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Home > Seventy-second World Health Assembly (A72/1) > 12.8 Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016–2030) > International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care Inc.

# International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care Inc.

## **Meeting:**

Seventy-second World Health Assembly (A72/1)

## **Agenda Item:**

12.8 Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016–2030)

## **Statement:**

IAHPC thanks the Secretariat for the attention paid in the report to the issue of cervical cancer, but we are disappointed that the Report, broadly titled "Health" not just "sexual and reproductive health," ignores the palliative care needs of children, adolescents, and women – populations that include both patients and family caregivers.

According to the recently published WHO Guide, the number of children, including adolescents up to 19 years of age, children, infants, and newborns, who need pediatric palliative care (PPC) each year, may be as high as 21 million.

Almost 2.5 million children die each year with serious health related suffering, more than 98% of whom are in low- and middle-income countries. To put these horrifying statistics into perspective, please imagine one of them as a child in your own family.

Moreover, many school age children, often adolescent girls, drop out of school to care for seriously ill family members. They receive little or no support from local health services, which send patients home with the dreadful words "nothing more can be done." Similarly, older women are often caregivers of family members with palliative care needs in countries of all income levels.

The deficit of palliative care support for families at this community level represents an enormous and unfair burden on children, adolescents, and women – a burden ignored by the Report. Women's, children's, and adolescents' health goes far beyond sexual and reproductive rights, and maternal-child healthcare, which tell only part of the story.

We must take a holistic approach to women's, children's, and adolescents' health by considering critical palliative care needs, so as not to leave families to struggle alone and unsupported at the end.

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