



MEDIA RELEASE

Federal Leadership Needed for Improved End-of-Life Care

(Ottawa. October 31, 2007) – The Quality End-of-Life Care Coalition of Canada (QELCCC) is calling on the federal government to take a strong leadership role in improving access to palliative and end-of-life care, in its recently-released document, *A Pan-Canadian Partnership for Palliative and End-of-Life Care*.

The document was sent in early September to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, federal Minister of Health Tony Clement and federal Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Monte Solberg. It was also copied to all provincial premiers, ministers of health, ministers of social development, and all MPs.

The QELCCC states in the document that achieving quality end-of-life care for all Canadians requires an on-going, well-funded, sustainable national approach to end-of-life care. It offers three major recommendations: develop a multi-level, multi-department consultation to steer the construction of a clear action plan; create a broad-based advisory committee to guide the development of new policies; and support continued research to help deepen understanding of end-of-life care issues.

“The federal government must provide leadership on this issue. Quality end-of-life care should be available for and easily accessible to every Canadian,” said Sharon Baxter, Executive Director of the Canadian Palliative Care Association, a founding member of the QELCCC. “A well-designed plan for the care of dying persons must involve not only provincial Health departments, but also Health Canada and other federal departments such as Human Resources and Social Development Canada, First Nations and Inuit Health, Veterans Affairs and Corrections.”

The QELCCC believes that “it is only through partnership, under strong federal leadership that the Canadian health care system can ensure all Canadians the right to die with dignity, free of pain, surrounded by their loved ones, in the setting of their choice.”

In 2007, approximately 259,000 Canadians will die. Up to 70% of them or 181,000, will die from chronic disease, and need access to quality end-of-life care. Statistics Canada has predicted that, by the year 2020, the number of deaths will jump to more than

330,000 per year. That could mean that end-of-life care will be required for about 231,000 people – an increase of 50,000 people in only 13 years.

A Pan-Canadian Partnership for Palliative and End-of-Life Care can be viewed or downloaded at the QELCCC's website at www.chpca.net/quality_end-of-life_care_coalition_of_canada.htm.

About the Quality End-of-Life Care Coalition of Canada

The Quality End-of-Life Care Coalition of Canada (QELCCC) believes that all Canadians have the right to quality end-of-life care that allows them to die with dignity, free of pain, surrounded by their loved ones, in a setting of their choice.

The Coalition believes that achieving quality end-of-life care for all Canadians requires a well-funded, sustainable national strategy for palliative and end-of-life care. The QELCCC members work together in partnership to achieve this goal.

Members of the QELCCC who signed the document are:

ALS Society of Canada	Canadian Lung Association
Alzheimer Society of Canada	Canadian Medical Association
Canadian AIDS Society	Canadian Nurses Association
Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance	Canadian Pharmacists Association
Canadian Association of the Deaf	Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians
Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists	CARP: Canada's Association for the Fifty-Plus
Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education	Catholic Health Association of Canada
Canadian Association of Social Workers	Childhood Cancer Foundation
Canadian Breast Cancer Network	Candlelighters Canada
Canadian Cancer Society	Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
Canadian Caregiver Coalition	Huntington Society of Canada
Canadian Healthcare Association	Long Term Care Planning Network
Canadian Home Care Association	National Council of Women of Canada
Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association	The GlaxoSmithKline Foundation
	VON Canada

For more information on the QELCCC, or to download a copy of *A Pan-Canadian Partnership for Palliative and End-of-Life Care*, please visit www.chpca.net/quality_end-of-life_care_coalition_of_canada.htm.

-30-

More information:

AnnMarie Nielsen Griffin
Communications Coordinator
Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association
613-241-3663 ext. 229
OR 1-800-668-2785 ext. 229