



2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT



Land Acknowledgment



Hospice Palliative Care Ontario gratefully acknowledges that our office in Toronto is located on land that is the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, as well as the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, and Huron-Wendat Peoples.

We acknowledge all First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples from across Turtle Island who now reside throughout the greater Toronto area.



Message from the Chair of the Board and President and CEO



As we look back on the past year, we are inspired by the people and organizations working every day to strengthen hospice palliative care across Ontario. Their compassion, creativity, and shared commitment continue to shape a system of care that meets individuals and families with dignity, comfort, and support wherever they are.

Across the province, our members, volunteers, partners, and health-system colleagues rose to meet growing needs with dedication, innovation, and care. HPCO is proud to stand alongside them by providing leadership, advocacy, education, resources, and opportunities for connection that build capacity and support more equitable access to high-quality hospice palliative care.

Education and knowledge exchange were at the heart of HPCO's work this year. Our online Volunteer Training program was accessed by 3,357 people, and more than 2,000 individuals enrolled in an HPCO educational course. Launched in April 2025, *Palliative Talks: The Palliative Care Podcast* has already surpassed 2,300 downloads. These learning opportunities brought together professionals, volunteers, leaders, and partners to share promising practices, strengthen skills, and improve care for families across Ontario.

In June 2025, more than 850 attendees from around the world came together at HPCO2025 to exchange ideas, showcase innovations, and celebrate progress across the sector. Through dynamic presentations, workshops, and sessions, delegates connected with peers, built new relationships, and explored practical approaches to strengthening care. The response was overwhelmingly positive: 97% of delegates reported that the conference met or exceeded their expectations, and more than 90% said they left with information that could help initiate positive change in their practice.

Looking ahead, HPCO will continue to advance strategic priorities that reflect the needs of our members and align with Ontario's evolving health system. Guided by collaboration, evidence, and a deep belief in the value of compassionate care, we remain committed to helping ensure that every Ontarian can access hospice palliative care when and where they need it.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the HPCO team, thank you to our members, volunteers, partners, donors, educators, and advocates for your leadership, generosity, and unwavering commitment. Together, we will continue to strengthen hospice palliative care and build a future where compassionate, high-quality care is available to everyone.

Jennifer

Jennifer Wilson
Chair of the Board

Rick

Rick Firth
President and CEO

What is Hospice Palliative Care?

Visiting Hospice Volunteer



Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients (adults and children) and their families who are facing problems associated with life-threatening illness. It prevents and relieves suffering through the early identification, correct assessment, and treatment of pain and other problems, whether physical, psychosocial, or spiritual. The goal is to improve the quality of life for patients and their families as they face challenges associated with life-limiting illness. A “family” is whoever the person identifies as family, and may include relatives, partners, and friends.

Hospice palliative care services are not only helpful when a person is approaching death, but also during the earlier stages of an illness. It may be combined with other treatments aimed at lessening or curing the illness, such as chemotherapy. Families also benefit from psychosocial supports when their loved one is dying, and bereavement supports after their death.

Hospice palliative care meets not only physical needs, but also psychological, social, cultural, emotional, and spiritual needs of each person and family. Quality hospice palliative care neither hastens death nor prolongs life. The goal of hospice palliative care is to improve the quality of life for patients and their families.

About HPCO



Day Hospice Program

Hospice Palliative Care Ontario (HPCO) is a provincial association for hospices and palliative care providers, professionals and volunteers throughout Ontario. Our members are community non-profit organizations providing the finest standard of hospice palliative care.

HPCO was formed in April 2011 when the memberships of The Hospice Association of Ontario (founded in 1989) and the Ontario Palliative Care Association (founded in 1981) voted to unify.



HPCO has been
accredited by
Imagine Canada since
2011

Our Vision

An integrated hospice palliative care system where every person in Ontario has access to quality hospice palliative care, at the right time, and in the right place.

Our Mission

To provide leadership on behalf of our members by informing policy and promoting awareness, education, knowledge transfer, and best practices in the pursuit of quality hospice palliative care in Ontario.

