

## **BC Home Parenteral Nutrition (HPN) Peer Support Program**

### **Welcome to the BC HPN Peer Support Program**

The purpose of the Peer Support Program is to offer extra support to patients who are starting home parenteral nutrition through the HPN Program at St. Paul's Hospital. This support comes from volunteers who share their experiences with HPN. These volunteers usually have been patients with the HPN Program or caregivers for someone in the program. We call these volunteers 'HPN peer support volunteers.'

### **How does the Peer Support Program work?**

We offer all new patients in the HPN Program the opportunity to connect with an HPN peer support volunteer. When a new patient comes to St. Paul's Hospital for HPN training, we will ask them and their caregiver if they would like to connect with a volunteer who has experience with life at home on HPN. Patients already in the HPN program are also welcome to use the Peer Support Program at any time.

If the patient would like to connect, the HPN team will contact one of the HPN peer support volunteers. We will ask permission to share contact details and arrange a time to connect. You will meet with them either in person or by telephone.

The HPN team will try to connect new patients with a volunteer who lives in the same area or has had similar experiences.

This document provides guidance for HPN peer support volunteers.

### **What is the role of an HPN Peer Support Volunteer?**

The role of an HPN peer support volunteer is to provide information, tips and support related to their lived-experience with HPN.

If a new patient has any questions about a medical condition or symptoms, tell them to contact the HPN Program as soon as possible. Issues that are considered urgent include but are not limited to:

- Fever.
- Pain.
- Shortness of breath.
- Light headedness (decreased level of consciousness).
- Central venous catheter (CVC) problems.

If a patient or caregiver has a concern during office hours (Monday to Friday 8:00 to 4:00) please encourage them to contact the HPN program directly. If they have an urgent concern in the evening or weekend, they should go to the closest emergency room. If you have any concerns as a volunteer, speak to the HPN Program Team. The HPN team will follow up directly with the patient.

We all have a duty to help someone who needs immediate medical care. For example, immediate medical care is needed if someone has uncontrollable bleeding. It is also necessary if they are hurting themselves, talking about it, or making plans to commit suicide. In this situation, please call 911 and request an ambulance.

## **HPN peer support volunteer responsibilities**

As part of my commitment to the BC Home Parenteral Nutrition (HPN) as a Volunteer, I agree that with respect to volunteer conduct:

- I will collaborate with others.
- I will respect the rights and views of others, and treat them with fairness, courtesy, dignity and respect.
- I will not engage in any form of harassment or discrimination.
- I will discuss any potential conflicts of interest with HPN staff should such a situation arise, including benefits related to my professional interests.
- I will, to the best of my abilities, follow through on my commitments regarding volunteer opportunities offered through HPN. If I am not able to meet a commitment, I will notify HPN staff as soon as possible.
- I will refer inquiries I receive about medical management of the patient to HPN staff.

### **With respect to confidentiality:**

- I will respect the privacy of an HPN patient and health care partners.
- I will consider details about medical conditions, family relations, contact information, and other facts of a highly personal nature as confidential. I will not disclose any information without the specific permission of the individual concerned.
- I understand that all information obtained through volunteer opportunities is confidential. I agree not to tell, show, copy, sell, change or disclose this information to others without prior permission.
- I will take all reasonable measures to ensure information is kept secure and disposed of appropriately. I will notify HPN staff if I believe I may have inadvertently breached confidentiality.
- I will seek clarification from HPN staff if I have any questions or concerns about confidentiality
- after leaving HPN as a volunteer, I will maintain confidentiality on personal and engagement information.

If you have any questions about this form, please contact the HPN Program at **1-877-806-9353**.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What if my patient wants to meet in person?

You decide if you are comfortable meeting a patient in person. Do not meet them in person if you are not comfortable doing so! If you decide this is OK, arrange to meet them in a public place during daytime hours. Make sure you tell a friend or family member where you are going and how long you expect to be. If you are not comfortable meeting in person, arrange a telephone call or an email.

### What should I do if a patient is using inappropriate language?

If the patient does anything to make you feel uncomfortable, contact the BC HPN Program as soon as possible.

### What if we are not a good fit?

Please contact the BC HPN Program. We will find a different volunteer for the patient.

### What do I do if the patient has a medical issue?

Tell the patient to contact the program. You must not give any medical advice. See section on the “Role of an HPN peer support volunteer” on page 1 of this document.

### How do I connect with another volunteer?

Please contact the BC HPN program and we can connect you with another volunteer as appropriate.

### What should I do if I am being harassed by the patient/client?

Contact the BC HPN Program immediately.

### How do I maintain safety while connecting with an unknown person?

Do not give out any personal information such as your home address. If you decide to meet a patient in person, do this in a public place during daytime hours.

### Are there any support groups for people living with HPN?

The BC Home Nutrition web site ([www.bchomenutrition.org](http://www.bchomenutrition.org)) contains information on other resources. We also include a link to the Oley Foundation ([www.oley.org](http://www.oley.org)), a North American support group. The content of the Oley Foundation web site focuses on the USA. Be aware that not everything is applicable to Canadian clients.

## HPN Program Contacts

Toll-free telephone number .....	1-877-806-9353
HPN Nurse .....	604-806-9950
HPN Dietitian .....	604-806-9352
HPN Program Coordinator .....	604-806-9808
HPN Clerk .....	604-806-9353



How you want to be treated.

This material has been reviewed and approved by patients, families and staff.



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