

Hospice Palliative Care Association rebrands as the Association of Palliative Care Centres

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As of 1 September 2023, the Hospice Palliative Care Association (HPCA) will now be known as the Association of Palliative Care Centres (APCC).



“This rebranding is not just a visual change,” says Ewa Skowronska, CEO of the APCC. “It is an important message to all medical professionals and the public that our members (many of whom still refer to themselves as hospices) offer quality, specialised and expert palliative care services. Too many people equate hospice with end-of-life only and many medical professionals refer very late. This leads to 1,000s of patients, and their loved ones, missing out on the holistic support that palliative care provides – support that, ideally, should be from diagnosis of a life-threatening illness and not solely in the last few days of life.”

The rebrand includes a new logo element that reflects that palliative care can be provided alongside curative treatments and into end-of life care, including bereavement support (if needed).

“Our members adhere to the Standards for Palliative Healthcare Services, 4th edition, 2020 approved by the Council for Health Service Accreditation of South Africa (COHSASA) and the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua),” says Leigh Meinert, advocacy and operations manager of APCC. “This is important as sometimes there is a perception that our members are only servicing patients who do not have private healthcare support and might not be at the same level as private organisations. In reality, they have decades of palliative care experience, and compliance with these Standards ensures an ongoing level of excellence.”

As much as 90% of APCC member’s services are provided to the patient in the comfort of their own home. The patient’s loved ones are also supported by way of an inter-disciplinary team. Such a team typically consists of a medical doctor, nurse, social worker, and home-based carers that can work alongside the patient’s healthcare professional and support quality of life.

Palliative care covers conditions such as HIV/AIDS, drug-resistant TB, chronic respiratory diseases, cardiovascular and neuromuscular diseases, MND and more. “Both adults and children are catered for,” says Meinert. “While patients can move in and out of a palliative care service, they may remain beneficiaries of the services for as long as they (or their loved

ones) need or wish to. Patients may be discharged from the service if they are doing well and able to function independently. This is always negotiated between the patient, family, and members of the care team. We encourage patients to engage with an APCC member from the point of diagnosis as this helps to dispel fears and provides insight into the holistic services that can be offered. We believe that all patients have benefitted from an improved quality of life through the supportive care received from APCC members.”

“APCC has a cloud-based patient care monitoring, evaluation and reporting system able to report in detail on interventions given to any patient,” says Skowronska. “Our members are comfortable working alongside the primary clinician or specialist. They can provide a supportive extension of care to the patient and their loved ones and, in most cases, the APCC members inter-disciplinary teams collaborate and work alongside the referring doctors who are treating the patient. They also provide supportive care to the patient’s loved ones. This may include advanced healthcare planning, as well as psychosocial and spiritual support.”

“Our palliative care definition says it all,” concludes Meinert. “Palliative care is the physical, psychological, social and spiritual care provided by an inter-disciplinary team of experts to anyone with a life-threatening illness and their loved ones. Care is offered from the point of diagnosis and extends to bereavement support if needed. Over 90% of the care that APCC members provide is home-based with a focus on promoting quality of life.

We sincerely hope that this rebranding results in more people receiving the support that they so desperately need during some of the most difficult times in a person’s life.”

For more info, visit www.apcc.org.za

ABOUT THE APCC

Previously known as the Hospice Palliative Care Association (HPCA), the Association of Palliative Care Centres (APCC) is a registered NPO in South Africa. Founded in 1987, the (now) APCC is a member organization for palliative care service providers, many of whom refer to themselves as hospices. As a national charity, the Association champions and supports 91 member organisations that provide palliative care services to approximately 40,000 people per year. APCC’s members are located across South Africa and care for patients with a variety of life-threatening conditions, predominantly in the comfort of their own homes.

About palliative care

Palliative care is the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual care provided by an inter-disciplinary team of experts to anyone with a life-threatening illness and their loved ones. Care is offered from the point of diagnosis and extends to bereavement support if needed. APCC members typically have a team that includes a medical doctor, professional nurse, social worker, counsellor, and home-based carers. All staff are trained in palliative care, which aims to ensure a quality of life for patients and to prevent and relieve unnecessary suffering.

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Formerly known as the HPCA, the APCC is the new brand (from 1st September 2023). As a registered NPO, APCC is a member organisation for palliative care service providers, many of whom call themselves hospices. Members care for over 100,000 patients and loved ones per year (primarily in the comfort of their own homes). The APCC champions and supports both members and palliative care as a healthcare speciality.

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