

# IMPROVEMENTS TO BC PALLIATIVE CARE BENEFITS

*BC Palliative Care Benefits cover certain drugs, medical supplies, and equipment that are used in palliative care.*

The Ministry of Health and BC health authorities are pleased to announce improvements to BC Palliative Care Benefits effective **October 29, 2015**.

After extensive analysis of feedback about these benefits, the ministry and health authorities worked together over the past year to develop a process that responds to practitioner feedback.

The primary changes allow physicians and nurse practitioners to improve assessment of a patient's eligibility, to confirm coverage is in place, and to discontinue coverage for those patients who no longer qualify for the benefits. These changes also help the ministry reserve funding for patients who truly require these benefits.

## WHAT IS NOT CHANGING?

There are no changes to the benefits available or to the criteria for coverage.

## WHAT IS CHANGING?

- 1 The [Registration Form \(HLTH 349\)](#) and [Prescriber Guide](#) now clearly indicate that both medical practitioners **and nurse practitioners** can register patients for coverage.
- 2 The **Supportive and Palliative Care Indicators Tool (SPICT™)** has replaced the Palliative Performance Scale as the supporting assessment tool when registering patients for the benefits. The **SPICT** offers a more accurate means of assessing patients as it applies to both malignant and non-malignant conditions. Instructions and the **SPICT** can be found on pages 1 and 2 of the revised [registration form](#).
- 3 Health Insurance BC has established a **Palliative Care Coverage Confirmation Line** at **250-405-3612**. This line allows physicians and nurse practitioners to quickly confirm coverage. The line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 364 days a year. When calling, provide (1) the patient's Personal Health Number, date of birth, address and primary diagnosis and (2) your college license number.
- 4 Practitioners are now required to **reassess a patient if the patient is still receiving benefits 12 months after they were first registered** for the benefits by indicating "Reassessment" on [registration form](#).
- 5 Practitioners can **discontinue benefits** for patients who no longer meet the criteria by indicating "Cancellation" on the [registration form](#).
- 6 Practitioners who still rely on pre-printed forms can **special order printed forms** using the Coverage Confirmation Line. Forms will no longer be available from the Product Distribution Centre as more and more practitioners are opting to complete forms online.
- 7 Health authorities are authorized to provide medical equipment and supplies from the approved list **as soon as they receive the BC Palliative Care Registration Form**. No confirmation of the patient's registration is required.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

- ▶ Begin using the new [Registration Form \(HLTH 349\)](#). Older forms can be accepted for only a limited time.
- ▶ Review the [Prescriber Guide](#) and [Health Authority Policy](#) for details on changes.
- ▶ Print the updated [Patient Information Sheet](#), as necessary.

## OTHER INFORMATION

For full information on BC Palliative Care Benefits, visit our [Prescriber Information page](#). The web page provides links to the documents mentioned above and to the latest [Plan Care Drug Plan Formulary](#).

## MINISTRY OF HEALTH WEBSITE—MAKING IT WORK FOR YOU

You might be interested to know that the [Ministry of Health](#) Website now provides a section **specifically for practitioners and professionals**.

Within this dedicated section of the website, is the information practitioners need about MSP, PharmaCare, professional regulations, physician compensation, BC Guidelines, and more.

