Victoria Hospice Strategic Plan
2015-2018
VISION
Quality end-of-life care for all

MISSION
To enhance the quality of life for those facing advancing illness, death and bereavement through skilled and compassionate care, education, research and advocacy.
Dear friends and partners of the Victoria Hospice Society,

It is with excitement and pride that we present this document to you, announcing our plans for the next chapter in the life and service of Victoria Hospice.

Since our inception in 1980, Victoria Hospice has provided compassionate, evidence-based palliative and hospice care to thousands of individuals and families across southern Vancouver Island. We have provided education to health care professionals on best practices in supporting patients at the end of their lives. In addition, we have participated in nationally recognized research to continually advance knowledge in the emerging specialty field of palliative care. All of this is grounded in the mission laid out by our founders and embraced by all members of our team.

We have undertaken all these activities in partnership with our colleagues, volunteers, donors, and Island Health – a key partner in enabling us to provide our services. Today, almost half of our operating funds come from philanthropic sources. A tireless cadre of more than 300 volunteers enriches our services in countless ways. At the core of the excellent service we provide are the dedicated, experienced staff and physicians with a passion for delivering the highest quality of hospice and palliative care.

Even as we celebrate our many achievements over the last 35 years, we acknowledge the significant changes that are shaping our operating environment, now and for the years to come. We have engaged in a comprehensive and consultative strategic planning process to ensure that Victoria Hospice not only meets the current challenges, but continues to thrive, adapt and lead. Most importantly, we want to ensure that we maintain our ability to provide the best physical and emotional support that we can for our patients and their loved ones.

The strategic plan that follows is the result of this process. Thank you for your continuing support. We look forward to keeping you up to date as the targets described in this strategic plan for 2015–2018 are achieved and surpassed in the future.

Eileen Harper, BSc, CHRP
President, Victoria Hospice Society Board of Directors

Mischelle vanThiel, BA, MBA
CEO and Executive Director, Victoria Hospice
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Introduction and Background
Our Foundational Commitment

When our founders established the Victoria Hospice Society in 1980, they laid out the organization’s purpose. The points outlined below, as documented in our constitution, continue to guide us today as we:

- develop, document and provide coordinated community hospice, palliative care and bereavement programs and services for individuals and families faced with death, dying and bereavement in accordance with the standards set by the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association
- provide support, encouragement and assistance to the hospice/palliative care programs across South Vancouver Island and more broadly as need and as suitable opportunities arise
- organize, train and support volunteers in hospice-related activities
- provide bereavement services to those in need, regardless of cause of death, and to train volunteers to assist in this program
- provide leadership and stimulate public and professional participation and education in the study, assessment and improvement of hospice palliative care and bereavement care in the community
- increase public engagement in and understanding of the services provided by the Society
- work in conjunction and cooperation with governmental bodies and other organizations that share the Society’s interests and goals
- develop a system of ongoing evaluation of the Society’s functioning
- operate as a fundraising vehicle for the Victoria Hospice Foundation by encouraging the making of legacies, donations, gifts, bequests and endowments from all sources, including, without limiting the foregoing, those from other charitable foundations and charitable organizations; and
- receive funding from the Victoria Hospice Foundation and other sources for use in the achievement of these purposes

“*My husband left this world in comfort and dignity, thanks to your care. Thank you.*”
– GD
Our Planning Challenge

As we recommit to the core purpose for our organization’s being, new demands, advances and realities are shaping the delivery of end-of-life care in Canada. Victoria Hospice is growing to meet the challenge and maintain our ability to fulfill our mission.

This document presents the results of a comprehensive strategic planning process undertaken in the winter of 2014–2015 by the Victoria Hospice Society and the Victoria Hospice Foundation. We initiated this process in recognition of Hospice’s commitment to maintain our leadership role in hospice palliative care, even as the social, economic and demographic environments for providing these services are changing dramatically. This leadership position is essential if we are to continue to progress in achieving our vision: Quality end-of-life care for all.

Our planning discussions were grounded in both the sustaining purpose of our organization and the new reality of end-of-life care.

