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International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care Inc.

Meeting:

EB Special session on the COVID-19 response

Agenda Item:

3. Update on implementation of resolution WHA73.1 (2020) on the COVID-19 response

Statement:

As an NSA in Official Relations with WHO our registered delegation for this meeting includes palliative care providers from Australia, Argentina, Bangladesh, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Germany, India, and the Republic of Zambia. We encourage member states reporting on WHA 73/1 at SS5 to collaborate with national palliative care organizations as key informants as they develop policies and budgets to integrate services into national responses and preparedness planning, per Op 7.7. The WHO has reported that all NCD services, including palliative care have been significantly disrupted during the pandemic, causing the already severe health related suffering of patients and families to escalate exponentially. A recent survey of our membership has confirmed this downward trend in service delivery, and we thank the WHO Secretariat for the updated Guidance on Clinical Management of COVID-19, which explicitly recommends inclusion of palliative care in national response. We respectfully remind member states of the Joint Statement issued on August 14 by the WHO, the International Narcotics Control Board and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime regarding the “ethical obligation of governments to ensure that their populations have adequate access to controlled essential medicines during the pandemic.” A summary of our recommendations for member states is found in the Briefing Note on the globalpalliativecare.org website “How pandemics affect health systems and resource allocation: impact on palliative care.” The IAHPC Serious Health-Database on our website hospicecare.com, is an essential tool in this work, as it disaggregates national data by conditions that cause serious health related suffering and recommended consumption of essential palliative care medications. We thank you and confirm our interest to continue collaborating with the Secretariat and member states on technical and normative issues regarding integration of palliative care into pandemic response and preparedness planning.

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