

European Network of Health Care Chaplaincy Statement on Palliative Care

The European Network of Health Care Chaplaincy (ENHCC) affirms that palliative care is an approach to care that seeks the prevention and relief of suffering by means of identifying, assessing and treating the physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs of patients and their families. It is an approach that affirms life and dying as a natural process, uses a team approach to address the needs of patients and their families, will enhance quality of life and positively influence the course of the illness. [World Health Organisation Definition of Palliative Care, 2002]

Palliative care is an essential part of health care, whether it be provided in healthcare institutions or home settings.

Spiritual interventions in palliative care

Spiritual interventions include:

- exploring the individual's sense of meaning and purpose in life
- exploring attitudes, beliefs, ideas, values and concerns around life and death issues
- affirming life and worth by encouraging reminiscing of the past
- exploring the individual's hopes and fears regarding the present and future for themselves and their families/carers
- exploring questions in relation to life, suffering and death

The Network's Standards for Health Care Chaplaincy in Europe acknowledge the organisational diversity in chaplaincy services throughout Europe that includes administration, regulations, policies, and chaplaincy associations. [ENHCC, 2002] It is clear that chaplaincy has a unique knowledge, skill and resource in providing spiritual care that focuses on life, meaning, suffering, dying and death, that can contribute positively to professional palliative care.

Good practice for palliative care includes spiritual and religious care, access to chaplaincy services, multidisciplinary team working, staff support, education and training. The Association of Hospice and Palliative Care Chaplains (UK) Standards for Hospice and Palliative Care Chaplaincy [AHPCC, 2006] provide an example of best practice.

Chaplaincy and the multidisciplinary team

It is acknowledged that while many health care professionals can develop skills in providing spiritual care, health care chaplains have a central role and expertise that can contribute positively to the multidisciplinary team.

The Network recommends that healthcare agencies and chaplaincies assure ways of providing for the delivery of spiritual care in palliative care through the inclusion of competent spiritual health care providers within the multidisciplinary team and the development of clinical standards. [MCCC (2003), NHS QIS (2002)]

Declaration

This statement was agreed at the 9th Consultation of the European Network of Health Care Chaplaincy, Lisbon, Portugal, 17th – 21st May 2006, to be used as a tool by participants.

There were 52 Representatives present from 26 countries representing the following 38 Churches, associations and organisations:

Austrian Roman Catholic Health Care Chaplains Association	Association of Spiritual Caregivers in Health Care Institutions (VGVZ), The Netherlands
Conference of Health Care Chaplaincy (AEKÖ) Protestant Church in Austria	Association of Ministers in the Church of Norway
Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium	Comissão Nacional da Pastoral da Saúde (Portugal)
Committee for Spiritual Care in Hospitals, Czech Council of Churches	Transylvanian Reformed Church
Charles University in Prague	DCCSS Moscow Patriarchate
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople	Lutheran (Evangelical) Church (ECAV) and Evangelical Diaconia
Danish Association of Chaplains in Healthcare (SYSAM)	Pastoral Health Care Department, Episcopal Conference of Spain
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia	Church of Sweden
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland	Association of Health Care Chaplains in the Church of Sweden (SKAIS)
Protestant Hospital Chaplaincy in France	Free Churches Council of Sweden
Aumônerie nationale des hôpitaux (France)	Association of the Swiss Protestant German speaking Hospital Chaplains
Conference of Health Care Chaplaincy of EKD (Germany)	Association of Catholic Health Care Chaplains in German Speaking Switzerland
Department of Pastoral Care of the German Catholic Bishop's Conference	Association of Hospice and Palliative Care Chaplains (UK)
Catholic Hospital Association in Germany (KKVD)	College of Health Care Chaplains (CHCC) (UK)
Metropolis of Thebes and Levadias (Orthodox Church of Greece)	Free Churches Health Care Chaplaincy (England and Wales)
Reformed Church, Hungary	Healthcare Chaplaincy Training and Development (Scotland)
Healthcare Chaplaincy Board of Ireland	Scottish Association of Chaplains in Healthcare (SACH)
Latvia Association of Professional Health Care Chaplaincy (LPVAKA)	Scottish Churches Committee on Healthcare Chaplaincy
Franciscan Capuchin Hospital Chaplaincy (Malta)	Metropolitan Commission for Pastoral Health Care (Ukraine)

Footnote:

The network commends the development of the Scottish Clinical Standards for Palliative Care which recognise the chaplain as a core member of the multidisciplinary team.

References:

AHPCC (2006) *Standards for Hospice and Palliative Care Chaplaincy*, 2nd Edition, Association of Hospice and Palliative Care Chaplains, United Kingdom.

www.ahpcc.org.uk

ENHCC (2002) *Standards for Health Care Chaplaincy in Europe*. European Network of Health Care Chaplaincy. www.eurochaplains.org/turku_standards.htm

MCCC (2003) *Spiritual and Religious Care Competencies for Specialist Palliative Care*, Marie Curie Cancer Care, London, United Kingdom,

<http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/forhealthcareprofessionals/>

NHS QIS (2002) *Clinical Standards Specialist Palliative Care*, NHS Quality Improvement Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland <http://www.nhshealthquality.org/nhsqis/files/SPC.pdf>

WHO (2002) *Definition of Palliative Care*, World Health Organisation.

<http://www.who.int/cancer/palliative/definition/en/>