“Victoria Hospice’s roots were formed 35 years ago, as a result of the desire of this community to better care for the dying. Bringing professional and volunteer communities together, in a unique way, we provide care that blends physical management with spiritual, social and emotional attention to patients and families. As we look forward to the future, our goal is to nourish and grow those roots, always working to enhance the quality of life for those facing advancing illness, death and bereavement through skilled and compassionate care, education, research and advocacy.”

– Wendy Wainwright
Director of Clinical Services
A community long favoured as a desirable place to retire, Victoria and southern Vancouver Island have a higher-than-average awareness of the needs of an aging population. Within this broad demographic reality, Victoria Hospice recognizes that a closer look at the details must profoundly shape the delivery of end-of-life care in the years to come:

- By 2030, it is estimated that 20% of Canada’s population aged 65 and over will be living with two or more chronic diseases – illnesses such as diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart disease, dementia and kidney disease. While all of us hope to age gently and live well, the reality is that many will “live sick” for years or decades.

- Dying has changed. Whereas palliative care once supported individuals through a relatively stable course characterized by gradual physical decline, it is now estimated that only 20% of deaths will follow a predictable palliative care trajectory. Given today’s advanced technologies and techniques, people with life-limiting conditions have times of crisis and decline, but when well supported, they can also rally and weaken over much longer periods.

- For the increasing proportion of Canadians who live beyond age 65, at least 33% will have dementia, requiring complex care for cognitive as well as physical decline.

- Today, fewer than 5% of Canadians face sudden death. For the vast majority, death will come as the result of a condition that could benefit from palliative care: terminal illness (28.4%), organ failure (33.8%) or frailty (29.3%).

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1 Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association, *Raising the Bar: A Roadmap for the Future of Palliative Care in Canada*, www.chpca.net/media/7859/Raisng_the_Bar_June 2010.pdf
As never before, we are debating options for the end of life, and this debate has shone a spotlight on the need for improved access to palliative care. There is agreement that excellent management of pain and symptoms can address many of the deep-seated fears we have about the quality of our last days.

National and provincial hospice palliative care organizations have consulted with stakeholders and expert care providers. The result is an emerging consensus around a new way of providing service. The vision is for an integrated palliative approach to care delivered in compassionate communities, across the entire health care system, from time of diagnosis until death (and beyond, for those who are bereaved).

Priorities for British Columbia

The Provincial End-of-Life Care Action Plan for British Columbia, published by the Ministry of Health in 2013, recognizes the significance of this growing need in both social and economic terms. The goal is to improve both the quality of, and access to, palliative care for the roughly 33,000 people who die each year in the province.

The Provincial End-of-Life Care Action Plan includes a commitment to redesigning health services so end-of-life care is timely and coordinated, while strengthening health system accountability and efficiency.

The provincial plan envisions an integrated mix of levels of care and settings to serve patients throughout their final journey:

- Primary care (general practitioners trained in the palliative approach to care)
- Secondary care (specialist providers trained in the palliative approach)
- Tertiary care (specialty and sub-specialty palliative care services – for example, in cancer centres and acute care hospitals)
- Designated hospice spaces staffed by integrated palliative care teams in multiple settings, including acute care facilities, hospices and the community
- Care providers trained in the palliative approach in residential (long-term) care
- System-wide access to consultation and support by palliative care experts, including practitioner support (education and mentoring)

These strategies will provide individuals, caregivers and health care providers with palliative care information, education, tools and resources across the continuum of care.

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Delivering on Our Mission

British Columbia’s health care system currently faces enormous financial pressure in all service areas, and meeting end-of-life needs is just one component of the system. Ensuring that finite resources achieve maximum impact will require collaborative efforts and new approaches.

Partnership and collaboration will be essential if we are to deliver an integrated palliative approach to care. Engaging patients, families, caregivers, health care providers and citizens is fundamental. And everyone will need education, mentoring and support from specialized palliative care providers like Victoria Hospice.

