



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

ALCP | ASOCIACIÓN LATINOAMERICANA
DE CUIDADOS PALIATIVOS

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Thank you for giving me the floor. My name is Victoria Diehl Navarro, I am a licensed physical therapist. I am speaking on behalf of the [Latin American Association for Palliative Care](#) and [IAHPC](#).

Objective 4 of the Hemispheric Plan of Action on Drugs commits OAS member states to ensure adequate availability and accessibility of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion to illicit purposes, in accordance with the international drug control treaties.

Our associations have the duty to inform you that there is a great inequity in the consumption of these substances for the relief of pain and other symptoms in the continent. They report that the response to the opioid overuse crisis in the United States and Canada has affected the rest of the countries in the region, further reducing the limited medical access in countries experiencing the crisis of “underuse”.

The COVID 19 pandemic has revealed the fragility of pharmaceutical supply chains and the need to strengthen supply chains for controlled medicines and improve the capacity of health care systems to provide services for palliative care and pain relief.

In Costa Rica, opioid medications are available both from the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (C.C.S.S.) and from private pharmacies. There is an institutional network of Pain and Palliative Care Clinics whose professionals can prescribe the medications to the insured persons they treat. This guarantees access to the population served.

In Colombia, during the pandemic, 67% of prescribers reported drug shortages, especially oral morphine and intravenous hydromorphone in palliative care services as well as fentanyl for sedation in intensive care units, despite the efforts of the Fondo Nacional to improve access. This situation is similar in other Latin American countries.

We draw your attention to the [Joint Statement of the INCB, UNODC and WHO](#) on Ensuring Access to Controlled Medicines in Humanitarian Emergencies, issued in August this year. We also suggest that steps be taken to ensure the training of health professionals, in coordination with academia, civil society and governments.

The palliative care professional associations in the OAS region are ready to support you in the design and implementation of strategies to improve access to essential medicines so that

you can fulfil your commitment under the international drug control conventions. We would like to enter the [Latin American Atlas of Palliative Care, 2020 Edition](#), which has detailed information about availability of medical opioids in the region. Thank you for your attention.

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