

Transforming the Palliative Care Scenario in Brazil with the National Palliative Care Policy

Transformando o Cenário de Cuidados Paliativos no Brasil com a Política Nacional de Cuidados Paliativos

Rodrigo Kappel Castilho^{1,2,3} 

It is with great enthusiasm that we are participating in the implementation of the National Palliative Care Policy in Brazil, a historic milestone that promises to reshape the country's healthcare landscape. This measure, approved in December 2023, represents a crucial response to the needs of patients facing critical situations, while consolidating Brazil's commitment to providing a more humanized and comprehensive healthcare system.

The promulgation of the National Policy during the meeting of the Tripartite Interagency Commission (CIT in its Portuguese acronym), held at PAHO headquarters in Brasilia, underscores the seriousness and reach of this advance. The presence of Health Minister Nísia Trindade at this historic event reinforces the importance the Brazilian government attaches to improving palliative care.

Palliative care, an approach designed to improve the quality of life of patients in life-threatening situations, now has a national framework to guide and support its implementation. This approach not only aims to prevent and control physical symptoms, such as pain, but also extends to caring for emotional, spiritual, and social aspects, recognizing the importance of family support.

By embracing this policy, Brazil is taking a significant step towards a more compassionate and inclusive healthcare system. The need for palliative care from the moment life-threatening conditions are diagnosed is highlighted, ensuring that patients receive adequate assistance from the very beginning of the process of coping with their illnesses.

However, beyond legislation, it is imperative to recognize the essential role played by the National Academy

of Palliative Care (ANCP in its Portuguese acronym) in this evolutionary process. Since its foundation in 2005, ANCP has been a tireless voice in the promotion, development, and implementation of palliative care in Brazil. Resolution 41, published by the CIT in 2018, marked the beginning of this journey, and ANCP has continued to lead efforts to consolidate and expand palliative care on Brazilian ground. The recent launch of the third edition of the ANCP Atlas of Palliative Care¹, revealing an increase in services in various regions, is testimony to academia's commitment to promoting the dissemination of these vital services.

Making palliative care a compulsory subject in medical schools by 2022 is a significant step forward, although there is room to expand this requirement to all health professions. By encouraging the development of care teams, training professionals, and guaranteeing access to medicines, including opioids, ANCP contributes substantially to achieving these fundamental goals.

The National Palliative Care Policy is a collective commitment towards a more compassionate and fair approach to healthcare. With ANCP playing a leading role, Brazil is paving the way towards a positive transformation in the care of patients facing life-threatening conditions. This is a significant chapter in our journey towards a healthcare system that respects the dignity and life of every Brazilian citizen.

REFERENCE

1. Guirro ÚBP, Castilho RK, Crispim D, Lucena NC, editors. Atlas dos Cuidados Paliativos no Brasil [E-book on the Internet]. 1st ed. São Paulo: Academia Nacional de Cuidados Paliativos; 2023. 64 p. Available from: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1r0DVSyo08-ArD-Pf7KjSpXB0ALjGEO9p/view>

¹National Academy of Palliative Care, São Paulo, SP, Brazil.

²Hospital de Clínicas de Porto Alegre, Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil.

³Palliatium Cuidados Paliativos, Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil.

Corresponding author: Rodrigo Kappel Castilho; **Email:** rkcastilho@gmail.com.

Conflict of interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Editor-in-chief: João Batista Santos Garcia; **Scientific editor:** Rudval Souza da Silva.

Received on January 11, 2024; **Accepted** on January 15, 2024; **Published** on April 05, 2024.