To deliver that support, this strategic plan moves us forward to become a sustainable, progressive organization that is a recognized leader in palliative and end-of-life care, education and research. We need new models, new partners and new accountabilities to grow and flourish. And yet our mission remains the same. As one member of the Victoria Hospice Society’s Board of Directors said during an interview:

We need to refocus on our mission so it is actively talked about. Business issues and long-term financial and infrastructure sustainability are crucial, but I also believe Victoria Hospice will be more effective in dealing with these challenges if we maintain a deep, well-considered awareness of why this organization exists in the first place.
The Victoria Hospice Planning Process

In late 2014, the Victoria Hospice Society Board of Directors undertook a consultative planning process to maximize the organization’s ability to advance its core purpose, embrace new realities and emerge as a leader and key component of the broader health care system. The process began with information gathering, which included:

- conducting a comprehensive literature review and analysis of epidemiological data to better understand the organization’s context for planning
- administering an online survey to Victoria Hospice employees, volunteers and Community Reference Group members, seeking their views on enablers and barriers to success and future organizational priorities (110 responses were received)
- conducting interviews with 19 key members of the organization, including senior staff and members of the Board of Directors, and administering questionnaires to six additional Directors, to obtain their views on current strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats facing Victoria Hospice; and
- conducting interviews with 11 external stakeholders, including staff from the Ministry of Health, Island Health, Home and Community Care Nursing, Division of Family Practice, Victoria Hospitals Foundation, Victoria Foundation, BC Centre for Palliative Care, and residential care and other hospice/palliative care organizations, to obtain their views on the current strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats facing Victoria Hospice and the broader BC health care system

The next step was a collaborative planning session held on February 26, 2015. Victoria Hospice’s senior leadership team and the Board of Directors met for a full-day facilitated workshop, which included the following activities:

- a keynote presentation by Dr. Doris Barwich, Executive Director, BC Centre for Palliative Care, entitled “The Future of Quality End-of-Life Care in BC and Beyond”
- presentation of the findings from the information-gathering process
- collaborative development of key elements of the new Victoria Hospice Strategic Plan, including draft strategic priorities, objectives and outcomes

“Thank you, thank you, thank you for all your kind words, loving hugs, and understanding advice. We could not have walked this road without you all.”

– JV
Next, the draft plan was presented at a staff-wide forum held on March 4, 2015. The forum included:

- a keynote presentation by Dr. Doris Barwich, Executive Director, BC Centre for Palliative Care, entitled “The Future of Quality End-of-Life Care in BC and Beyond”
- presentation of the findings from the information-gathering process
- collaborative discussion of key elements of the new Victoria Hospice Strategic Plan, including draft strategic priorities and objectives

Finally, the plan was presented to the Victoria Hospice Community Reference Group on March 9, 2015, for further input and discussion.

This document presents the results of these workshops/forums, as further refined and approved by the Victoria Hospice Society Board of Directors.

The final step in the planning process is operational implementation, which commences in April 2015 with operational planning. As a first step, we will work to create specific and measurable objectives that support the broad aims of this plan. The Victoria Hospice senior leadership team will then work together with staff to integrate the plan’s components into the annual operating plan and budget. Quarterly reports to the Board of Directors on progress and achievement of milestones will be implemented.

The Palliative Approach

Throughout this plan, we refer to the “palliative approach.” This is a very specific approach to end-of-life care, defined as follows:

A palliative approach addresses the needs for pain and symptom management, psychosocial and spiritual support of patients facing life-limiting illnesses and their families, even if the patient chooses to undergo life-prolonging treatments and interventions. A palliative approach helps prevent care gaps that may occur during transitions in the patient’s journey, adds to an overall improvement in the quality of life for the patient and lessens the post-death suffering of the bereaved.³

Our Mission

To enhance the quality of life for those facing advancing illness, death and bereavement through skilled and compassionate care, education, research and advocacy.

Our Vision

Quality end-of-life care for all
Our Strategic Priorities

Strategic priority 1: Enhance care and system capacity

Victoria Hospice is a registered charity that has provided end-of-life care focused on palliative treatment since 1980. Highly skilled nurses, counsellors, spiritual caregivers, physicians and trained volunteers provide comfort for the patient and support for the family, rather than a cure for progressive, life-limiting illness.

As one of the leading hospices in British Columbia, Victoria Hospice established its model of care in a health system that is very different from the one in which it operates today. The time is right to ensure that our mission-driven programs and services are fully aligned with provincial and health authority plans and service delivery models, so we can continue as an integral part of the health care system. This strategic priority addresses the need to execute our mission in ways that also accomplish objectives prioritized by the Ministry of Health and Island Health.

