

Updated Quality Standard: Palliative Care: Care for Adults with a Serious Illness

Health Quality Ontario is now part of Ontario Health (OH), an agency created by the Government of Ontario with a mandate to connect and coordinate our province's health care system to help ensure that Ontarians receive the best possible care. OH and the Ontario Palliative Care Network (OPCN) have released a 2024 update for the Quality Standards. Quality Standards are sets of concise statements designed to help health care teams easily and quickly know what care to provide, based on the best evidence. See Quality Statements (QS) for Palliative Care:

QS 1: Identification and Assessment of Needs

People with a serious illness have their palliative care needs identified early through a comprehensive and holistic assessment.

QS 3: Advance Care Planning – Substitute Decision-Maker (SDM)

People with a serious illness know who their future SDM is. They engage in ongoing communication with their SDM about their wishes, values, and beliefs, so that the SDM is empowered to participate in the health care consent process if required.

QS 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.

QS 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.

QS 9: Care Partner Support

Families and care partners 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.

QS 11: Setting of Care and Place of Death

People with identified palliative care needs, their SDM, their family, and their care partners have ongoing discussions with their health care professionals about their preferred setting of care and place of death.

QS 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.

QS 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.

QS 4: Goals-of-Care Discussions and Consent

People with identified palliative care needs or their SDM have discussions with their interprofessional 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 the treatment options so the person or their SDM has the information they need to give or refuse consent to treatment.

QS 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.

QS 8: Education for People With a Serious Illness, Substitute Decision-Makers, Families, and Care Partners

People with a serious illness, their future SDM, their family, and their care partners are offered education about palliative care and information about available resources and supports.

QS 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.

QS 12: Interprofessional Team-Based Care

People with identified palliative care needs receive integrated care from an interprofessional team, which includes volunteers.



Quality standards outline for clinicians and patients what quality care looks like

2023-24 Updates

- ✓ Clinical practice guidelines & health technology assessments
- ✓ Formatting to align with current Ontario Health branding
- ✓ Links, secondary references, data sources & associated resources
- ✓ Palliative conditions
- ✓ Definitions
- ✓ Terminology:

From	To
People living with a progressive, life-limiting illness	People with a serious illness
Interdisciplinary Caregiver	Interprofessional Care Partner

Quality Standards Resources

- ✓ [Palliative Care Quality Standard](#)
- ✓ [Patient Guide](#)
- ✓ [Placemat](#)
- ✓ [Getting Started Guide](#)
- ✓ [Case for Improvement](#)
- ✓ [Technical Specifications](#)

Learn more:
[Health Quality Ontario – Evidence to Improve Care](#)