

Survey Highlights and Facts about Palliative Care

Palliative care encompasses a much wider range of care than most Quebecers believe!

What is palliative care?

- A majority of Quebecers (89%) believe that they more or less know what is palliative care.
- 79% of respondents associate palliative care with providing comfort care to terminal patients at the end of life.
- Under half of Quebecers know that palliative care includes whole-person care and all that it entails.

When told what palliative care encompasses:

- 74% of respondents associate palliative care with pain relief
- 53% know that palliative sedation is part of the continuum of palliative care
- 49% **wrongly** believe that medical aid in dying (MAID) is part of palliative care
- 43% are aware that palliative care can improve a person's quality of life
- Only 56% know that psychological support is part of palliative care
- Only 47% know that spiritual care is part of palliative care
- Only 36% know that bereavement support is part of palliative care.

According to the World Health Organization:

“Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families who are facing 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. This includes addressing practical needs and providing bereavement counselling. It offers a support system to help patients live as actively as possible until death.”

When can patients receive palliative care?

- 68% of Quebecers **wrongly** believe that palliative care is only administered to people during the few weeks leading to death.
- 30% are unsure if OR **wrongly** believe that palliative care will hasten death.

In fact, palliative care is a way to help people have the best quality of life possible. This means that palliative care can start at the time of diagnosis to ensure that symptoms are managed while a patient undergoes treatment. One thing is for certain: people need to ask questions about palliative care well before end of life. Through a joint approach with healthcare professionals, the best solution can be found to meet the priorities of patients.

Where can patients receive palliative care?

Below are the results of the following question: “Among the following, where can patients receive palliative care (select all that apply)?”:

- 82% in hospices
- 70% in hospitals
- 51% in CHSLDs
- 40% at home
- 28% in retirement homes

Expectation for palliative care services outside of hospitals and hospices is still very low even though palliative care can and should be accessed in all care settings.