



End-of-Life Planning for CMS Members

While both advance care planning and end-of-life planning involve preparing for the future, they serve different purposes. Advance care planning includes discussing and documenting medical treatment preferences, whereas end-of-life planning specifically addresses the final stages of life and death. As a member of the Cooperative Memorial Society (CMS), having a well-thought-out end-of-life plan ensures that your wishes are respected, your loved ones are supported, and unnecessary burdens are minimized.

Talking About Death: A Necessary Conversation

Discussing death may feel difficult, but it is a crucial step in preparing for the inevitable. Open conversations about end-of-life matters help reduce fear and uncertainty, allowing individuals to make informed decisions. As a CMS member, engaging in these discussions ensures that your family is aware of your preferences, reducing stress when the time comes. By planning ahead, you provide peace of mind to yourself and your loved ones, ensuring that your final wishes are honoured.

Resources for CMS Members in Alberta

CMS members have access to a variety of resources that make end-of-life planning easier. Understanding available support options can help you navigate the complexities of planning with clarity and confidence.

1. Funeral Planning Through CMS

One of the key benefits of CMS membership is access to simple, affordable funeral plans with trusted, locally owned funeral service providers. By pre-planning with CMS, you ensure that your funeral arrangements align with your wishes and that your loved ones will not be burdened with making difficult decisions at a stressful time.

2. Death Doulas and Death Care Providers

Death doulas and death care providers offer compassionate support during the dying process. They assist with emotional, spiritual, and practical needs, helping individuals and their families feel supported. These professionals can also facilitate meaningful conversations about death and legacy planning, ensuring your wishes are clearly understood and respected.

3. Hospice and Palliative Care Services

Hospice and palliative care services provide comfort, dignity, and symptom management for those in the final stages of life. These services focus on enhancing quality of life and providing essential support for both patients and caregivers. Early access to palliative care can help individuals manage symptoms effectively and receive the care they need in a setting of their choice.

4. Advocacy and Patient Rights

Organizations such as Dying with Dignity Canada advocate for patient rights and provide information on end-of-life choices, including Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD). These resources empower individuals to make decisions aligned with their values and personal beliefs. As a CMS member, understanding your rights ensures that you receive the end-of-life care that best reflects your wishes.

5. Grief Support Services

Losing a loved one is an emotional journey, and having access to grief support services can be invaluable. Alberta offers various counseling services, support groups, and educational programs to help individuals and families cope with loss. These resources provide professional guidance and peer support, helping you navigate grief with understanding and care.

6. Government Resources

The Government of Alberta provides useful resources, such as the [Saying Farewell Handbook - A guide to assist you with the death and dying process](#) available in PDF format. This guide outlines key steps to take before and after a death, covering legal considerations, financial planning, and emotional support services. Knowing what to expect can make the process more manageable for you and your loved ones.

Planning Ahead: Protecting Your Family from Uncertainty

Making end-of-life arrangements in advance reduces stress and financial burdens for your family. As a CMS member, you benefit from pre-arranged funeral plans that ensure your final wishes are carried out. If you choose to prepay for funeral services, it is essential to understand your rights and review the terms of any contract. Knowing the costs, refund policies, and what is covered in your plan helps ensure that your investment meets your expectations.

Embracing a Positive Approach to Death

By openly discussing and preparing for the end of life, CMS members can approach this stage with clarity and peace of mind. Through education, advocacy, and comprehensive planning services, CMS supports its members in making informed choices. End-of-life planning is not just about preparing for death—it is about ensuring dignity, respect, and comfort for both you and your loved ones.

Taking the time to plan now means that when the time comes, your family can focus on honoring your life rather than navigating complex decisions. CMS is here to guide and support you every step of the way.