

Universal Health Coverage & Palliative Care – The Way Forward

We, the civil society and participants of the workshop on Universal Health Coverage & Palliative Care in Kerala – The Way Forward, “Call for Action Based on Astana Declaration on Primary Health Care” (on 11 December 2018) organized by Pallium India Trust and Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram at Old Auditorium of Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram:

- noting that there is a huge burden of serious health-related suffering in India,
- viewing with concern that less than 2% of those in need have access to pain relief and palliative care,
- dismayed at the recent finding that 55 million Indians are pushed below poverty line by out of pocket health expenditure, thus causing distress for the patients and their family,
- aware of the World Health Assembly resolution of 2014¹ which calls on all member countries’ health systems to integrate evidence-based, cost effective and equitable palliative care services in the continuum of care, across all levels, with emphasis on primary care, community and home based care and universal coverage schemes,
- taking note of the Astana declaration of October 2018 which calls on health care systems to institute primary health care systems including palliative care and ensuring partnership and control by the community,
- having studied the success of the palliative care movement of Kerala which achieved significant coverage with participation of the community and taking account of its successes and shortcomings,

Urge the Government of India and the Governments of all States and Union Territories to:

- review the National Program for Palliative Care (NPPC) which was created by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2012²,
- review the implementation of the Kerala State Palliative Care Policy with a view to improving coverage and quality of palliative care delivered with possible adaptation by other state governments,
- implement the amended Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Amendment (NDPS) Act of 2014³ throughout the country and ensure the availability of Essential Narcotic Drugs (ENDs) at affordable cost and
- initiate undergraduate palliative care education by the Medical Council of India, Indian Nursing Council, and in allied health sciences. It is important to make education altruistic compassionate and gender sensitive. Palliative Care should be included in broad specialties and super specialties.
- implement the Clinical Establishment Act and adhere to ethical practices when it comes

to end of life care at the minimum.

References:

1. World Health Organization. World Health Assembly WHA 67.19. Agenda Item 15.5. Strengthening of palliative care as a component of comprehensive care throughout the life course. Available at http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA67/A67_R19-en.pdf. Accessed 11 February 2016.
2. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. The National Program for Palliative Care (NPPC). Available at http://palliumindia.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/National-Palliative-Care-Strategy-Nov_2012.pdf <http://palliumindia.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Gazette-notification-NDPS-amendment-10-March-2014.pdf>. accessed 11 February 2016
3. The Gazette of India. 10 March 2014. Available at <http://palliumindia.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Gazette-notification-NDPS-amendment-10-March-2014.pdf>. accessed 11 February 2016.