

Collaboration to improve palliative care in Dufferin and Caledon

Written By **Zachary Roman**

Local groups are working to improve access and quality of palliative care services in Caledon and Dufferin County.

The Hills of Headwaters Collaborative Ontario Health Team (HOHC OHT), in collaboration with Bethell Hospice and the HOHC OHT's palliative care working group, recently secured funding for a clinical coach through Ontario Health.

Bethell Hospice executive director Margaret Paan said the clinical coach will guide and support the implementation of a framework to improve access to, and quality of, hospice palliative care in Dufferin and Caledon.

The HOHC OHT's integrated palliative care model is focused on earlier identification and improved connection for those in need of palliative care.

"We are so proud of the work being done locally and are thrilled to receive funding to help further this work," said Paan. "The success of our application for funding from Ontario Health is a testament that by working collaboratively, we can accomplish more than the sum of our parts."

Paan said with rapid population growth, Dufferin and Caledon have a great need to bolster current palliative care services to keep up with changing demographics.

The new clinical coach is going to lead implementation of the HOHC OHT's integrated palliative care model; create a single intake for palliative care services in collaboration with primary and acute care providers; provide support to community nurses and primary care providers focused on palliative care; and develop an interdisciplinary team for further coordination.

Tracy Coffin is the executive director of the HOHC OHT. She said the clinical coach will help improve access to palliative care services and increase the number of health care professionals who can provide those services.

"Our goal is to identify those who require palliative care services earlier in their care journey and provide them and their caregivers with quality care and support," said Coffin. "This work would not be possible without the financial support of the Ontario Palliative Care Network (OPCN), and the tireless efforts of HOHC OHT's palliative care working group. Their dedication and commitment to improving care in our community is truly inspiring."

In the coming months, Bethell Hospice, the OPCN, and HOHC OHT will be working together to recruit the clinical coach.