

Frequently-Asked Questions (FAQs)

Health Quality Ontario (HQO) Quality Standards for Palliative Care: Care for Adults with a Progressive, Life-Limiting Illness

1. What are quality standards?

Quality standards are concise sets of statements that will:

- *Help patients, residents, families, and caregivers know what to ask for in their care*
- *Help health care professionals know what care they should be offering, based on evidence and expert consensus*
- *Help health care organizations measure, assess, and improve their performance in caring for patients*

The statements in the quality standards do not override the responsibility of health care professionals to make decisions with patients, after considering each patient's unique circumstances.

2. What do the Quality Standards for Palliative Care address?

This quality standards address palliative care for people who are living with a serious, life-limiting illness, and for their family and caregivers. The goal of palliative care is to relieve pain and suffering, and to improve a person's quality of life. This quality standard focuses on care for people in all settings, including home and community, hospice, hospital, and long-term care.

3. How do I use the quality standards?

Quality standards inform clinicians and organizations about what high-quality health care looks like for aspects of care that have been deemed a priority for quality improvement in the province. They are based on the best available evidence. They also include indicators to help clinicians and organizations assess the quality of care they are delivering, and to identify gaps and areas for improvement. These indicators measure processes, structures, and outcomes. In addition, tools and resources to support clinicians and organizations in their quality improvement efforts accompany each quality standard.

To access the Getting Started Guide, follow this link:

<http://www.hqontario.ca/Portals/0/documents/evidence/quality-standards/getting-started-guide-en.pdf>

4. How many quality statements are there?

In the Quality Standard for Palliative Care: Care for Adults with a Progressive, Life-Limiting Illness, there are 13 quality statements in total.

5. Can you please give a brief explanation of each of the 13 quality statements included in the Quality Standards for Palliative Care?

The 13 quality statements include:

- **Quality Statement 1:** *Identification and Assessment of Needs People with a progressive, life-limiting illness have their palliative care needs identified early through a comprehensive and holistic assessment.*
- **Quality Statement 2:** *Timely Access to Palliative Care Support People with identified palliative care needs have access to palliative care support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.*
- **Quality Statement 3:** *Advance Care Planning—Substitute Decision-Maker People with a progressive, life-limiting illness know who their future substitute decision-maker is. They engage in ongoing communication with their substitute decision-maker about their wishes, values, and beliefs, so that the substitute decision-maker is empowered to participate in the health care consent process if required.*

- **Quality Statement 4: Goals of Care Discussions and Consent** - People with identified palliative care needs or their substitute decision-makers have discussions with their interdisciplinary health care team about their goals of care to help inform their health care decisions. These values-based discussions focus on ensuring an accurate understanding of both the illness and treatment options so the person or their substitute decision-maker has the information they need to give or refuse consent to treatment.
- **Quality Statement 5: Individualized, Person-Centred Care Plan** - People with identified palliative care needs collaborate with their primary care provider and other health care professionals to develop an individualized, person-centred care plan that is reviewed and updated regularly.
- **Quality Statement 6: Management of Pain and Other Symptoms** - People with identified palliative care needs have their pain and other symptoms managed effectively, in a timely manner.
- **Quality Statement 7: Psychosocial Aspects of Care** - People with identified palliative care needs receive timely psychosocial support to address their mental, emotional, social, cultural, and spiritual needs.
- **Quality Statement 8: Education for Patients, Substitute Decision Makers, Families, and Caregivers** - People with a progressive, life-limiting illness, their future substitute decision-maker, their family, and their caregivers are offered education about palliative care and information about available resources and supports.
- **Quality Statement 9: Caregiver Support** - Families and caregivers of people with identified palliative care needs are offered ongoing assessment of their needs, and are given access to resources, respite care, and grief and bereavement support, consistent with their preferences.
- **Quality Statement 10: Transitions in Care** - People with identified palliative care needs experience seamless transitions in care that are coordinated effectively among settings and health care providers.
- **Quality Statement 11: Setting of Care and Place of Death** - People with identified palliative care needs, their substitute decision-maker, their family, and their caregivers have ongoing discussions with their health care professionals about their preferred setting of care and place of death
- **Quality Statement 12: Interdisciplinary Team-Based Care** - People with identified palliative care needs receive integrated care from an interdisciplinary team, which includes volunteers.
- **Quality Statement 13: Education for Health Care Providers and Volunteers** - People receive palliative care from health care providers and volunteers who possess the appropriate knowledge and skills to deliver high-quality palliative care.

6. Where can I access the complete Quality Standards for Palliative Care?

You can access the complete Quality Standard as well as other helpful tools and information to assist with using the Standard by following this link: <http://www.hqontario.ca/portals/0/documents/evidence/quality-standards/qs-palliative-care-clinical-guide-en.pdf>

For more information about this FAQs sheet, please contact: hpcinfo@hospicewaterloo.ca