## Group wants palliative care strategy

The Townsend Smith Foundation is hopeful that north Halton residents will throw their support behind a primate member s bill that calls for the development of a national framework on palliative care.

The Milton-based foundation, which is working to establish a 10-bed, 15,000-square-foot residential hospice serving the north Halton community, believes there s a need for increased awareness of palliative and end-of-life care. Currently, there is no formal palliative care organization in Canada be it public or medical.

Palliative care is a specialized form of health care that is provided by fragmented services across the province and country, explained Townsend Smith Foundation board member Tish Butson.

It's pretty much a patchwork, she said. Sarnia-Lambton MP Marilyn Gladhu is looking to close the gap with her proposed bill, C-277, that, if enacted, would make way for the development and implementation of a framework designed to guarantee all Canadians access to high-quality palliative care.

The piece of legislation would, in part, identify the palliative care training and education needs of palliative health-care providers as well as the measures to support palliative caregivers, according to the proposed Act. The framework would also identify measures to facilitate consistent access to palliative care across the country and evaluate the advisability of amending the Canada Health Act to include palliative care services provided through home care, longterm care facilities and residential hospices.

According to the Canadian Palliative Care Association, the majority of Canadians say they would prefer to die at home. However, 70 per cent of deaths are reported to occur in hospital. Due to a lack of resources, among other reasons, there is no other choice.

Gladhu s private member s bill, titled the Framework on Palliative Care in Canada Act, gives people a choice, said Butson.

A petition endorsing palliative care options is garnering support from coast to coast, including from members of the Townsend Smith Foundation board. Signatures must be registered by noon on Wednesday, Nov. 9.

To sign the petition, visit https://petitions.parl.gc.ca/en/Petition/ Details?Petition=e-425.

For more on the Milton foundation, visit www.townsend-smith.ca

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