Our Core Values

Courage: We make the best decisions not just the popular ones. We dare to go down new roads and challenge accepted wisdom. We place clear expectations on one another and promote change.

Integrity: We are professional and honest in our relationships. We honor our commitments. We hold ourselves accountable.

Respect: We value the diversity of our members and stakeholders, their opinions, experience, and contributions.

Strategic Priorities 2026 – 2029



Grief and Bereavement Services

HPCO leads the palliative care movement to improve access to quality hospice palliative care by providing: targeted, effective public policy engagement, driving high level system change that supports sustainable, high-quality hospice palliative care; Information, education, and resources, enabling members to optimize and leverage the resources to deliver high-quality hospice palliative care, and a forum for the exchange of ideas and information, enabling members to learn from each other.

System Focus

We will champion an integrated hospice and palliative care system by promoting public policy and care approaches that ensure excellence and sustainability.

Member Focus

We will strengthen and scale sustainable member-valued services to meet the evolving needs of the hospice palliative care sector.

Organization Focus

We will invest in our capacity, expertise, and services to enable HPCO to deliver exceptional member value.

HPCO's Sponsors and Business Partners

HPCO's Sponsors

Our corporate and foundation sponsors generously support HPCO throughout the year. Their contributions support volunteer training, quality improvement initiatives, and strengthen HPCO as we work toward a future where every person in Ontario has access to quality hospice palliative care. We are also deeply grateful to the individual donors who contribute to our mission.



HPCO's Business Partners

Business partners support HPCO while providing members with access to products and services they need for the care they provide to the people of Ontario.



Advocacy Highlights



Throughout 2025–2026, HPCO maintained a sustained advocacy effort to ensure hospice palliative care remained part of provincial funding and health system discussions. In January of 2025, the government announced funding for 96 new hospice beds, including four sites in First Nations communities.

Following the February 2025 provincial election, HPCO worked closely with Minister Jones' office and the Ministry of Health to expedite one-time funding increases delayed by the election and caretaker period.

Anthony Leardi, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health, attended HPCO2025, addressed delegates, and connected with hospice palliative care leaders.

In fall 2025, HPCO brought hospice leaders and *Ellie the Elephant* to Queen's Park for its annual MPP Day. The focus was on stabilizing funding for In-Home Visiting Hospice Services and hospice residences as organizations faced growing costs and increasing demand for care.

Building on this momentum, HPCO developed its **2026 Pre-Budget Submission**, outlining four priority funding asks for the hospice sector. The submission was shared with the Minister of Finance, Minister of Health, Premier's Office, government partners, and the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. Hospice leaders were encouraged to meet with local MPPs and participate in pre-budget consultations, amplifying a consistent sector-wide message.

HPCO President and CEO Rick Firth presented the sector's priorities during the Minister of Finance's pre-budget consultations in January. Updated recommendations were subsequently shared with members, including revised funding requirements for hospice residence clinical costs and hospice bed expansion. In-Home Visiting Hospice Services remained a central advocacy priority.

Ahead of the March 2026 Ontario Budget, HPCO continued engaging government and identifying opportunities for hospice within anticipated investments in health, primary, and at-home care. While the Budget did not specifically identify hospice palliative care, it reaffirmed the \$1.1 billion investment in home care and included additional investments in hospitals and health infrastructure.

HPCO continues to work with government, Ontario Health, and sector partners to ensure hospice palliative care is recognized within these broader investments, including sustainable funding for In-Home Visiting Hospice Services, hospice residence operations and clinical costs, hospice bed expansion, and capital infrastructure.

Hospices in Ontario



Hospices in Ontario provide compassionate, community-based care for individuals with life-limiting illness, focusing on symptom management, emotional and spiritual support, bereavement services, and caregiver respite. Delivered via home-visiting programs, hospice residences beds, or other programs such as day hospice, these services are coordinated by multidisciplinary teams. The 142 hospice programs in Ontario include:



Hospice Residences

93 sites with 576 beds serving over 9,000 patients annually

- 45% of hospice residences are in rural communities
- 39 new hospice residences with 241 beds are in development



In-Home Hospice Services

85 sites supporting over 28,000 clients



Grief and Bereavement

Hospices support over 45,000 bereaved individuals annually

Satisfied with service: 98%

In-home hospice clients

Satisfied with service: 98%

Hospice Residence clients



Volunteers are vital to hospice palliative care and are the heart and soul of the hospice movement in Ontario. Volunteers cast the vision, raise the funds, support patients and families, enhance quality of life through companionship, respite, and non-clinical assistance, and console the grieving.

