

MEDIA RELEASE



**Palliative
Care
Australia**

Palliative Care Australia Inc.

Level 1, 21 Napier Close, Deakin ACT 2600 | PO Box 24, Deakin West, ACT 2600
t: 02 6232 4433 | f: 02 6232 4434 | w: www.palliativecare.org.au | e: pcainc@palliativecare.org.au



Connect with Palliative Care Australia

24 January 2014

Australia sponsors ground breaking palliative care resolution in Geneva

Palliative care has for the first time been accepted as an integral component of health systems worldwide. The Executive Board of the World Health Assembly (WHA) overnight adopted a resolution which calls on member states to ensure adequate access and funding for palliative care services.

‘This is a hugely significant event for palliative care advocates across the world,’ said Dr Yvonne Luxford, Chief Executive Officer of Palliative Care Australia. ‘This is the first time that there has been a resolution on palliative care considered at this level. It is recognition of the growing importance of this essential health service.’

The World Health Organization (WHO) secretariat’s report estimates that a minimum of 40 million people require palliative care annually. Those aged over 60 years account for 69% of the need and children, 6%.

‘The report also highlights that for developing countries such as Australia, this need is only going to grow due to our ageing population and burden of chronic disease,’ said Dr Luxford.

The resolution calls for countries to ensure that palliative care is a core part of health systems, that palliative care is embedded in the basic and continuing education and training for all health workers, and to ensure adequate access to pain medications.

‘Even in Australia, which is one of the world leaders in palliative care service provision, we still are unable to meet the palliative care needs of 50-70% of those who could benefit from access to these services,’ said Dr Luxford. ‘This is despite evidence which shows that palliative care services can be implemented at relatively low cost and even save money for health budgets.’

The Australian Government played a leading role in bringing this issue to the WHA and was one of the co-sponsors of the resolution.

‘We thank the Government for its support of palliative care and all of those responsible for getting palliative care onto the international health agenda,’ said Dr Luxford. ‘We look forward to working with them to implement the recommendations from the resolution and improving quality care at the end of life for all Australians.’

‘The resolution will now be referred to the full World Health Assembly which meets in May, and we will be calling for all members to adopt the resolution.’

Contact: Claire Maskell Gibson– PCA National Communications Manager– 02 9239 2906/0406 258 722

PCA is the peak national organisation representing the interests and aspirations of all who share the ideal of quality care at the end of life

Patron: Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

This decision comes ahead of the publication of the *Global Atlas of Palliative Care at the End of Life*, which will be released by the Worldwide Palliative Care Alliance and the WHO next Tuesday 28 January. The Atlas is the first publication to outline the need for, and availability of, palliative care across the world.

To read the WHO secretariat's report and resolution click [here](#).

Ends

For more information please contact:

Claire Maskell Gibson: 02 9239 2906 / 0406 258 722

Claire@palliativecare.org.au

Interviews available.

Notes to Editors

WHO is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends. For more information on WHO go to www.who.int

The Worldwide Palliative Care Alliance (WPCA) is a global action network focusing exclusively on hospice and palliative care development worldwide. Its members are national and regional hospice and palliative care organisations and affiliate organisations supporting hospice and palliative care. The WPCA is in official relations with the World Health Organization and this publication is one product of that relationship. WPCA is the international arm for www.ehospice.com, an international palliative care news and information service, and is the home for World Hospice and Palliative Care Day www.worldday.org. For more information on the WPCA go to www.thewpca.org

Palliative Care Australia is a member of the Worldwide Palliative Care Alliance, and is the peak national Australian organisation representing the interests and aspirations of all who share the ideal of quality care at the end of life: www.palliativecare.org.au. PCA is responsible for the Australian edition of ehospice www.ehospice.com/australia.