We have long known that our current facilities and services are insufficient to meet the needs of all the people in our service area who are reaching the end of their lives. Today, across the Island Health service region, only 7% of deaths occur in hospice facilities (as illustrated below). We also know that not everyone wishes to die in a hospice. Many people would prefer to die at home (which for 30% of Canadians is a long-term care facility), if they could be assured of sufficient pain and symptom management support.

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To ensure that the benefits of the integrated palliative approach are available to people where and when they are needed, we must maximize and leverage our ability to influence access to service and quality of care in all settings. If we are successful in addressing this strategic priority, the result can serve as a model for other hospice palliative care providers in terms of service, staffing and a partnership approach to integrated palliative care.

We have identified the following objectives within this strategic priority:

1.1 Care is our core work: keep this at the forefront of all we do

Providing skillful and compassionate hospice palliative care to patients and families is our core work. Everything we do in terms of programs, services, education, research, advocacy, leadership and governance is in support of our commitment to caring for our patients and families. All aspects of this plan have been developed with consideration given to what is necessary to improve access to quality end-of-life care for those we serve.

TARGET OUTCOME:

- Demonstrate Victoria Hospice’s delivery of excellent end-of-life care and our contribution to improved access to quality palliative hospice care across the Island Health region

“Victoria Hospice has an honoured history, providing excellent hospice palliative care as well as leadership in consultative support, education and research. Our reputation is built on solid clinical practice that is both innovative and evidence-based. Resources developed by this team have been adopted throughout the hospice palliative care community across Vancouver Island, the province, the country and even around the globe. As the abilities of the colleagues we support have grown, so do our ambitions.”

– Carolyn Wilkinson
Victoria Hospice Clinical Nurse Specialist
1.2 Align with Island Health

Victoria Hospice and Island Health are parties to a service agreement (contract) with a term that expires in 2016. Before the current agreement expires, we will engage in constructive negotiations to establish a new, mutually beneficial, multi-year service agreement. We anticipate that this new agreement will be more detailed and defined than past service agreements, and may encompass such interdisciplinary hospice palliative care services as:

- management of acute care beds in a tertiary hospital setting
- management of hospice and respite beds in a community-based setting
- consultative support for home and community care, residential care and acute care
- ambulatory clinic services, whether embedded in other medical specialty departments or as a palliative day hospice facility
- expanding system capacity through the provision of education and research

TARGET OUTCOME:

- Appropriately funded service agreement between Island Health and Victoria Hospice that appropriately covers the costs of services provided by Victoria Hospice
1.3 Build system capacity

Victoria Hospice has a long and distinguished track record of delivering on the educational component of our mission. We provide numerous public and professional education, training and development courses, programs and workshops. We believe that a broader sharing of this expertise will facilitate greater system-wide capacity to deliver quality end-of-life care across all settings. This capacity enhancement can occur through clearly aligned education and research partnerships with Island Health, the Victoria Division of Family Practice, residential care facilities, academic institutions and others. Activities anticipated within this objective include:

- an expanded service agreement with Island Health to provide education for Island Health physicians, clinical employees, contractors, staff and volunteers in other settings (e.g., residential, home and community care)
- continuous content development and quality improvement of our education programs to reflect current evidence-based practice
- a rigorous program of practice-based research, to generate evidence, best practices and high-value curricula

TARGET OUTCOMES:

- Appropriately funded education and consultation programs are delivered by Victoria Hospice that positively impact system capacity to deliver quality hospice palliative care across all settings
- Annual increases in the number of practice-based research and/or quality improvement projects conducted by and/or including Victoria Hospice clinical staff
- Increased participation in Victoria Hospice education by the public and professional groups involved in providing hospice palliative care
- A new vision and action plan is developed and implemented to maximize the contribution and satisfaction of Victoria Hospice volunteers
- Clarified and resourced role of Victoria Hospice in the development and education of volunteers working in hospice palliative care in other institutions
1.4 Shift services and sites

Today, the Victoria Hospice team provides care in patients’ homes, within a 17-bed inpatient unit, and through specialized clinical consultations to patients in other health care facilities. Provincially and nationally, trends indicate that best practice is to situate acute care palliative services within tertiary hospitals where appropriate clinical supports are readily available (e.g., chemotherapy, diagnostic imaging and respiratory therapy).

