

ADVANCING QUALITY IN END-OF-LIFE CARE FOR PATIENTS WITH KIDNEY DISEASE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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BACKGROUND: Acknowledging the needs and importance of delivering quality end-of-life (EOL) care for renal patients, the BC Provincial Renal Agency (BCPRA) developed a provincial EOL framework which articulated four pillars of EOL care: Patient identification, advance care planning, symptom assessment & management and care of the dying patient and bereavement. As set out in the framework, the need to assess both processes and outcomes are essential to quality improvement in each of these four areas of EOL care.

OBJECTIVES: To develop and implement an evaluative framework which will provide data for strategic planning and continuous quality improvement in EOL care for renal patients.

METHODS: An environmental scan was conducted to assess current state and perceptions of EOL care among care providers using a survey and interviews with individual EOL champions in the Health Authority Renal Programs (HARPs). Literature review was carried out to identify tools for measuring the quality of dying and death from various perspectives.

RESULTS: Implementation of the EOL framework varies across the HARPs with each having formalized strategies to facilitate ongoing growth in EOL care. Specifically, prominent improvements were shown in symptom care & management and advance care planning. The majority of survey respondents deemed standardizing agreed-upon measures (79%) and evaluating EOL care at a provincial level (93%) provincially as “very” and “moderately” important on a 5-point Likert scale. Key challenges identified include enabling the organizational culture, sustaining quality EOL care and continual improvement.

CONCLUSIONS: From the environmental scan, we were able to identify enablers, barriers and opportunities in advancing EOL care provincially. Our next steps include selection and testing of tools for measuring quality of death, establishing provincially agreed-upon outcome and process

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measures for population-based monitoring of progress for continual improvement in EOL care for renal patients, their families and caregivers.