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Palliative and End-of-Life Care

Assess, Treat and Refer Program

EMS Palliative and End of Life Care





“Working together to bring emergency care to palliative and end-of-life patients.”

What is the program?

The assess, treat and refer program provides urgent care in patients’ homes during palliative emergencies. Emergency medical services (EMS) practitioners and your clinician (this could be a physician, registered nurse, nurse practitioner, licensed practical nurse, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, or respiratory therapist providing care in your home) will work together to make sure your emergency treatment matches with your overall care plan. This may include the desire to remain in your home, rather than be transported to a hospital.

Who is the program for?

This program is for adults who are receiving palliative and end-of-life care and have a palliative emergency when a registered clinician is with them. A palliative emergency may include:

- pain that gets worse
- breathing problems
- delirium (confusion)
- nausea or vomiting



Why is the program important?

Many palliative patients prefer to die in a non-hospital setting, but complex care issues have historically left EMS practitioners and clinicians with few options but to transport them to hospital. The assess, treat and refer program allows clinicians and EMS practitioners to keep patients at home, when appropriate. This improves patient and family experiences, and reduces the impact on emergency departments.



How do I access the program?

The program is accessed by your clinician when needed.

What can I expect when EMS arrives at my home?

EMS will work with you, your family, and your clinician to discuss your current wishes. They will consult with an on-call physician to determine the best treatment. If possible, treatment will be administered in your home and your desire to remain at home will be supported. Your clinician will ensure that your family doctor is aware of the event and will follow up with any required medication or supplies.

What if I want to go to the hospital?

EMS will provide transport to the emergency department.