
12th May 2017

Letter of support to the Venezuelan Association of Palliative Medicine

The Latin American Association of Palliative Care (ALCP) and the Associations here signing have been informed of a public letter¹ of the Venezuelan Association of Palliative Medicine (SOVEMEPAL for its acronym in Spanish) in which its representatives described the lack of availability of essential medicines for palliative care, including opioids for the treatment of moderate and severe pain.

Palliative Care improves the quality of life of patients (adults and children) and their families who are facing with life-threatening diseases. It also prevents and relieves suffering through early identification, assessment and appropriate treatment of pain and other problems, be they physical, psychosocial or spiritual².

The Resolution on Palliative Care, adopted unanimously by the World Health Assembly³ in May 2014 urges Member States to strengthen and implement palliative care policies in support of the comprehensive strengthening of health systems, with emphasis on primary health care, community-based and home-based care and universal coverage programs and to assess "national needs for palliative care, including those related to pain medications, and to promote collaborative formulas to ensure an adequate supply of Essential medicines for palliative care and thus avoid situations of scarcity".

The Outcome Document of the Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGASS 2016) urges Member States to "ensure adequate domestic funding and allocation of human resources, as appropriate, for palliative care initiatives, (...) supporting the availability and appropriate use of essential medicines, including controlled medicines for symptom management"⁴.

On behalf of the organizations we represent, we call on the Venezuelan government to take the necessary measures to promote legitimate access to the necessary medicines for palliative care, especially opioids, to guarantee the supply of medicines for the control of pain and other symptoms.

As organizations and as members of civil society, we offer our support to SOVEMEPAL and are available to the civil, academic and government associations of Venezuela to collaborate and cooperate in the search for solutions to alleviate the suffering of the patients with palliative needs in Venezuela.

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1 Public letter of the Sociedad Venezolana de Medicina Paliativa SOVEMEPAL

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- 2 OMS (2015). Palliative Care. Fact sheet N° 402. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs402/en/>
 - 3 Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly (2014) Strengthening of palliative care as a component of comprehensive care throughout the life course.
http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA67/A67_R19-en.pdf
 - 4 UNODC (2016) Outcome Document of the 2016 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem New York, 19-21 April 2016
<https://www.unodc.org/documents/postungass2016//outcome/V1603304-S.pdf>