

The **After Hours Palliative Nursing Service** (AHPNS) is a provincial telephone service to help support palliative clients and their family members while living at home. The After Hours Palliative Nursing Service (AHPNS) was introduced across B.C. in April 2012, and Interior Health is a participating health authority in all geographical areas of the Interior, **except in Kelowna**, where a local after hour program is provided.

Home Health nurses will provide the toll free AHPNS brochure and telephone number to those clients registered as a palliative client in Home Health services on the first visit. If you are not registered to the community palliative program, and feel that you or a loved one should be, speak to your doctor about a referral, or call the local Home Health office in your phone book.



Individuals or caregivers who call the after-hours line speak first to a HealthLink nurse with enhanced skills to provide advice by telephone. If they require additional support, they are referred to a specially trained palliative response nurse from Fraser Health. More complicated calls involve further consultation with an on-call physician or a clinical nurse specialist.

This service is available to address any palliative care issues that arise between 9 p.m. and 8 a.m., seven days a week, 365 days per year. Individuals and/or caregivers can call for any type of palliative questions, information and support, such as:

- asking the significance of a change in condition, e.g., is it normal or expected?
- new or worsening symptoms such as pain or shortness of breath, constipation, nausea;
- concerns about the functioning of a piece of equipment, such as a pain pump, a chest tube, a dressing or other medical supplies/equipment supporting care in the home;
- medication questions, such as what to give, the amount and how often;
- seeking decisional support about going to the local hospital now or waiting until morning;
- emotional support when experiencing anxiety and distress;
- support during the dying process, and/or immediately following a death in the home.

All palliative individuals who contacted the After Hour Palliative Nursing Service are automatically flagged for follow-up the next day by their Home Health nurse, who may call or visit. Depending on the nature of the call, the physician may also be contacted. We encourage the public to use this important after hours program support. In a big health authority like Interior Health, with so many small communities in rural and remote areas, this service is a significant support for evening and overnight care when individuals and family members choose to support dying at home.