In 2025-2026 there were:

Over 15,000

Direct Service Volunteers

Over 10,000

Indirect Service Volunteers

Recognizing Outstanding Volunteers



The June Callwood Circle of Outstanding Volunteers was established in 1994 to acknowledge and thank outstanding hospice volunteers throughout Ontario. The award was named in honour of the late June Callwood, a long-time advocate of hospice, community activist, author, and recipient of the Order of Canada.

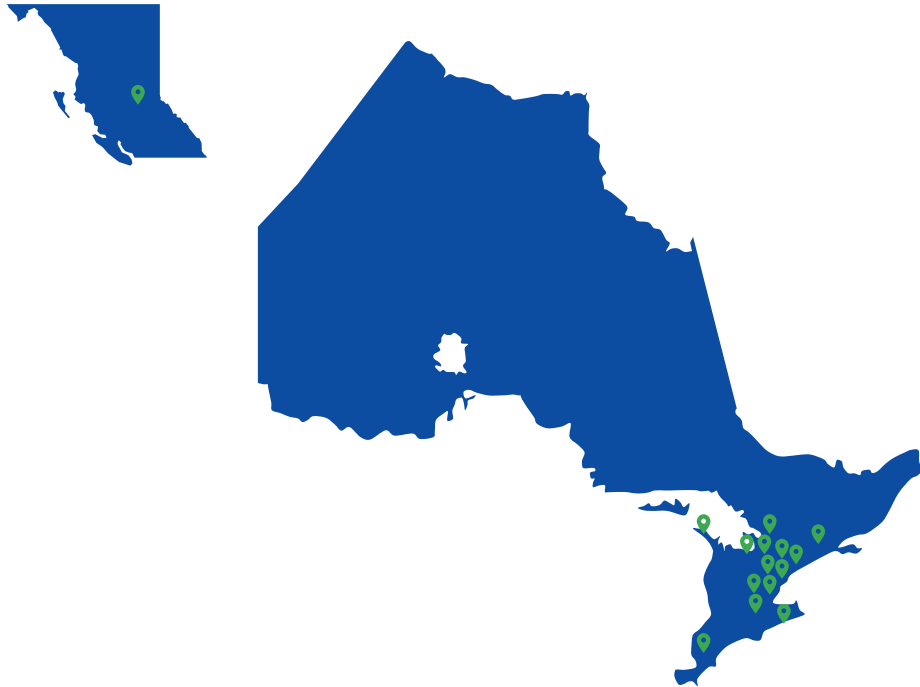
June was a recipient of this award in 1995, and Patron of the Circle until her death. Over 1,000 hospice volunteers have been inducted into the Circle of Outstanding Volunteers.

In June 2025 at HPCO's Annual Conference, 77 volunteers were inducted into The June Callwood Circle of Outstanding Volunteers.

Standards and Accreditation

HPCO's Accreditation Program supports hospices in demonstrating excellence, accountability, and continuous quality improvement. Designed specifically for hospice palliative care, the program provides standards and a structured review process for services including hospice residence, in-home visiting, day hospice, grief and bereavement, spiritual care, and complementary therapy. HPCO publishes Standards for hospice care and accredits hospice programs on a three-year cycle to assure the delivery of consistent, high-quality hospice palliative care.

In 2025–2026, HPCO initiated a comprehensive review and update of the Grief and Bereavement Standard, engaging subject matter experts from HPCO member hospices to inform the process.



