



The White Rose Program

Showing respect for dying patients

When a patient is in the process of dying a white rose sign is placed at the entrance of their room heightening staff awareness and fostering a sympathetic, quiet, and compassionate atmosphere for patients and their loved ones.

How does it work?

- ❑ When the physician documents *comfort care* in the patient's medical record, a white rose sign may be placed at the entrance of the patient's room.
- ❑ The nurse will educate the patient/surrogate(s) and/or family member(s) about the process prior to the sign being placed at the entrance of the patient's room. If they prefer not to have the sign displayed, respect their wishes.
- ❑ The nurse will make a referral to Spiritual Care if the family or patient wishes.
- ❑ All support services will perform their duties in a quiet and respectful manner.
- ❑ Staff will encourage family and friends to be involved in the patient's care.
- ❑ If available, the patient may be moved to a more quiet room on the unit if the patient or family desires.
- ❑ Conversations on the nursing unit should be respectful, quiet and supportive at all times.
- ❑ When the patient passes away, the original White Rose sign will be replaced by one that reads, "*Please stop at the nursing station prior to entering*".
- ❑ White Rose sympathy cards can be given and may be signed by staff to be given to the family.
- ❑ To order contact DATA at 403-207-6631 or Chrlientservices@datagroup.ca please quote the following codes:
Door posters:R-1361, Sympathy Cards :R-1360

Practical Wisdom by AHS Staff and Physicians

Featuring: The White Rose Program by Carol Lefebvre, Unit Manager,
PCU 39 Peter Lougheed Centre



In November 2011, Carol Lefebvre brought the idea for the program to the Patient and Family Centred Care Committee, Arts and Entertainment Committee, Volunteer Resources and Jack Merritt from Maintenance. After hearing about a similar initiative using real flowers at the Enloe Medical Centre in Chico California, together the group was inspired to begin this program. Carol said, "I always felt that there must be a more respectful way to communicate with and support families and caregivers coping with the loss of a loved one." She was inspired to see if she could find a way to make it work on her unit and solicited the support of others at the Peter Lougheed Centre.

The Peter Lougheed Centre decided to pilot the program and developed a process for how to communicate with the patient, their family and caregivers as well as the various staff members that interact with patients. A very special contribution was made by Jack Merritt, who took the rose photo that is used on the door signs and in the sympathy card. An addition was made to the program where a "compassion cart" is also offered to the family, which provides light refreshments prior to or after their loved ones have passed.

Front row: Linda Stilborn, Margo Templeton, Karima Punjani
Back row: Karen O'Connell, Carol Lefebvre, Jack Merritt

*"This was such a thoughtful and kind gesture,
thank you so very much!"*
- Family Member

Carol hopes that the White Rose Program will inspire others to think of unique and innovative supportive measures that could be taken in the spirit of compassion. The Peter Lougheed Centre piloted the program with great success and soon word spread across the province to other facilities.

If you have any ideas or practices you would like to share with others, we would love to hear from you!
Please call us at 1-877-735-1102.



Patient.engagement@albertahealthservices.ca