



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE  
*Advancing Hospice & Palliative Care Worldwide*

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Statement by International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care

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**Agenda Item EB139/3**

IAHPC requests that palliative care be included as an essential element in any Draft Global Action Plan developed by the World Health Organisation. Palliative care was notably absent from any of the interventions at the high level ministerial event last week at the WHA, and because no cure for dementia is foreseen in the near future, many people will die with or from the condition, indicating palliative care as the indicated upstream response as per WHA Resolution 67/19.

Patients with dementia suffer from pain and other symptoms, which are difficult to assess, and their families are massively distressed by the burden of care. Palliative care addresses patients' and families' pain, concerns and needs, improves quality of life and may even prolong life. Dementia care at the end of life is increasingly being studied as the different courses of patient deterioration warrant dementia-specific palliative care strategies and treatment decisions more frequently need to consider comorbid disease. Health-care professionals need specific expertise in managing behavioural problems and in anticipating, assessing and managing physical and cognitive problems.

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Communicating with patients with dementia and their families requires special skills because the cognitive problems associated with dementia complicate decision making around a host of issues. Support for families is needed to help them in their role as proxy decision-makers in more advanced dementia and to deal with a high burden of care and chronic grief caused by the continuing deterioration of the patient. Inclusion of palliative care in a WHO dementia strategy aligns with WHO priorities such as the WHA 97 resolution on palliative care, the GCM on non-communicable diseases, the global strategy on ageing, and access to controlled medicines. IAHPC is standing by to assist in the development of the strategy to include palliative care.

I thank you.

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