

Memorandum

Date: September 24, 2012

To: Nanaimo Family Physicians

From: Dr. Robin Love, Medical Director NRGH PCU
Jill Gerke, Manager End of Life Care VIHA

Re: **NRGH/Oceanside Community Palliative Physician Consultation**

The Palliative Care Program in our area has received an increase in physician funding that will provide for a modest expansion in palliative care services in the NRGH/Oceanside area. Services are available for patients with life-threatening illnesses. Approximately 85 % of the patients seen by our program have a cancer diagnosis, and the remainders have other illnesses including neurological diseases, end stage cardiovascular and respiratory disease, renal failure etc. *We are not able to provide service for chronic non-malignant pain.*

The current services include:

1. NRGH Palliative Care unit - A 12 bed acute inpatient unit that provides acute symptom management and end of life care. Most referrals are for inpatients at NRGH, who are seen as a consultation, and transferred to the PCU if and when appropriate. Family physicians are encouraged to remain active in the care of their patients with the support of the palliative care team, and may retain MRP status. Direct admissions are occasionally possible depending on the particular circumstances. These should be discussed directly with the PC physician on call.
2. Consultation Service at NRGH - Patients with symptom issues related to life-threatening illnesses may be seen as a consultation with appropriate supportive care visits, even if they are not appropriate for admission to the palliative care unit.
3. Symptom Management Clinic (Outpatient) - An outpatient clinic held once/week for patients with symptoms related to their life-threatening illness. Patients may be referred by faxing a referral form and appropriate information to the palliative care unit – 250-755-7929.
4. On-Call service: 24/7 on call service is provided for the inpatient service, and can be accessed via the NRGH switchboard or the PCU.

New Services:

A palliative physician consultation service for the community will start week of September 17, 2012. This has been developed in order to provide additional symptom management expertise and end of life care service to patients in the community and in residential care facilities, who are unable to attend the outpatient clinic. This collaborative service with Home and Community Care nursing will offer home visits and visits to LTC facilities.

This additional service has been developed to *assist family physicians, not to replace them in the care of their patients*. It is intended for **more complex situations**, and is not to provide service to all patients who are dying. It is anticipated that most referrals will be initiated by the patient's family physician, or by home care nursing/ facility nursing staff with the approval of the family physician.

Referrals may be directed to the NRGH palliative care unit for booking. Please indicate clearly whether the referral is for the outpatient clinic, home visit or facility. A request for an admission should be made by contacting the PC physician on call.

Please see attached forms for contact information, and further questions please contact:
NRGH Palliative Care Unit – 250-739-5882.