

Montreal Declaration on Hospice Palliative Care

September 2014

Palliative Care McGill, International Association of Hospice and Palliative Care, International Children's Palliative Care Network, Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance, Cicely Saunders Institute, Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association and the Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians call on delegates of the 20th International Congress on Palliative Care and others to support the following *Montreal Declaration* for the inclusion of palliative care in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines palliative care as an approach that improves the quality of life of patients (adults and children) and their families who are facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and correct assessment and treatment of pain, and other problems, whether physical, psychosocial or spiritual.

WHO and Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance (WHPCA) estimate that, worldwide, some 20 million people need end-of-life palliative care services each year, and just as many people are believed to need palliative care in the year before death, giving an annual total of about 40 million people. It is estimated that of the 20 million people needing palliative care at the end of their life, around 80% live in low- and middle-income countries; some 67% are elderly (more than 60 years of age), whereas about 6% are children. These statistics do not take into account those who need palliative care throughout the life course.

In cases of severe pain, failure to provide palliative care and pain relief has been reported as constituting cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. The WHO Model List of Essential Medicines includes a list of medicines needed to treat the most common symptoms in palliative care, including pain and others.

The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had included palliation as part of the right to health, and palliative care has been recognised by the WHO through the resolution: Strengthening of palliative care as a component of integrated treatment throughout the life course.

Recognising that hospice palliative care is an essential component of national health systems, the undersigned call for the inclusion of hospice palliative care in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

To support this declaration, please visit www.palliativecare.ca