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## **Thousands across 80 countries convene to make hospice and palliative care a public health priority**

To mark **World Hospice and Palliative Care Day 2019** (12 October 2019) thousands of people in around 80 countries will be coming together to celebrate, support and speak up about the importance of hospice and palliative care.

This year's World Hospice and Palliative Care Day theme is '**My Care, My Right**' and aims to communicate that palliative care can be demanded by the public - and that, together, every person impacted by a life limiting illness can influence their policy makers to prioritise palliative care financing under Universal Health Coverage.

- Worldwide, more than 25.5 million people die every year with serious health suffering that requires palliative care.
- the number of people who experience serious health-related suffering is much higher, with an additional 35.5 million people requiring some degree of palliative care outside of end-of-life care.
- Family carers and volunteers are a key component of palliative care services as they provide essential support. Governments have a responsibility under Universal Health Coverage to provide resources for care delivery to ensure patients have palliative care services per this year's theme: 'my care, my right'.
- Less than 10% of the overall need for palliative care is being met globally.
- More than 80% of these cases are in low- and middle-income countries, where access to immediate release oral morphine, an essential and inexpensive medicine to alleviate pain, as well any other type of palliative care, is severely lacking.
- Global policies restricting access to opioids mean that millions of people are denied medicines to relieve pain linked to illness or injury<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Knaul FM, Farmer PE, Krakauer EI, et al. **Alleviating the access abyss in palliative care and pain relief—an imperative of universal health coverage: the *Lancet* Commission report.** *Lancet.* 2017; (published online Oct 11.) [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(17\)32513-8](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(17)32513-8)

Dr Stephen Connor, Executive Director of the WHPCA, explains:

“The numbers are huge and so is the unmet need as only a minority of countries have implemented equitable palliative care programs through a public health approach. This year’s World Hospice and Palliative Care Day is about collectively saying, palliative care is the right of every man, woman and child. Together we can stop unnecessary pain and distress during illness and at the end of life.”

Campaign activities around the world include a 500 person Voices for Hospices concert in the United Kingdom, a TEDx style public speech in Shanghai, China, a public hearing on palliative care in the Sorcoba court of law in Sao Paulo, Brazil, as well as public events and celebrations across the world.

To find out more about World Hospice and Palliative Care Day 2019, visit [www.worldday.org](http://www.worldday.org)

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## Notes to editors

### World Hospice and Palliative Care Day 2019

World Hospice and Palliative Care Day is a unified day of action to celebrate and support hospice and palliative care around the world. Voices for Hospices is a wave of concerts taking place on World Hospice and Palliative Care Day every two years.

For more resources and information on palliative care globally, visit: <http://www.thewhpc.org/resources>. For general media enquires, please contact [info@thewhpc.org](mailto:info@thewhpc.org).



## **Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance**

The Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance is a global action network focusing exclusively on hospice and palliative care development worldwide. With our 350 organisational members in over 100 countries, we provide a global voice with a vision to accelerate universal access to quality palliative care.

For more information visit [www.thewhpc.org](http://www.thewhpc.org)