



Voice of Volunteering

The EAPC Madrid Charter on Volunteering in Hospice and Palliative Care

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The European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC), the Worldwide Hospice and Palliative Care Alliance (WH-PCA) and the International Association for Hospice & Palliative Care (IAHPC) are working together to advocate for the support, recognition, promotion and development of volunteering in hospice and palliative care through the implementation of this Charter with the following aims:

- Promote the successful development of volunteering for the benefit of patients, families and the wider hospice and palliative care community.
- Recognise volunteering as a third resource alongside professional care and family care, with its own identity, position and value.
- Promote research and best practice models in the recruitment, management, support, integration, training and resourcing of volunteers.

1. Recognise the important role of volunteers in the total care of patients and their families, and in sustaining hospice and palliative care services

Actions include that organisations and individuals:

- Ensure that volunteering has a recognised and clearly described place in their hospice and palliative care organisations and networks. Volunteers do not replace professionals or family carers, but have their own role.
- Enable and empower volunteers to make their diverse contributions, ranging from care of patients and their families to supporting roles such as fundraising, administration, board and any other activities that sustain hospice and palliative care.
- Enable volunteers to contribute to hospice and palliative care decision-making at individual, organisational and societal levels and ensure that their views and opinions are sought, considered and respected.

2. Promote volunteering in direct support of patients and their families

Actions include that:

- Health care organisations recognise 'being there'¹ for the patient and family as the core contribution of volunteering in direct patient care.
- Organisations and individuals actively seek ways to involve trained volunteers in direct support of patients and families, following best practice models from different countries, and encourage patients and their families to make use of the support available from volunteers.

¹ 'Being there' focuses on the human connection, on 'being with' the person, that is the basis for sensing what kind of support the volunteer can provide to this particular person at this particular time. See the EAPC [White Paper on Volunteering](#) for further clarification.

3. Ensure effective management of volunteering, including clearly defined policy on roles, careful recruitment, selection, training and development

Actions include that:

- Organisations and individuals ensure effective volunteer management with sensitive collaboration between volunteers, family and professionals. This is vital for good quality and sustainable volunteer services.
- National (or regional) best practice guidance, training and quality programmes to support volunteering are developed and implemented in every European country.

4. Ensure effective support for hospice and palliative care volunteering at organisational, local and national levels

Actions include that organisations:

- Provide adequate funding to ensure effective management, training and quality including reimbursement of costs incurred by volunteers such as travel, telephone and insurance.
- Recognise and resource volunteering as an important area for research and evaluate the impact of volunteering.
- Collect accurate data including numbers and volunteers' roles at organisational level and for each European country.
- Influence European, national and regional legislation and policy advocating for hospice and palliative care volunteering.

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For more information please see the Charter's background document.

Acknowledgements

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