Our inpatient unit and administrative headquarters are both situated in an aging building that is no longer suitable for a modern health care facility. Renovation is not an option, and a combination of city zoning and Island Health capital construction policies means rebuilding on an acute care hospital campus is not possible.

Thus, as we plan to meet our challenges, we recognize that a new location will be part of our future. Recently, Victoria Hospice has been approached by a number of respected residential care providers currently operating in the Greater Victoria area. These potential partners have expressed interest in exploring future co-location of Victoria Hospice, as a “win-win” proposition – they could benefit from enhanced palliative care expertise, while Victoria Hospice could find a suitable new location for its non-tertiary programs and services.

TARGET OUTCOMES:

- Established in consultation with Island Health and other partners, a financially sustainable integrated service delivery model with a mix of acute beds, hospice beds, community programs, psychosocial care and consultation services
- A functional plan defining the space and facilities required to deliver the new service model
- Options for relocation explored
- A decision reached on how, when and where to proceed with relocation

“My wife and I had a tour of Hospice and we were so impressed by the people who go to work there every day. They don’t treat their work as another day at the office. These people are defining their lives by the care and compassion they give to patients and their loved ones as life draws to a close.”
– Steve and Betsyn Clark, Donors
1.5 Advocate for quality end-of-life care and enhance awareness of our services

Our mission includes a commitment to advocating for quality end-of-life care beyond our own walls and our local community. We remain committed to advocating for improved access to and funding for quality hospice and palliative care.

Victoria Hospice’s reputation for providing quality hospice palliative care is essential in attracting new members to our team, including nurses, physicians, psychosocial care providers, educators, volunteers, researchers, administrators and donors.

Research undertaken for this strategic plan indicates that Victoria Hospice is well regarded by those familiar with its services. The organization has a reputation for high-quality, compassionate care, and its education programs are respected and valued by health care providers.

However, there is room for improvement. Many who have not been personally touched by Victoria Hospice are unaware of its services. Among those who are aware of the organization, many are not knowledgeable about the breadth of services provided beyond inpatient care and the Palliative Response Team’s visits. Specifically, bereavement services and research activities are not well known. Furthermore, most people are unaware of our non-profit, donor-dependent status and believe that Victoria Hospice is simply part of Island Health.

The fundraising challenge for Victoria Hospice is perhaps more complex and delicate than it is for other charities. Historically, the bulk of gifts to Victoria Hospice have been either one-time gifts related to a specific individual’s passing (i.e. in the year of the death, from donors who do not become annual supporters) or in the form of wills and estates (generous, but unpredictable).

As Victoria Hospice grows and evolves, we have an opportunity to build on our strong reputational foundation and raise awareness of the diverse ways in which Victoria Hospice adds value to its community. This increased awareness will help ensure that people who need us find us and people who wish to support us know what our financial needs are and how their contributions can help.

TARGET OUTCOMES:

- Active participation by Victoria Hospice in local, provincial, national and international associations, committees and groups advocating for improved access to and funding for quality end-of-life care
- Demonstrated emphasis on the diverse services provided by Victoria Hospice in all appropriate external activities and materials
- Strengthened and unified Victoria Hospice branding and increased public awareness of the organization and its breadth of services
- A compelling, professional case statement to support fundraising for a new location, including an appeal for endowment contributions through planned giving to support ongoing operations once the new location is completed
Strategic priority 2: Make the business case

As one stakeholder told us in an interview, “These days health authorities have two problems: not enough money and not enough capacity. What can we offer to be part of the solution?” Being part of the solution means acting in alignment with our commitment to “work in conjunction and cooperation with governmental bodies and private organizations that share the Society’s interests and goals” and to receive funding from a range of sources for use in the achievement of our mission.

In the past, Victoria Hospice relied on its reputation and exemplary quality of service delivery to make the case for public and donor funds. Today, those arguments alone are insufficient. There are many high-quality providers of essential health and social services vying for government funding. Securing contracts with health authorities requires ever higher levels of evidence that the provider is delivering both efficiency and effectiveness.