46



Accredited hospice sites, including 1 site in BC

3



First-time Accredited by HPCO

"It was rigorous, provided room for interpretation and local differences with proper justified supports in place. The peer review allowed for an immense opportunity to learn from the experience of others." – Program participant

HPCO Annual Conference

At HPCO 2025, over 850 delegates, attendees and, speakers from Canada, England, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States gathered in Richmond Hill from June 8-10, 2025, for the Annual Hospice Palliative Care Ontario Conference.

The conference featured 4 keynote presentations, 80 workshops, 52 lightning talks and 30 posters, showcasing emerging research, innovative practices and the expertise of the hospice palliative care community.

Keynote speakers Dr. Lucy Hone, Dr. Christopher Kerr, and Jessica Holmes inspired delegates with perspectives on resilience, the human experience at end of life, and mental health, while Dr. Kathy Kortess-Miller delivered the Carmelita Lawlor Lecture.



Dr. Lucy Hone

2025 Award Recipients

- Margaret's Place Hospice received the Mount Pleasant Group Hospice Innovation Award
- Hospice Northwest is the inaugural recipient of the Mount Pleasant Group Equity in Action Award
- Doug and June Barber received the Outstanding Philanthropist Award
- Dr. Amit Arya received the Dr. S. Lawrence Librach Award for Palliative Medicine in the Community
- Maria Panzera-Rugg received the Dr. Dorothy Ley Award of Excellence in Palliative Care



Conference met or exceeded attendees' expectations

97.1%



Delegates said the education at the conference will help initiate change in practice

90.4%

HPCO Annual Conference Sponsors

Presenting Sponsor:



Care Partner Sponsors:



Sponsors:



 Palliative Care Education for PSWs (PACE for PSWs)	1,041
 Person-Centred Decision Making	614
 Palliative Talks: The Palliative Care Podcast	2,225
 Webinars	251
 Learning Hub: On-demand Education	1,168
 Caregiver Support Education	33,047
 Advance Care Planning Guides Distributed	18,531
 Advance Care Planning Senior Volunteers	36
 Volunteer Training*	3,357

*HPCO provides comprehensive online training for hospice palliative care volunteers across Ontario. Since 2016, HPCO has trained more than 20,000 hospice volunteers.

Palliative Care Education Program

Palliative care education courses are offered to Long-Term Care Homes and Community Support Service organizations located within Toronto. These courses are designed to meet the palliative care educational needs of interdisciplinary staff and are offered in-person and virtually.

HPCO gratefully acknowledges funding from Ontario Health for our Palliative Care Education Program for long-term care homes.



PACE for PSWs



PACE for PSWs is a partnership between Life & Death Matters, Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association, and Hospice Palliative Care Ontario to provide PSWs the palliative care skills they need in long-term care, home care, and hospice.



PACE for PSWs

Palliative Care Education for Personal Support Workers

PACE for PSWs is an exciting and flexible 10-course online program designed to provide much-requested support and palliative care education for PSWs.

PSWs who complete all 10 courses receive a National Certificate in Palliative Care jointly issued by the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association, Hospice Palliative Care Ontario, and Life & Death Matters.

Content is aligned with provincial and national palliative care competencies specified for personal support workers.



The palliative care education improved my knowledge of palliative care as it relates to my role

96%



Would recommend this palliative care education to others

98%



Life & Death Matters

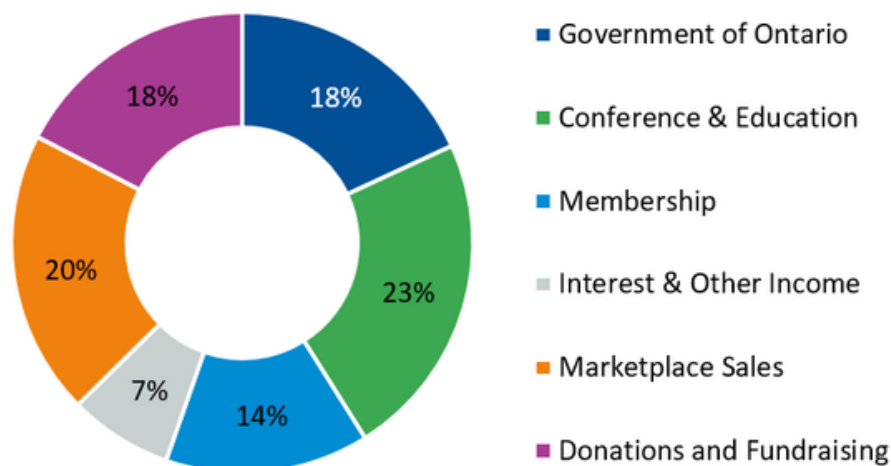


Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association
Association canadienne de soins palliatifs

