



**Catholic
Health
Alliance
of Canada**

Press Release

November 17, 2011

Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care Launches its Report: “Not To Be Forgotten: Care of Vulnerable Canadians”

(Ottawa) – The Catholic Health Alliance of Canada applauds the recommendations of the all-party Parliamentary committee as an important step toward improving palliative end-of-life care in Canada.

The report, which was launched today on Parliament Hill, reflects the testimony of hundreds of Canadians who appeared at 24 hearings and local round table meetings held throughout Canada. The recommendations put forward by the committee aim to improve palliative care, but also address suicide prevention and the prevention of elder abuse.

Sister Nuala Kenny, Ethics and Health Policy Advisor with the Alliance appeared before the committee during its hearings. Her presentation focused on the Catholic understanding of a “good death”, the latest empirical research regarding requests for physician assisted suicide and euthanasia, and the lessons an exploration of these two themes holds for palliative care in Canada.

She illustrated how Catholic health care has a long history in the delivery of palliative care in Canada, and described how the Alliance actively promotes palliative care through education, advocacy and the development of ethical norms for health decisions and care for persons who are dying.

“There are many challenges and areas that require improvement: the need for equitable access and stable funding; support for family caregivers, and the pressing need to address the great confusion that exists regarding palliative care – its goals and effectiveness” said Dr. Kenny. “The recommendations put forward by the committee, if implemented, would represent important steps forward in addressing those challenges.”

The recommendations on palliative care include:

- Federal government re-establish a Palliative Care Secretariat with adequate funding to conduct and support research, and facilitate communication and collaboration between the various levels of government, and community stakeholders.

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- Development of a flexible integrated model of palliative health care delivery that takes into account Canada's geographic, regional and cultural diversity, along with a funding mechanism for implementation by provinces and territories
 - Federal government, through either Health Canada or the recommended Palliative Care Secretariat, fund a national public awareness campaign on palliative and end-of-life care.
 - Federal government expand the provisions of the E.I. based compassionate care benefit to a minimum of 26 weeks coverage.

The Catholic Health Alliance of Canada is a member of the Quality End-of-Life Coalition of Canada (QELCCC). The mandate of the QELCCC is to act as an advocate for quality end-of-life care for all Canadians. The QELCCC represents a network of 34 national organizations.

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The Catholic Health Alliance of Canada (CHAC) is a national body comprised of 12 sponsors of Catholic health care organizations in Canada. Its mission is to strengthen the ability of these organizations to foster the healing ministry of Jesus Christ into the future, and to promote a commitment to enduring care and compassion.

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