

Network helps Canadians deal with death and dying



The recent launch of the **Canadian Virtual Hospice** gives Canadians a new source of information and support about death and dying. The new bilingual website provides high quality health information about death and dying, as well as a forum for Canadians to share their experiences with illness or grief. The website exists as a resource for those who are affected by terminal illness or involved in the care of the terminally ill.

The Canadian Virtual Hospice takes advantage of the Internet to eliminate barriers of time and place, providing people with information the moment it is needed. Whether citizens live in a major city, or in a remote rural community, day or night, the Virtual Hospice will be there to help them find the answers they are looking for.

Aimed at patients, their families and friends, health care professionals and volunteers, the Canadian Virtual Hospice is a unique venue for sharing information and support, eliminating barriers of time and place, and improving palliative care throughout Canada. It provides detailed information

about the physical symptoms of illness and deals with some of the emotional reactions and spiritual questions often experienced by palliative care patients and their families. The website will connect people facing similar situations by creating online communities of support. It includes chat rooms, bulletin board discussion areas, and a place for people to e-mail questions to a health care professional.

The website houses a listing of resources such as local hospices and palliative care programs, related products, services, books, website links, downloadable resources and other materials. Visitors may also choose to share their reflections about their experiences with death and dying on personalized web pages. Health care professionals working in the field of palliative care will have the opportunity to share research results and benefit from access to expert opinion from Canadian colleagues.

This new website will not replace, nor is meant to replace, the care provided by doctors and nurses. However, it is hoped that it will help make Canadians better informed

about death and dying, so that they can be more confident when participating in discussions about their care and in making decisions related to that care. When first accessing the website, registration is required by providing an e-mail address, password, postal code, and screen name. Once registered, repeat users must only enter their e-mail address and password.

We invite those who could benefit from this innovative resource to visit us at www.virtualhospice.ca or www.carrefourpalliatif.ca. ●

MB Hydrom
1/3 S
4c
#26

Powell
1/6 V
bw
#13