MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT
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CONFERENCE MARKS ESSENTIAL PROGRESS IN SCALING UP OF PALLIATIVE CARE IN AFRICA

Over 70 top medical professionals from countries across Africa will convene in Nairobi on 24-25 March 2011 to discuss the essential work that is taking place in the scaling up of Palliative Care in Africa.

Sponsored by The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund and organised by the Kenya Hospices and Palliative Care Association (KEHPCA) and the African Palliative Care Association (APCA), the conference Palliative Care: An essential part of medical and nursing training, will assess the developments in Palliative Care practice over the past three years.

The conference will address the growing evidence for the need to integrate palliative care into national policies and core educational curricula to strengthen health systems across Africa and address workforce challenges. The conference will galvanise leadership for Palliative Care education through the institutions of higher learning in Africa to ensure its sustainability.

Dr. Zipporah Ali, National Coordinator, KEHPCA, explains “Unfortunately, health care professionals in many African countries are not well trained to take care of patients with life threatening illnesses (like cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes and other chronic diseases). This is because palliative care is not included in the training curricula of health professionals. This needs to change. It is time that every health care professional understands the basics of taking care of patients with life limiting illnesses and End of Life issues. Kenya is one of the countries that is making progress to ensure that health care professionals are trained in palliative care”

The conference will bring together delegates from ten African countries, including among others, Kenya, Botswana, Malawi, Tanzania, South Africa and Namibia. Delegates will include Deans of Medical Schools, Heads of Nursing Schools, Senior Lecturers, Training Managers / Directors of Palliative Care organisations and Senior Officials with a key role in curriculum development in the focus countries.

A roster of expert speakers will include Dr Francis Kimani - Director of Medical Services, Ministry of Medical Services, Kenya, Dr. Faith Mwangi-Powell - Executive Director, African Palliative Care Association (APCA), Dr. Zipporah Ali - National Coordinator, Kenya Hospices and Palliative Care Association (KEHPCA), and Olivia Dix - Head of the Palliative Care Initiative, The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund amongst others.

The aims of the conference will be to review progress over the past three years, discuss strategies for the integration and further strengthening of Palliative Care education in Africa, develop a framework for the integration of palliative care education into national policy and to explore opportunities for future scale-up and mentorship.

The conference Palliative care: An essential part of medical and nursing training will take place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya.

ENDS
Notes to Editors

1. The Conference

_Palliative care: An essential part of medical and nursing training_

*From an education conference in October 2008 to action*

24 - 25 March 2011
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya

2. Conference Schedule

Day One - Thursday 24 March

08.30 - 09.00 Registration and Refreshments
09.00 – 11.00 Introduction to the conference
11.00 – 11.50 Panel Discussion One: Regional update since the October 2008 conference
11.50 – 13.00 Panel Discussion Two: Practical issues around integration of palliative care into the nursing curriculum
13.00 – 14.00 Lunch
14.00 – 15.35 Panel Discussion Three: Practical issues around integration of palliative care into the doctors’ curriculum
15.35 – 16.00 Tea
16.00 – 17.00 Panel Discussion Four: Developing a framework for integration of palliative care education into national policy
17.00 – 17.30 Summary and way forward
18.30 – 21.00 Conference Dinner

Day Two - Friday 25 March

08.30 – 10.00 Welcome and Group work: country-specific action planning
10.00 - 10.15 Tea Break
10.15 - 11.15 Feedback on country action plans
11.15 - 12.15 Plenary group discussions
  - Identifying new opportunities for developing palliative care education across Africa
  - Developing trainers and mentors who can support palliative care education across Africa
12.15 - 12.45 Group discussions feedback
12.45 – 13.00 Conclusion and next steps
13.0 – 14.00 Lunch and close of conference

3. Background

The drive to advocate for the integration and strengthening of palliative care in health professionals’ teaching institutions across Africa commenced in 2008, through an education conference held in Kampala, Uganda. In 2009, The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund (through APCA) made funding available for the implementation of country action plans in Malawi, Kenya and Botswana. For other countries, including Tanzania and Namibia, the African Palliative Care Association has provided support for integration of palliative care in Medical and Nursing curricula by incorporating some of the priorities outlined in the country action plans into existing APCA partnership work plans funded by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Other countries have also received technical support from APCA as required.

There has been continuing work on education in palliative care at all levels in developing sustainable strategies for creating a skilled palliative care workforce to ensure the delivery of high quality palliative care across Africa. It is against this background that the conference _Palliative care: An essential part of medical and nursing_
training, will take place in Nairobi, Kenya, where the medical professionals who attended the original 2008 conference in Kampala will reconvene.

4. Kenya Hospice and Palliative Care Association

The Kenya Hospices and Palliative Care Association (KEHPCA) which is the National Association, was formed to represent Hospices and Palliative care service providers in Kenya. The aim of the association is to scale up Palliative Care services in the country to bridge the very significant gap between those who get the services and those in need of the services. This encompasses addressing issues of accessibility, affordability and quality of the services. KEHPCA focuses on advocacy; education and training; scaling up palliative care services; Setting standards for palliative care; networking and developing private and public partnership to advance palliative care in Kenya.

5. The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund

The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund (The Fund) works to ensure that palliative care - an affordable and holistic approach to healthcare that provides relief from pain and symptoms and emphasises quality of life for patients and their families - is available to all those with HIV/AIDS, cancer and other life-limiting illnesses who need it. This is through scaling up services, developing education and training, advocacy and research and evaluation. The Fund wants to ensure that palliative care becomes fully integrated into national health policies and systems, fully integrated into the strategic plans of HIV/AIDS and cancer stakeholders working in sub-Saharan Africa - and a funding priority for donors.

6. African Palliative Care Association (APCA)

APCA’s goal is to support the scaling-up of palliative care provision across Africa through a culturally appropriate public health approach that strives to balance quality with coverage. Its broad objectives are to: Promote the availability of palliative care for all in need, including orphans and vulnerable children; Encourage governments across Africa to support affordable and appropriate palliative care which is to be incorporated into the whole spectrum of health care services; Promote the availability of palliative care drugs for all in need; Encourage the establishment of national palliative care associations in all African countries; Promote palliative care education and training programmes suitable for African countries; Develop and promote quality standards in palliative care training and service provision for different levels of health care professionals and care providers.

7. Press enquires, image and interview requests:

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