



*Manitoba Health supports reporting and learning from patient safety events. The focus of a patient safety review is to closely look at the health care system that surrounds and interacts with those giving and receiving care. The goal is to identify risks to patient safety and recommend the most effective ways to minimize risk and improve the delivery of healthcare.*

## **Patient Safety Learning Advisory**

### **Patient Suicide**

#### **Summary:**

A resident was transferred to a personal care home (PCH) along with his/her spouse to be closer to their next of kin (NOK). The resident and his/her spouse shared a room. The spouse of the resident had a decline in his/her health, and was deemed palliative. The resident displayed an inability to cope with his/her spouse's decline in their health condition (would refuse to eat when spouse was admitted to the hospital until their return to the PCH, declined to participate in activities, would prefer to remain at spouse's side). The resident's spouse was actively dying.

The resident was discovered by staff on a routine wellness check with a ligature around his/her neck that was attached to a ceiling lift in the room he/she shared with their spouse. The resident was pronounced deceased.

#### **Keywords:** Suicide

This review is based on a single event.

#### **Findings of the Review:**

The resident completed the act of suicide in the room he/she shared with his/her spouse.

The resident's primary concern was the well-being of his/her spouse who was palliative, and voiced over several years that he/she could not live without them.

Several indicators that the patient may harm him/herself went unnoticed during the final stages of his/her spouse's end of life (i.e. Telling family it was time for them to leave when they normally wanted them to stay longer, took off his/her wedding ring saying "wouldn't need it anymore", told granddaughter to "take care of her new baby").

The NOK stated that the resident often said over the years that "he/she could not live without their spouse", but they never thought he/she would act upon it.

**System Learning:**

**Recommendation:**

**Implement Southern Health- Santé Sud (SH-SS) "Suicide Risk Assessment in Personal Care Homes" policy CLI.6410.PL.021 at the site.**