November 29, 2010

The Honourable Deb Matthews,
Ministry of Health and Long Term Care,
80 Grosvenor Street,
10th Floor, Hepburn Block,
Toronto ON
M7A 2C4

Dear Minister,

It is with great pleasure that we the Steering Committee of the Quality Hospice Palliative Care Coalition of Ontario (QHPCCO) submit to you the last of three reports outlining the next steps in implementing a quality hospice palliative care (HPC) system across the continuum of care throughout the province of Ontario.

As you recall from our initial submission in October the first document outlines our recommendations to achieve significant progress in HPC, in the short term. The second is a comprehensive document outlining a System Design Framework adopted by our coalition and guided our work in developing the recommendations.

This third document is the result of many months of work and represents the collaboration and partnership of multiple stakeholder associations throughout the province that recognize the value of HPC. Never in the history of this province has there existed such agreement and alignment among stakeholders across the continuum of care regarding the needed next steps in the health care system for HPC. Therefore, this report provides you with the evidence that shows that quality HPC is not only desirable to those dying and their families, but is critical in providing a quality health care system that is cost-effective and responsive to the needs of the people it serves.

The QHPCCO applauds the Ministry for its valiant strides in improving access to quality HPC for the people of Ontario. However, without formal policies and standards across Ontario, a patchwork of access, outcomes, practices, and services is the best that has been able to be achieved to date. The Canadian Cancer Society states (2010) “there is no comprehensive provincial palliative care program in Ontario”.

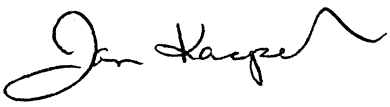
Integrated hospice palliative care systems have demonstrated their effectiveness to improve patient experiences, promote the well-being of patients and caregivers, and reduce costs. The

current situation of inconsistent hospice palliative care in Ontario and the potential for a truly integrated system presents a significant opportunity for the Government of Ontario to make hospice palliative care a real priority through policy and appropriate funding.

We know that the Ministry is committed to improving hospice palliative care in this province and we have greatly appreciated the open dialogue that we have shared with you over the last year. We wish to continue our offer to share our expertise and support for this vital on-going work.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter. We look forward to meeting with several key Ministry representatives on December 6, 2010 to begin this formal presentation of our recommendations and to discuss this submission and next steps.

Yours truly,



M. Janet Kasperski, RN, MHSc, CHE
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-and-

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