at the end-of-life.
- Apply for Canadian Institute of Health Research and Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute collaborative funding to determine the cost of palliative care services for cancer patients.

Contact us

For additional information about Palliative Institute projects, please contact Carleen Brenneis, Director, at carleen.brenneis@covenanthealth.ca or 780-735-9659.

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