

## **Briefing Note: Hospice Palliative Care Expansion in Niagara Region**

Hospice Niagara is currently in the planning phase with the Ministry of Health for expansion of 20 new hospice beds within Centers of Excellence in Hospice Palliative Care. These centres, located in Fort Erie and Welland, will provide exceptional end-of-life care for which Hospice Niagara has become known, along with expansion of in-home hospice care, education and volunteer support across the Region.

## **Why it's important for Municipalities to Invest Now in Hospice Palliative Care**

This expansion will provide residents of Pelham increased care within their home and increased accessibility to two hospices located in St. Catharines and north Welland.

It is important to invest in this expansion now, given this Region's aging demographic, and the limit hospital resources. St. Catharines hospital does not have any designated end-of-life care beds. The future of existing end-of-life beds at Port Colborne, Fort Erie and Welland hospitals, are unknown. Also, it is important to note the Ministry has also designated Hotel Dieu Shaver as a Rehabilitation hospital only, and will not be approving expansion of the end-of-life beds located within this hospital. This alone leaves our Region short 17 hospital end-of-life beds within the next 5-years. Most importantly, 80% of Canadians prefer to die at home or in hospice, not in hospital rooms and hallways.

Currently, the hospice residence bed count in Niagara is 3 beds per 100,000 residents. The Auditor General has recommended 7-10 beds per 100,000. The Ministry of Health agrees that the first step to addressing the issue of hallway medicine is to build effective community solutions, rather than locate more beds within hospitals. As such, the Ministry has approved operational funding for 20 additional Hospice residential beds; 10 in Fort Erie and 10 in Welland. This will better address our hospice bed shortage and open capacity for admissions at the St. Catharines site for neighbouring communities. This is of the upmost importance given that requests for hospice beds at the St. Catharines site have been over capacity for the past 10 years. Currently, this 10-bed residence accommodates only half of those who choose hospice care, and these requests continue to increase by at least 15% each year.

Hospice care is delivered at a fraction of the cost of hospital care. The average cost of a hospice bed is \$465 per day, while a hospital bed costs over \$1,100 per day, saving our health care system millions of dollars each year. While dying in hospital may be some people's preference, or due to necessity, hospices provide people and their families with individual care, input into all care decisions and most important, maintains their dignity at end-of-life.

## **Economical Planning**

The typical cost of building a stand-alone hospice residence falls within the range of \$10M - \$14M. Building alongside the expansion of two larger not-for-profit long-term care homes decreases the build cost by half, as the hospice 10-bed portion advantages economies of scale.

If approved, the Ministry of Health will provide Hospice Niagara with \$2M capital grant for each site, to offset the total capital build cost.

Once approved, opening for both sites will occur in 2023.

### **The Stabler Centre**

403 Ontario Street, Unit 2, St. Catharines, ON L2N 1L5  
T: 905-984-8766 | F: 905-984-8242

### **Welland Office**

555 Prince Charles Drive, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Welland, ON L3C 6B5  
T: 905-984-8766 | F: 905-735-1703

[info@hospiceniagara.ca](mailto:info@hospiceniagara.ca) | [hospiceniagara.ca](http://hospiceniagara.ca) | Charitable Registration # 899716294RR0001

We rely on your donations to provide our programs and services throughout Niagara.  
Official income tax receipts are provided for donations of \$20 or more.

## Sustainable Growth

Hospice Niagara plans to manage increased operating costs of these two new facilities by integrating and/or contracting most of its infrastructure and back-end operating costs through its long-term care partners. In this way, the organization is ensuring that the services it provides today will be available to future generations.

Integration planning between Hospice Niagara and long-term care operators will provide:

- Opportunity for shared use of amenities and services (where possible);
- Potential for shared services (laundry, housekeeping, grounds keeping, parking, utilities, building maintenance, etc.);
- Opportunity for back-end integration of administrative functions, such as Information Technology (IT), maintenance, payroll, communications, etc.

## Capital Campaign Contributions

Hospice Niagara's capital campaign has launched, with a target of raising \$14M toward the build costs for the Fort Erie and Welland sites. Hospice Niagara is working to secure contributions from every municipality, along with the Region, not only because this expansion benefits all of Niagara, but this broad-based commitment will send a very strong message to the province, as it considers allocating a provincial grant funding (\$4M in total) toward the project.

## Improved Care for South Niagara

Niagara's much needed Hospice expansion is important to every community. This expansion model creates a template for other communities in Niagara to plan alongside Hospice Niagara for future hospice resource expansions.

Most importantly, for people living in Pelham, expansion means:

- Increased local access to weekly hospice wellness programs, caregiver and bereavement support;
- Influx of palliative care professionals working in south communities;
- Two south-Niagara facilities that serve this geographic area, which has one of the highest proportions of aging population (in all age categories over 65 years old), with complex health issues (i.e. underserved communities);
- The expansion of francophone programs and services;
- Onsite expert consultations to help people living in southern LTC homes avoid hospital admissions due to pain crisis and complex end-of-life care and;
- Better planning, transitions and improved quality of life for patients and families, who will have local access to vital hospice and community palliative care services.

These projects are community and provincial investments that will maintain Hospice Niagara's proven record in providing exceptional care according to best practice standards, while ensuring sustainable expansion through partnerships and integration.

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