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சுகாதார மற்றும் வெகுஜன ஊடக அமைச்சு
Ministry of Health & Mass Media

General Circular No: 01 - 40 /2025

Provincial Director of Health Services
Regional Director of Health Services
All Heads of Health Institutions

World Hospice and Palliative Care Day Circular – 2025
"Achieving the Promise: Universal Access to Palliative Care"

World Hospice and Palliative Care Day is commemorated worldwide on the second Saturday of October every year. Accordingly, this year it will be commemorated on 11th October 2025 under the theme of "Achieving the Promise: Universal Access to Palliative Care". World Hospice and Palliative Care Day is a vital opportunity to raise awareness and mobilize support for palliative care from communities and governments worldwide.

Palliative care is identified as a holistic approach aiming to improve the quality of life of patients who are suffering from life threatening illnesses. The spiritual, psychological and social well-being of bereaving families are also considered as a part of palliative care. Receiving palliative care is a right of each person suffering from life threatening illnesses and providing palliative care according to the need is a responsibility of everyone including healthcare professionals. Each year, an estimated 60 million people are in need of palliative care around the world and only about 14% of people who need palliative care currently receive it. Among them, the majority live in low- and middle-income countries.

Sri Lanka being such a country, the need for palliative care is rising due to the aging population and the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases & other chronic illnesses including cancers. Therefore 'Sri Lanka National Health Policy 2016-2025' identified that "the mainstream health system should provide palliative care to all patients who need such care for them to live and die with dignity". Furthermore, 'National Strategic Framework for Palliative Care Development in Sri Lanka 2019-2023 (Ministry of Health, 2019)' provides the strategic directions for development of palliative care services in the country. However, presently a significant number of patients have no access to palliative care services with a holistic approach.

Following areas are emphasized during commemoration of 'World Hospice & Palliative Care Day' this year;

- Raising global awareness
- Advocating for policy changes
- Increasing access to care for vulnerable populations
- Supporting the dedicated work of palliative care professionals and volunteers

Therefore, National Cancer Control Programme, Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Directorate of Non-Communicable Disease intends to utilize the World Hospice and Palliative Care Day 2025 to draw the attention of all health and non-health stakeholders towards the above areas of palliative care services.


All heads of health institutions are requested to communicate the content of this circular to all relevant healthcare staff in their institution (including Health Education Unit, Palliative Care Unit etc.) and facilitate strengthening of palliative care services in their institution.

During the month of October, priority should be given to;

- Conduct in-service training programmes on palliative care at institutional level for the healthcare staff and awareness programmes for the general public with a special focus on relevant non-health stakeholders. IEC materials that are available in the NCCP website can be utilized for the above-mentioned activities. NCCP website address – www.nccp.health.gov.lk
- Establish / strengthen Palliative Care Consult Services (PCCS) at the institutional level.
Circular no: 01-34/2020 dated 31/08/2020 issued by the Director General of Health Services, provides guidance to the heads of all tertiary and secondary institutions to establish/strengthen Palliative Care Consult Services in their institution.
- 'Palliative Care for Cancer Patients in Primary Health Care: A Guide for Health Care Professionals' (National Cancer Control Programme 2022) can be used for palliative care at primary level.
- Organize or attend events, seminars, or workshops related to hospice and palliative care in your community.
- Spread awareness about World Hospice and Palliative Care Day 2025 and the importance of these services using social media platforms.

Submitting a summary report with photographs on special activities conducted by the relevant institution/district to commemorate the World Hospice and Palliative Care Day 2025, to reach the Director / National Cancer Control Programme on or before 15th of November, 2025 would be highly appreciated. (Email- nccpmohsl@gmail.com). These will be used as sharing experiences to develop the palliative care services in the country.

Your leadership, guidance and active participation are much appreciated in this national endeavor.


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Cc:

Secretary, Health
Additional Secretary (Public Health Services)
Additional Secretary (Medical Services)
All Secretaries – Provincial Ministry of Health
All Deputy Director Generals
Director –
National Cancer Control Programme /Non-Communicable Diseases /Health Promotion Bureau/Family
Health Bureau / Primary Health Care / National Institute of Health Sciences / Youth Elderly
& Disabled persons /Mental Health / Private Health Sector Development
All Heads of Health Institutions: to implement the activities and feedback
Chief Medical Officer - CMC