



# STRENGTHENING A PALLIATIVE APPROACH IN LONG-TERM CARE (SPA-LTC) PROJECT

RESEARCH BRIEF

## The Strengthening a Palliative Approach in Long-Term Care (SPA-LTC) Program: An Evaluation

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**Canadian Frailty Network** | Réseau canadien des soins aux personnes fragilisées

Known previously as Technology Evaluation in the Elderly Network, TVE

### BACKGROUND

- An increasing number of residents require a palliative approach to care in long-term care (LTC) homes; these settings are ill-prepared and often provide sub-optimal palliative care
- The SPA-LTC program is a novel intervention that addresses these issues by building capacity among LTC staff to improve the delivery of a palliative approach

### RESEARCH TOPIC

- To evaluate the SPA-LTC program's impact on resident, family, and staff knowledge and self-efficacy in palliative care and organization outcomes

### METHODOLOGY

- Mixed methods design that included both quantitative and qualitative data from four LTC homes in Ontario
- Chart audits, family care conferences (FCCs), surveys, and focus groups were used to evaluate perceptions from staff, residents and families regarding the SPA-LTC program and gain organization

### KEY FINDINGS

- Families reported feeling well-supported during FCCs and perceived them to be positive and useful
- A higher proportion of residents who participated in FCCs had dementia, suggesting a higher need for FCCs within this population
- Staff felt the comfort care rounds provided opportunity for critical reflection surrounding death
- PSW and support staff groups appeared to require more training and education on inter-professional collaboration
- Post-implementation findings included slight improvements in the appropriateness and number of ED visits and hospital admissions

### CONCLUSION

- The combined interventions were effective in informing the decisions of residents and family members and were beneficial to improving palliative care skills amongst the staff
- SPA-LTC is effective in improving the delivery of a palliative approach to care in LTC settings