Choosing Your Pathway of Care

A Guide for Veterans and Families at
Camp Hill Veterans’ Memorial Building

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Capital Health, Nova Scotia
www.cdha.nshealth.ca

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The information in this brochure is provided for information and education purposes only.
The information is not intended to be and does not constitute healthcare or medical advice.
If you have any questions, please ask your healthcare provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is updated every 3 years.
What is ‘The Pathways of Care’ Approach?

The Pathways of Care is the approach Veterans Services uses to plan your care at Camp Hill Veterans’ Memorial Building (CHVMB). This helps your doctors and others caring for you determine what treatments to use or not to use if you become ill. We recognize that veterans and their families have different goals of care. We respect your views and will honor your choices.

The Pathways of Care approach is based on how important the following goals are to each veteran:

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Often, it is impossible to achieve all these goals at the same time. They need to be placed in order of importance to you.
**We ask that you:**

- Give your Personal Directive, if you have one, to a member of your caregiving team. It will be very useful when you and your doctor select your Pathway of Care.
- Read this guide carefully with your family.
- Discuss with your family which goals of medical care matter most to you.
- Rank the goals of care listed on page 1 in order of importance to you by placing a 1, 2, or 3 in the box in front of each of the choices.

After you are admitted to the CHVMB, we will meet with you and your family/caregivers to talk about your goals of care. You and the caregiving team will choose a Pathway of Care based on your general medical condition, your goals of care and on what is a reasonable approach to care, based on practice and medical proof.

**The Pathways of Care**

We will now describe each Pathway of Care based on the ranking of goals on page 1.

**Palliative Pathway (Focus on Comfort)**

You have ranked the goals with Maximizing Comfort first. In this pathway your priority is comfort. This pathway will

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**Intensive Pathway (Focus on Prolonging Life)**

You have ranked the goals with Prolonging Life as your first goal.

In this pathway, the key goal of care is to prolong life in spite of possible treatment side effects. You must be willing to have some pain and risk short term or lasting loss of physical independence, in return for the chance of living longer. You want to accept any medical treatment that has some chance of keeping you alive. This could include CPR, surgery, possibly painful procedures, a long hospital stay, being in ICU, being placed on a breathing machine (ventilator), or being on a kidney machine (dialysis).

**Summary**

We hope that you and your family now have a better idea about what care goals are most important to you. Shortly after you are admitted, a meeting will be arranged between the caregiving team, you and/or your family. Together you will pick a Pathway of Care that fits your wishes given your overall medical condition and your goals. The pathways provide guidelines for both you and your caregiving team. Changes can be made to the pathway as your condition changes by talking with your caregiving team.
be suitable for you if you have reached advanced stages of dementia, severe heart, lung, or kidney disease or terminal cancer. It is also for veterans who are deciding not to have any further medical treatment and tests, but simply wish to remain as comfortable as possible should they become ill.

All your treatments would be given at the CHVMB and would be aimed towards relief of symptoms. For example, you may be given oxygen for shortness of breath, Tylenol® for fever, and morphine for pain. You usually would not have tests, such as blood tests or x-rays. Generally you would not have Intravenous (IV’s) or antibiotics. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and/or Intensive Care Unit (ICU) care would not be given.

**Maintenance of Function Pathway**

**Choice A: (Focus on continuing to do what you do now with little to no discomfort)**

You have ranked the goals as **Maintaining Physical and Mental Function** first and **Maximizing Comfort** second.

You want care to help you live longer but not at the cost of your independence or your comfort. You would be willing to put up with some pain to stay as you are now (for example, the minor, short term pain from repairing a broken hip, or taking out a cataract). You are not willing to have care that causes a lot of pain or pain for a long time or if it could make you more disabled.

When these goals are chosen, care would be given at the CHVMB rather than in hospital. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) care would not be provided. Only those problems which cannot be looked after at the CHVMB (for example, a broken hip or a ruptured bowel) would be treated in the hospital.

**Choice B: (Focus on continuing to do what you do now allowing some discomforts)**

You have ranked the goals as **Maintaining Physical and Mental Function** first and **Prolonging Life** second.

In this pathway, the key goal is to be able to continue to do the things you can do now. You would choose this pathway if you think that keeping your physical and mental function should be the most important goal of medical care. You are willing to have some discomfort from medical treatment if you can continue to live at your present level of functioning.

A broad range of treatments, including hospital care, emergency surgery, and intravenous medications will be offered. Long term treatment on a breathing machine, CPR or ICU care would not normally be given as frail older adults seldom survive or benefit from these treatments.
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Please record the meeting information below. Bring this Guide and your Personal Directive (if you have not already brought it in) with you to the meeting.

**Meeting to Discuss Pathways of Care**

Date: ________________________________________
Time: ________________________________________
Location: ________________________________________
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