



73rd World Health Assembly Adopts “National COVID Response” Including Palliative Care

For immediate release

(Houston, TX) - The International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care (IAHPC), a Houston based charity registered with the United Nations, is glad to report that the 73rd World Health Assembly, held virtually for the first time in its history, approved the resolution “COVID-19 Response,” committing governments to deliver palliative care services alongside safe testing and treatment for COVID-19. Governments must pay “particular attention to the protection of those with pre-existing health conditions, older persons, and other people at risk, in particular health professionals, health workers and other relevant frontline workers.” ([Operative Paragraph 7.7](#)) The resolution also calls for equitable access to medicines and vaccines.

The IAHPC fielded a virtual delegation of palliative care experts from six countries: Kate Reed, NP from Australia, Farzana Khan and Rumana Dowla MDs from Bangladesh, Marvin Colorado MD from El Salvador, Zipporah Ali MD from Kenya, Nisla Camaño MD from Panama, and Abidan Chansa MD from Zambia. They also represented their national associations and held conversations with their health ministries and permanent missions in Geneva. These positive results were thanks to extraordinary advocacy efforts by these delegates as well as representatives of the Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance (WHPCA), other palliative care organizations and many palliative care advocates from around the world.

[Palliative care](#) is the active holistic care of individuals across all ages with serious health-related suffering due to severe illness, and especially of those near the end of life. It aims to improve the quality of life of patients, their families, and their caregivers.

The [IAHPC submission](#) to the World Health Assembly commented on the need for all health systems to:

1. Train, equip, and support health care workers to deliver basic palliative care in all settings, including refugee camps, nursing homes, prisons, at home, and in hospitals; and
2. Strengthen pharmaceutical supply chains to ensure adequate access to the palliative care medications on the WHO Model List, including immediate release morphine, crucial for managing Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS) and the pain and breathlessness of patients with palliative care needs pre-COVID

Professor Lukas Radbruch, Chair of the IAHPC Board, commented: “*I am very pleased that palliative care is now included in this important document – it underscores the importance of the integration of palliative care in all services and for all conditions.*”

Ms. Liliana De Lima, the Executive Director stated that “*the IAHPC will continue to work with its members and stakeholders and assist them with technical support, guidance, and resources as*

they collaborate with their governments to implement the palliative care component of this new resolution”.

Dr Katherine Pettus, Advocacy Officer, thanked the members of the delegation for their work and efforts that resulted in the inclusion of palliative care in the resolution.

About the IAHPC: More information about IAHPC and the programs and projects it is currently engaged in to improve access to palliative care around the globe can be accessed in its website at <https://hospicecare.com/home/> To contact the IAHPC: Ph: +1 (346) 571-5919 info@iahpc.com