Major donors and partners – government and private – increasingly demand that charities and non-profit agencies in all fields present detailed and carefully documented business plans to ensure that resources provided will be used as effectively as possible. It is not about business being more important than the mission. Rather, it is recognition of the reality that we operate in an environment of finite resources, and we must therefore be as cost-conscious, accountable and transparent as possible.

Today, palliative care is part of the continuum of health care services. As a result, hospice services compete with acute care, residential services and home and community care for scarce government funding. Despite these challenges, we are confident the vision for system-wide capacity building described in Strategic Priority 1 will allow Victoria Hospice to articulate a compelling and evidence-based value proposition that Island Health, our donors and other stakeholders will embrace as valuable and worth supporting.

We have identified the following objectives within this strategic priority:

“You are connecting with people at a very important and intimate time of their life. You are dealing with their true selves, their essential being, and that’s part of the privilege and the reward of this work.”
– Dr. Deb Braithwaite
Palliative Care Physician
2.1 Confirm funding partners’ information needs, benchmark costs and generate rigorous cost assessments/projections for future programs and services

We will collaborate with Island Health to determine the scope and format of information it requires in relation to the services offered by Victoria Hospice (including inpatient and outpatient services, psychosocial services, education, research and system-wide capacity building). We will work with hospice palliative care peers across Canada to better understand how they quantify and describe the costs of their services, to benchmark sector standards.

Island Health and other funding partners need to be able to understand the true cost of our services and compare it to their own costs and industry standards. Only then can we effectively demonstrate the excellent value we provide for funds received. We will generate accurate cost assessments and projections for service delivery and compare them to benchmarks to demonstrate our effective use of resources.

TARGET OUTCOMES:

- A comprehensive costing model, including appropriate benchmarks, to serve as the basis for future cost projections

- Regularly generated cost assessments and projections that compare favourably to appropriate benchmarks, supporting our business case
2.2 Document the business case for a new and enhanced role for Victoria Hospice at a new location

The detailed service and care delivery model (Strategic Priority 1) and rigorous costing (above) will be combined in a persuasive and effective business case for our funding partners. We will show how a new location and redefined role for Victoria Hospice will provide a win-win opportunity for Island Health and other key partners, including philanthropists who may choose to support construction of our new location. As part of developing a business case, we will create and implement a targeted communication plan to disseminate key messages about our quality of care, cost efficiency and value for money.

TARGET OUTCOMES:

- A persuasive and effective business case, resulting in appropriate levels of stable operating funding from Island Health

“Every year, thousands of local residents give Victoria Hospice their time and money to help us provide care to patients and families. In a relatively small community like ours, that’s a pretty powerful indicator of the importance of Victoria Hospice’s mission, and the quality of the care the nurses, doctors, counsellors, volunteers and other staff provide.”
– Tom Arnold
Manager, Major Gifts
Strategic priority 3: Grow education, training and research

A key part of Victoria Hospice’s mission, as set out in our constitution, is to “provide leadership and to stimulate public and professional participation and education in the study, assessment and improvement of hospice palliative care and bereavement care in the community.”

Since its earliest days, Victoria Hospice has recognized its responsibility to serve as an expert resource to the broader community. One of the strengths of the resulting education programs for health care providers has been having both research-based and practice-based evidence shape what we do, teach and share.

In 2014, Victoria Hospice completed a comprehensive planning process designed to reinvigorate education and research activities. Three objectives were identified, which roll forward into the present strategic plan:

3.1 Build our internal education and research capacity, integrating education and research with practice

Recent resource limitations have been a barrier to building organizational capacity for strategic partnerships in practice-based research and education. But with the recruitment in 2014 of an education and research leader skilled in the translation of research findings into everyday practice, Victoria Hospice is now well positioned to refresh this area to create and nurture a culture of practice-based enquiry and education.

TARGET OUTCOMES:

- Developed clinical education activities based on the learning goals established by staff, including quality improvement projects
- Increased number of staff involved in developing and executing research and/or quality improvement projects, in partnership with external researchers where appropriate
- Demonstrated integration of learning and research outcomes into clinical practice

“I go back to my facility filled with ideas and the confidence to present them to our team and work to constantly improve our palliative care program.”

