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International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care Inc.

Meeting:

EB Special session on the COVID-19 response

Agenda Item:

4. Update from the Co-Chairs of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, the Chair of the IHR Review Committee and the Chair of the Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee for the WHO Health Emergencies Programme

Statement:

The IAHPC respectfully requests that the Independent Panel Update to EBSS5 address the need for WHO member states to redouble their efforts to integrate palliative care into national pandemic response and preparedness plans per WHA73/1 OP.7.1. The WHO Guidance on Clinical Management of COVID19 now includes programmatic recommendations and tools for health system planners including an Essential Package of Palliative Care therapies adapted from "Integrating palliative care and symptom relief into responses to humanitarian emergencies and crises: a WHO guide", available at <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/274565>. In addition, the President of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) has called for expanding palliative care during the pandemic and ensuring access to essential palliative care medicines. Our global membership of palliative care providers is ready to collaborate with WHO member states to develop the necessary policies and budgets that will integrate palliative care into public health systems. IAHPC recommends that WHO member states *Activate mechanisms to collaborate with civil society organizations providing palliative care to integrate it into health systems thereby increasing resilience to this and future pandemics by reducing serious health related suffering of impacted populations;*Continue delivering essential healthcare services, including PC, a core component of UHC, to maintain and sustain the health of all, emphasizing the ethical imperatives of equity and non-abandonment; *Adopt the INCB directive to maintain access to opioid analgesics and controlled medicines by simplifying export, transport, and delivery procedures; *Adapt and adopt the cost-effective Essential Package of PC included in Appendix 3 of the WHO Guidance on Clinical Management of COVID-19. These measures will strengthen health workforces & provide appropriate triaging capability to respond within the pandemic context while building back better for sustainable long term preparedness.

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