# Niagara Health Foundation

Patient Comfort Fund
Standard Operating Procedure & Terms of Reference**

## 1. Purpose

The Niagara Health Foundation Patient Comfort Fund supports initiatives, supplies, and one-time requests that enhance the comfort, dignity, and well-being of patients and families receiving care at Niagara Health.

The Fund is intended to address needs that are not covered through government funding, hospital operating budgets, or other established programs. This includes small projects, comfort items, environmental enhancements, and one-time, one-off patient needs that improve the patient experience or support compassionate care.

The Fund reflects Niagara Health Foundation's commitment to ensuring donor support directly enhances patient care in meaningful and timely ways.

## 2. Guiding Principles

The Patient Comfort Fund will:

- Prioritize direct benefit to patients and families in alignment with the Six Key Elements of Patient Experience
- Support equitable access across Niagara Health sites and programs
- Fund items not otherwise provided through operational or capital budgets
- Fund items not on the "Top 50" priority equipment list from Niagara Health
- Enable timely responses to patient-centred needs
- Steward donor funds responsibly and transparently

## 3. Eligibility

### Eligible Applicants

Requests may be submitted by:

- Niagara Health clinical units or departments
- Patient-facing programs or services
- Interdisciplinary care teams

Applications must be endorsed by a Niagara Health Manager, Director, or designate.

### Eligible Uses of Funds

The Fund may support:

- Patient comfort items (e.g., blankets, hygiene kits, sensory supports)
- Therapeutic or engagement materials
- Environmental improvements enhancing patient experience
- Small equipment directly supporting patient comfort or dignity
- Patient or family support initiatives
- One-time, individual patient needs that cannot be addressed through other funding sources or hospital programs

### Ineligible Uses

The Fund will not support:

- Staffing or salary costs
- Core medical equipment normally funded through capital processes or regular Niagara Health Foundation fundraising
- Operational supplies already budgeted for by Niagara Health
- Research projects, marketing campaigns or similar
- Education, conferences, or training

## 4. Funding Limits

To allow for timely decision-making while ensuring equitable access, the President and Vice-President of Niagara Health Foundation will be the approval body.

Niagara Health Foundation will establish annual allocation targets and a “cap” for approvals for a fiscal year. This “cap” will be set annually and factor in other donations and past approvals. Some projects that meet the Patient Comfort Fund criteria and approval, may be subject to further approval and review from Niagara Health procurement or similar and ultimately may be denied in this step. Niagara Health Foundation is only the funder of these requests and will not operate in a procurement, service delivery or similar role.

# 5. Application Process

## Step 1 – Submission of Request Form

Applicants must complete a Patient Comfort Fund Request Form (online) which will include, but is not limited to:

- Description of the item or initiative
- Expected patient benefit and examples of other similar programs or items at other hospitals (where applicable)
- Estimated number of patients impacted
- Alignment with Six Key Elements of Patient Experience
- Cost details and quote (where applicable)
- Confirmation the request is not funded through operational budgets or existing programs
- Approval by Director

## Step 2 – Foundation Review

Niagara Health Foundation staff will conduct an initial review to confirm:

- Eligibility under Fund criteria
- Alignment with donor intent and Foundation priorities
- Availability of funds
- Compliance with applicable hospital procurement processes

## Step 3 – Executive Approval

Final approval authority rests with:

- President & CEO, Niagara Health Foundation
- Vice President, Niagara Health Foundation

Approval decisions will consider:

- Patient impact and urgency
- Equity across Niagara Health programs and sites
- Availability of funds
- Alignment with donor stewardship opportunities

Approvals may be documented via email confirmation, digital workflow, or inclusion in a monthly approval log.

## 6. Procurement and Implementation

Once approved:

- Purchases must follow Niagara Health procurement policies
- Niagara Health Foundation would prefer to NOT make purchases of items directly or reimburse departments, however there may be exceptions on a case-by-case basis
- Departments must confirm receipt and implementation timelines

## 7. Reporting and Stewardship

To support donor accountability and storytelling:

Recipients will provide:

- A brief summary of impact
- Optional patient or staff feedback
- Photos or stories where appropriate and permitted

Niagara Health Foundation will:

- Track fund distribution annually
- Share outcomes in donor communications where appropriate
- Monitor distribution across programs and sites

## 8. Annual Review

Niagara Health Foundation leadership will review the Fund annually to assess:

- Total funding distributed
- Distribution across Niagara Health programs and locations
- Patient impact and outcomes
- Donor engagement opportunities

Funding thresholds and processes may be adjusted to ensure the Fund continues to meet patient needs and donor expectations.