



# Special Patient Program

Information for health care professionals

# About the Special Patient Program (SPP)

The SPP provides individualized protocols for patients who may have care needs not normally addressed by standard EHS protocols.

Paramedic practice is guided by clinical policies, protocols and guidelines developed and reviewed by the Office of the Provincial Medical Director (EHS). However, a patient with a rare condition, unique care needs, or receiving palliative care may fall outside of the normal protocols and guidelines. These patients require an individualized approach. The SPP was developed to facilitate the identification of these patients and to promote strategies to maintain their quality of life.

## Who benefits from the SPP?

- Those with rare conditions
- Those with unique care needs
- Those who are receiving palliative care

## Benefits of the SPP

- Provides optimal care for patients in accordance with their personalized care protocols that are not specifically addressed by standard EHS protocols
- Safe, effective and integrated care program
- Provision of care which is respectful of patients' wishes
- Improves patient outcomes
- As with any ambulance response, patients will only be billed if they are transported

## Patients receiving palliative care

Paramedics have been trained to provide care and support for various palliative crises which may enable patients to avoid a trip to the Emergency Department. They are also supported by a Medical Oversight Physician for palliative care cases.

For SPP patients receiving palliative care who wish to receive care at home, efforts are made to provide palliative care at home. In some circumstances the patient may wish to remain at home but the paramedics may advise that a transport to hospital is best.

If at any point, the patient/family/caregiver would prefer to be transported to the Emergency Department rather than be cared for at home then they may be transported to the Emergency Department.




## Ambulance *lights and sirens*

Patients receiving palliative care, and their families, may want the ambulance to come with the *lights and sirens* off. A *lights and sirens* response can be frightening or disruptive for patients receiving palliative care and their families.

When patients call 911 and are transferred to Ambulance Dispatch, they will be asked a series of questions that will determine whether or not this will be a *lights and siren* response. Inform your patients to tell Ambulance Dispatch if the change/reason for the call was expected. This helps the Ambulance Dispatch Officer decide if the ambulance can come without *lights and sirens*.

If the change is not expected or if it is something not related to the patient's SPP, it may be best to have the *lights and sirens* on.

# How do you enroll patients in the SPP?

-  1 Download an enrollment form at:  
**[novascotia.ca/dhw/ehs/palliative-care.asp](http://novascotia.ca/dhw/ehs/palliative-care.asp)**
-  2 Complete the form in discussion with your patient/  
family/caregiver.
-  3 Submit the completed form to EHS (instructions  
provided on the enrollment form).

If you have any questions please contact the Office of the Provincial Medical Director of Emergency Health Services at **902-424-1729**.

## What is the approval process?

Once the SPP Enrollment Form has been received by EHS, it will be reviewed by the Provincial Medical Director. Please note that you may be contacted by EHS for follow up questions or clarifications regarding the submitted form.

Once approved by the Provincial Medical Director, your patient will be mailed an EHS SPP card containing their Special Patient Number. This number is used for identification when they call 9-1-1 or if the paramedics request it.

## What if the patients' need or wishes change?

Should the patients' situation or wishes change, please re-submit an SPP Enrollment Form (check the 'update' box) with the requested change. Amendments will require the signature of the Provincial Medical Director.

## How is the form used?

The paramedics' on-scene will have and follow the SPP Care Plan developed by you and your patient. Please note it is your responsibility to ensure information related to the enrollment form is kept secure and confidential.

  
**NOVA SCOTIA**

  
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