



For Immediate Release  
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**Catholic  
Health  
Association  
of Canada**

## **More Needs to be Done CHAC Endorses Carstairs End-of-Life Care Report**

(Ottawa) – The Catholic Health Association of Canada (CHAC) supports the recommendations of a progress report on end-of-life care prepared by Senator Sharon Carstairs. *Still Not There. Quality End-of-Life Care: A Progress Report*, which was tabled in the Senate on June 2, reflects on what progress has been made in implementing recommendations made by the Senate in 1995 and 2000 to improve palliative care programs and services in Canada.

“While there have been significant advancements made in palliative and end-of-life care, the CHAC shares the view expressed in the report that more needs to be done to ensure Canadians have access to integrated, coordinated and comprehensive palliative care services,” said Charles Gagné, Chairperson of the CHAC Board of Directors.

Many of CHAC’s member hospitals and homes are actively involved in the care of those who are dying and offer palliative care services. The association has actively promoted palliative care and improved pain control through education and advocacy activities, and has articulated ethical norms for care of the dying person.

From the recommendations presented in the *Still Not There* report, the CHAC emphasizes the following as key:

- The federal government must provide leadership and coordination by providing a long-term, sustainable national strategy on palliative and end-of-life care.

- The compassionate care benefit program that has been initiated by government is too limiting, and needs to be changed to allow Canadians to choose the best caregiver for their end-of-life care needs.
- Training and education for formal and informal health care providers is a key component in improving the quality of palliative care services. Of particular importance is the need to train health care providers on the legal implications of withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining treatment at the end of life.
- Given the stress that accompanies making decisions regarding treatment options at the end of life, it is important that Canadians speak to their families and physicians about their end-of-life care wishes and that individuals are provided assistance in developing advance health care directives.

The report notes that only 15% of Canadians have access to palliative care today, and that the demand for such care will grow as the number of deaths in Canada increases dramatically by 2020. “The report by Senator Carstairs highlights the need to act now to develop a well-funded, long-term, and sustainable strategy that will help us avoid the impending crisis in accessing palliative care services in Canada,” said Mr. Gagné.

The Catholic Health Association of Canada (CHAC) is a national Christian association supportive of health care in the tradition of the Catholic Church. As the national voice for Catholic health care, the CHAC acts to promote health in all its aspects: physical, emotional, spiritual and social. Its membership includes seven provincial associations; 23 sponsors/owners of health care organizations; 95 hospitals and long-term care organizations; health care professionals; and affiliate organizations and individuals.

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Report: *Still Not There. Quality End-of-Life Care: A Progress Report*  
[http://sen.parl.gc.ca/scarstairs/PalliativeCare/PalliativeCare\\_e.asp](http://sen.parl.gc.ca/scarstairs/PalliativeCare/PalliativeCare_e.asp)