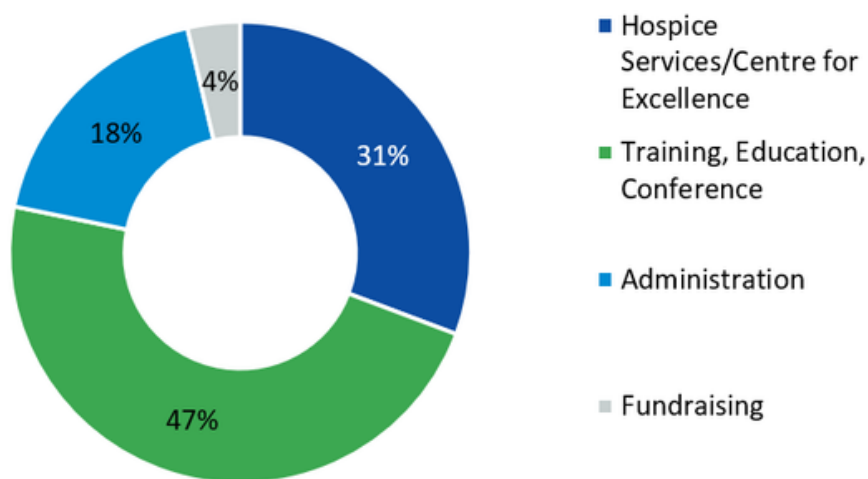
Stewarding Our Resources

HPCO strives to be a good steward of funds received from grants, donations, member services, membership fees, and the annual conference.

Sources of Funding



How our Dollars Were Spent



HPCO Audited Financial Statements are available at hpcoco.ca



Charity Information Returns are available on the Canada Revenue Agency website.

Board of Directors



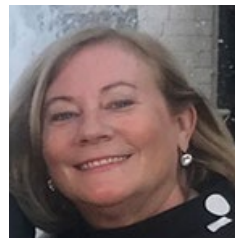
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Nominating,
Governance



Nancy Lefebvre
Vice-Chair,
Nominating,
Governance



Paul Hazzard
Treasurer,
Finance (Chair)



Lisa Sullivan
Governance
Committee (Chair)



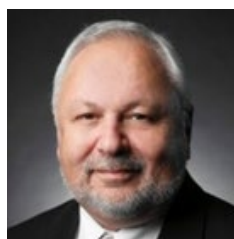
Johanna Lim
Director,
Audit & Risk (Chair)



Nazira Jaffer
Director,
Audit & Risk



Angelika Gollnow
Director,
Audit & Risk



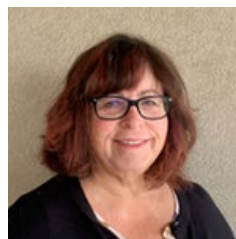
Len Lifchus
Director,
Finance



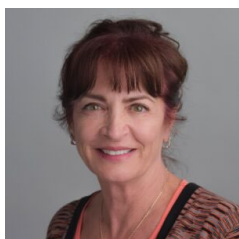
Janet Cosier
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Finance



Janette Panhuis
Director,
Audit & Risk



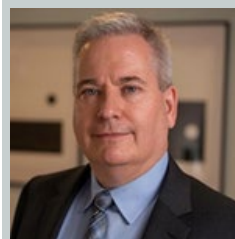
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Jill Ross
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Rick Firth
President and
Chief Executive
Officer



Christine Gordon
Director, Centre
for Excellence

Staff Leadership Team

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The HPCO staff team attending a tour of the Ontario Legislature on April 8, 2026.