– Palliative Care: Medical Intensive Course Testimonial
3.2 Define Victoria Hospice’s education and research domains

Without a strong central vision, education and research activities in health care organizations can sometimes be driven by the professional focus of internal leaders. Victoria Hospice recognizes the need to develop a shared internal consensus of our education and research domains. However, we must also work with Island Health and palliative care partners to identify their education needs and define Victoria Hospice’s role in meeting these needs. We will identify and act on opportunities for cost recovery and revenue generation arising from research and education activities where appropriate.

TARGET OUTCOMES:

- Clarified domains of Victoria Hospice’s research activities
- Clarified role for Victoria Hospice in meeting the educational needs of internal and external stakeholders

“The underlying importance of education and research to the quality of the care we deliver is growing at Victoria Hospice. As we embrace a leadership role in the end-of-life and palliative care arenas in our province, we also expand the support we provide to professionals, volunteers and the larger community through new education opportunities and innovative research.”

– Helena Daudt
Director of Education and Research
3.3 Enhance education and research partnerships

A relatively small organization like Victoria Hospice multiplies effectiveness by collaborating with partners in many aspects of our work, including research and education. As our internal domains are clarified (Objective 3.2), we will identify, prioritize, negotiate and formalize research and education partnerships with key regional partners, such as the University of Victoria, University of British Columbia, Vancouver Island Federation of Hospices, the Division of Family Practice, BC Centre for Palliative Care and the residential care community.

Internally, our Education and Research Department and Fund Development Department will work together to identify opportunities for external research funding, as well as funding to support staff release time, allowing them to engage in education and research activities.

TARGET OUTCOMES:

- Expanded and improved existing partnership with Island Health and other external institutions for education and research initiatives (e.g., University of Victoria, Camosun College, University of British Columbia’s Division of Palliative Care, BC Centre for Palliative Care, Palliative Education BC)

- New funding relationships established that increase resources for Victoria Hospice education and research

“Thank you all for the beautiful and important work you do every day as well as reaching out to the rest of us to help us accomplish good work as well. Never doubt the benefit of it.”

– Palliative Care: Medical Intensive Course Testimonial
Strategic priority 4: Achieve financial sustainability

All parties consulted for this strategic planning process recognized that financial stability and sustainability are essential foundations for all our activities. Without adequate, sustainable funding, Victoria Hospice will not exist. Thus, we are committing to integrating fund development, income generation and cost control into all aspects of governance and operations.

At present, two sources of revenue account for 91% of our operating income: 46% comes from donations and 45% comes from contracts with Island Health. Our goal over the next three years is to maintain or enhance total dollars received from both these sources, while at the same time diversifying our revenue base through education and other activities.

We have identified the following objectives within this strategic priority:

4.1 Diversify revenue sources

Based on the well-supported and benchmarked business case (Strategic Priority 2), we will develop and implement a diversified revenue generation plan to meet our operating budget requirements.

TARGET OUTCOMES:

- Established funding partners and sources beyond Island Health
- Fee-based and user-pay models are implemented, where appropriate, for clinical services that were previously provided free of charge, generating a net positive contribution to the budget
- Externally focused education programs and activities generate a net positive contribution to the budget
4.2 Balance the operating budget

Victoria Hospice has projected an annual deficit budget in recent years and relied on unbudgeted bequest donations to fill the gap. We recognize this is not a fiscally responsible approach, given the essential nature of the services we provide. Going forward, Victoria Hospice will adopt a more sustainable approach to budget development, facing the hard choices based on stable revenue sources.

TARGET OUTCOME:

- Consistently balanced operating budgets

4.3 Grow our long-term endowment

Over the past few years, approximately 42% of our annual donation revenues have come from wills and bequests. These funds have been essential to Victoria Hospice’s ability to maintain service levels, but by their nature, such gifts are unpredictable and difficult to forecast. Many peer organizations choose to direct donations from wills and bequests into an endowment for long-term organizational sustainability. As the endowment fund grows, interest and dividends generated each year are made available to fund enhancements that might not otherwise be part of the operating budget, such as pilot projects, enhanced staff education and/or research.

