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International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care Inc.

Meeting:

Seventy-second World Health Assembly (A72/1)

Agenda Item:

- Primary health care towards universal health coverage

Statement:

The vision of primary health care as “a whole-of-society approach that ... meet[s] people’s health needs through comprehensive and integrated health services (promotive, protective, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative) aligns with IAHPIC’s mission to relieve suffering through the provision of palliative care wherever it is required. Palliative care adds life to days, not just days to life. Provided at the household and clinic level by primary care and community health workers, it improves quality of life of patients and their families with infectious, chronic and non-communicable diseases, thereby improving the health of all. Community palliative care teams that support families in extremis can prevent the financial harm that follows futile out of pocket medical expenses associated with serious illness, and can prescribe the essential medicines that relieve severe pain. Primary health care that includes palliative care can assist families to survive the loss of a breadwinner, prevent the withdrawal of caregivers from the workforce and reduce school dropout rates that follow from inability to pay fees. Health systems that provide a holistic approach to the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimension of care allow governments to fulfill human their rights obligation and comply with 2018 Astana commitments. IAHPIC urges member states to review the new WHO Guide on Palliative Care in Primary Health Care and make training in basic palliative care compulsory at all levels of the health workforce.

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