



# . . . Memo

**To:** Chair and Members of the Community and Corporate Services Committee

**From:** Mayor Rick Goldring

**Date:** August 23, 2016

**Re:** Carpenter Hospice – Compassionate Cities Charter

---

The Carpenter Hospice has been in operation for 14 years and in that time, the hospice has served over 1,900 residents and families.

We are extremely fortunate to have such an asset in our city. The Carpenter Hospice assists residents by providing exemplary care and comfort to residents and their families in the most challenging of circumstances.

Recognizing the current mode of operation of the hospice serves 10 residents at any given time and the fact that the percentage of our residents over 65 continues to increase, the need for resources and services related to palliative care will only increase.

The Board and Staff of the Carpenter Hospice recognize this and as a result have engaged the broader community about ways the community including the City of Burlington can work in a collaborative manner to increase the level of awareness and services related to death and dying.

Over the last year, I have had several meetings with the staff of the hospice and I would like them to provide you an overview of the work they are doing in making Burlington an even more compassionate city. Attached is an Executive Summary about the Compassionate Cities Charter.

Karen Candy, the Executive Director of the Carpenter Hospice, will be a delegation at the September 12 meeting of the Community and Corporate Services Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Goldring". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Rick Goldring,  
Mayor



## **Compassionate City Charter: Executive Summary**

The Compassionate City Charter (3C) is an international framework of 12 social changes that guides cities in becoming more compassionate. A compassionate city is a community that recognizes that sickness, health, birth and death occur in the natural cycle of life. Dying, loss, caring and bereavement is also part of this cycle. Its residents understand that caring for one another during crisis is everyone's responsibility. The initiative involves engaging a broad spectrum of sectors and individuals within a community to offer palliative needs that complement the services provided by the medical establishment. 3C is not a strict step-by-step template, but a guide which individual cities can use to identify needs and determine the social changes that best fit their local community.

The initiative will achieve the following for Burlington residents:

- raise awareness of available local resources for palliative care and bereavement;
- demystify death and the dying process which will enable people to talk openly about death and dying, thereby equipping families to be better prepared;
- improve mental health and quality-of-life for those on the palliative care journey.

Between 2006 to 2011, Burlington residents aged 65+ represented a higher than provincial average (4.3%) of seniors based on government trajectories, and this above average number is expected to grow until 2050. Moreover, each death in Canada affects 5 people which translate to 1.25 million Canadians are affected by death every year. With the noted increase in patient and caregiver demand for services, the current medically-driven system is inadequate. In response, using this community-focused approach will enhance palliative care for patients and caregivers, and provide support to the medical system. Combining the 3C community-driven initiative with the efforts of the health-care system, will result in Burlington residents receiving quality person centered palliative care, better mental health and improved quality-of-life.

The 3C initiative aims to place a compassionate palliative care lens on existing community projects. This approach will not only benefit residents, but will also increase the uptake of these organizations' supports by driving people in their direction.

Community links in progress:

- Community Services Database – make it the primary search hub for all palliative care-related inquiries
- Faith Communities – connecting patients with local faith community initiatives to fill the gaps in their palliative support

- Demystifying death – facilitating local Death Cafes that provide a safe space for open conversation around death and the dying process

Highlighting these existing supports is a cost-effective way to address unmet palliative needs, therefore providing better quality care. Seeing the abundance of community support and drive to achieving this charter, the City of Burlington may be the 1<sup>st</sup> in Canada to be designated a Compassionate City.

To ensure the sustainability of this initiative, 3C is required to annually review current initiatives, evaluate their effectiveness, identify unmet needs and determine new sectors to include. As a community-driven charter, 3C gives control of decisions and resources to the community, achieving immediate and lasting results at the grassroots level and complementing community and municipal-run programs. Through partnerships with committed organizations and institutions, increased knowledge of palliative care resources and supports, with a focus to demystifying death, the residents of Burlington will reap the benefits and experiences of what it means to be a compassionate city, and the palliative well-being of the entire Burlington community is a priority.