



Improving Access to Palliative Care for Persons with Disabilities: A Human Rights Perspective

SOCIAL FORUM 2016

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- *The human rights perspective on PC for persons with disabilities*
Ms. Maria Soledad Cisternas Reyes, Chairperson, Committee on Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD)
- *PCAU's work with the deaf community*
Ms. Rose Kiwanuka, Director, Palliative Care Association of Uganda
- *Palliative care for persons with intellectual disabilities*
Ms. Catherine Hoenger, European Association of Palliative Care
- *Palliative care for children with disabilities*
Ms. Joan Marston, Executive Director International Children's Palliative Care Network

Definition of palliative care: Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problem associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual. (WHO Definition)

Palliative care for persons with disabilities. Improving access for palliative care for persons with disabilities, including children and older persons, can help countries to protect, respect, and fulfil health and social rights stipulated in the CRPD. The absence of integrated palliative care services often results in routine hospital practices creating and aggravating existing disability, contravening Article 25(b) of the Convention, which explicitly requests parties *“to provide those health services needed by persons with disabilities [...] and services designed to minimise and prevent further disabilities, including among children and older persons.”*

The ethical stakes: Best palliative care practices represents the only ethical option preventing the abandonment and neglect of persons with disabilities, and away from the growing international momentum favouring policies that allow for euthanasia and physician assisted dying (PAD). IAHPC believes that no country or state should consider the legalisation of euthanasia or PAD for any patients until it ensures universal access to palliative care services and to appropriate medications, without discrimination and ensuring full participation of all vulnerable communities.

To learn more about palliative care contact www.hospicecare.com <http://www.eapcnet.eu/> <http://thewhPCA.org/> or contact kpettus@iahpc.com