Yerevan Declaration
On palliative care development in former Soviet and socialist republics
13 November 2013
Yerevan, Armenia

Palliative care, as part of health care, is a fundamental human right. We have one and only life, every human being has the right to die with dignity. This is something that the palliative care specialists and advocates strive to achieve by providing palliative care for terminally ill patients. For many governments the financing and development of health care activities involving both curative and palliative care is an imperative.

Representatives from eight former Soviet and socialist republics met in Yerevan for a conference on international palliative care from November 11-13, 2013. Representatives attended from Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Romania, and Ukraine to share experiences and challenges in developing palliative care in their respective countries and to learn from each other. There was a general desire to continue this communication and to express support for changes to health care that will promote the development of palliative care in the region.

Taking into consideration international documents that urge our governments to act towards recognizing the need to include palliative care in the public healthcare systems, we the undersigned experts in palliative care and human rights advocates from former Soviet and socialist countries declare the following:

1. That palliative care is a fundamental component of any fully functioning modern health care system.
2. Governments should recognize palliative care as a part of the health care system and as an area of specialization.
3. That opioids are essential to the practice of palliative care and that patient access to these medications, especially in oral forms, must not be unduly restricted.
4. That all health care professionals involved in the care of seriously ill patients should receive basic education and training in palliative care both in undergraduate and post-graduate education and that advanced training be established for specialization.
5. That continuous efforts be made to expand the delivery of palliative care to the population in need.
6. That financial, human, and other resource be dedicated to the development and expansion of palliative care in all our countries.
7. Realizing that palliative care is a relatively new development in former Soviet and socialist republics, that the undersigned commit ourselves to the development and expansion of palliative care throughout the region.

The following international documents contain text and reference related to access to pain treatment and palliative care as a fundamental human right:

- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted and ratified by the UN General Assembly in 1996
- CESC General Comment No.14: The Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health, adopted at the 22nd session of the CESC, August 2000
- European Charter of Patients’ Rights, Rome, November 2002
- WHA58.22 Cancer Prevention Control Resolution, adopted by the 58th UN Assembly for Global Health, 25th May 2005
- White Paper on Standards and Norms for Hospice and Palliative Care in Europe, EAPC (European Association for Palliative Care), 2009

Signed by:

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