

Dear <name>:

I write to you today because you have previously donated to support palliative care in Ontario. In this letter, I would like to do two things.

First, I want to thank you for your past support for palliative care in Ontario. Your contributions helped make a difference to many Ontarians who received palliative care in the last days of their lives.

Second, I want to reacquaint you with the good work that Hospice Palliative Care Ontario (HCPO) does and update you on the status of palliative care in this province in the hopes that you might consider renewing your donations to us.

You may know us under a different name. If you are not familiar with HCPO, we formed in 2011 when the Hospice Association of Ontario and the Ontario Palliative Care association joined together. Now HCPO directly represents 215 hospice palliative care organizations, more than 500 members working in hospice palliative care, and 14,000 hospice volunteers.

HCPO is also the secretariat for the Quality Hospice Palliative Care Coalition of Ontario, which formed in 2010 and is comprised of academic centres and over 900 health care providers-community care access centres, residential hospices, visiting hospice services, long-term care homes, health associations, and hospitals. This larger organization is now working with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) and Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) to improve all aspects of hospice palliative care here to allow more people access to hospice palliative services, to improve support for both patients and caregivers, to better integrate hospice palliative care into the rest of the health care system, and to improve accountability. (To read more about this, please see www.qhpcco.ca for reports and documents.)

Further, HCPO is proud to announce that it is one of the first 17 organizations accredited by Imagine Canada's new Standards Program, which was launched in 2012 to improve public confidence in charities and non-profits across Canada. Accreditation in this program means that HCPO has demonstrated excellence in five areas: board governance, financial accountability and transparency, ethical fundraising, staff management, and volunteer involvement.

However, a great deal more needs to be done. Though 70 to 80% of Canadians would rather spend their last days at home, 75% still die in hospitals and long-term care facilities. Canada's population is ageing, meaning that more and more people will suffer from the chronic diseases that most often call for hospice palliative care, meaning that the current bottleneck for palliative care will only worsen. Should the

healthcare system do better than this? Yes. Can it? Not in its current form and at its current level of funding. Until it can, HCPO will do as much as it can.

That's why we're asking you to consider donating to us again. Though we receive money from the government, we receive just 36% of our funds from the government and make up the rest from donations, membership fees, and conference income. Every dollar you can give helps us a little more toward our goal of allowing every terminally ill Ontarian to see the end of their days as tranquilly as possible.

We realize that many other organizations ask you for money, and that many of those causes are worthwhile. However, we want to remind you of the special role that HCPO plays in our healthcare system: it allows people to die in peace, comfort, and dignity. While this should be part of every healthcare system, the unfortunate reality is that it is not, and the caregivers of Hospice Palliative Care Ontario made the difference for tens of thousands of Ontarians in 2012.

Sincerely,