TARGET OUTCOMES:

- At least 25% of wills and bequests are directed to the Victoria Hospice Foundation’s investment or endowment funds annually
Strategic priority 5: Strengthen operations and governance

Over 35 years, Victoria Hospice has developed into an organization with a long institutional memory and deep community roots. These characteristics are strong assets, but also present challenges. People are by nature resistant to change, and the initiatives laid out in this strategic plan may appear daunting to some. We aim to both recognize the passionate commitment of our staff to their work and support people in embracing new approaches.

To support a strong culture of engagement across the organization, this strategic priority focuses on the importance of investing in change management and committing to the highest standards of operational and governance practices.

We have identified the following objectives within this strategic priority:

5.1 Manage and support change

We will embrace a continuous quality improvement approach, based in practice and evidence. And we will support all the members of our team by recognizing their need to understand why change is essential and how they can best contribute. Enhanced communication, listening and information sharing will characterize this support.

TARGET OUTCOMES:

- A formal and comprehensive change management process implemented across Victoria Hospice
- Leadership Team works together to successfully implement the Strategic Plan, speaking with one voice

“At a time when our hearts were breaking into a million pieces, you provided the solace we needed to carry on. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.”

– PC
5.2 Implement an organization-wide accountability framework

This strategic plan is the basis for clear, actionable and aligned operating plans, department plans, and project plans across Victoria Hospice. We will establish, operate and make decisions based on key performance indicators, derived from our strategic plan. With regular reporting timelines, we will make accountability a core component of organizational culture – within departments and functions, from these departments to the CEO, and from the CEO to the Board of Directors, who are ultimately accountable for the success of this plan.

TARGET OUTCOMES:

- Quarterly delivery of reports to the Board outlining progress against operating plan targets
- Annual performance management process implemented for all staff

“Hospice is a path; for me, it is finding the way to go. Like following a compass, only it’s something different, more wonderful than that – it’s letting yourself be guided by the love that is here.”
– IB
5.3 Clarify leadership roles, responsibilities and accountabilities

We will review and refresh position descriptions to ensure that they are up to date and aligned with our redefined role (Strategic Priority 1). We will ensure that our Leadership Team and our Directors have clear expectations regarding their respective decision-making authorities and accountabilities, to enhance their shared understanding and working relationships. We will engage in an ongoing conversation between our Executive Director and Boards of Directors, to ensure that they maintain a consensus regarding their relative contributions to the organization’s leadership and a shared understanding about “what is strategic” and “what is operational.”

TARGET OUTCOMES:

- Updated position descriptions for staff, physicians and volunteers
- Updated role descriptions for all Directors and Officers of the Society and Foundation
- Annual self-assessment by Society Board of Directors leading to Board development and education plans for subsequent years, based in part on priorities identified through the assessment process
- Active engagement by Society Board of Directors in ongoing education and development activities to enhance their knowledge of hospice palliative care and their expertise as volunteer Directors

“You were there for us and always are. Thank you for all the care and attention my aunt received to help her on such a peaceful journey and for her to be pain free at last. I will never forget.”

– MT
5.4 Demonstrate transparency and accountability

This priority reflects our commitment to those who support us and contract with us, and those who rely on us to deliver excellent services. We will continue to publish an annual report that includes highlights of service delivery and of education and research activities, with a summary of our audited financial statements.

TARGET OUTCOMES:

- Regular reporting to the community, donors and both internal and external stakeholders regarding Victoria Hospice’s activities towards fulfilling its mission.

5.5 Align policies and procedures with organizational needs

This priority reflects our commitment to ensure our organization is governed and operated effectively. Aligning policies and procedures with organizational needs will ensure Victoria Hospice remains focused and will reinforce our values of quality end-of-life care.

TARGET OUTCOMES:

- Appropriate policies and procedures for all operational and governance levels that are adhered to on a consistent basis, regularly reviewed and updated as required.
This plan is tangible evidence of Victoria Hospice’s commitment to transparency and public accountability. Its publication marks the beginning of a new approach to reporting results relative to specific targets outlined in this plan and showing our values in action.

To learn more about Victoria Hospice or to support or partner with us, please contact:

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