

DECLARATION OF MEDELLIN



“FOR A NETWORK OF COMPASSIONATE CITIES IN COLOMBIA”

17 MARCH 2017

Helping others who suffer should be an essential social value in Colombia; compassion will be a source of dignity when we care and are cared for with kindness and respect from the common experience of our shared humanity.

Celebrating its first meeting for the "Colombia Contigo, Compassionate Cities" initiative on March 17, 2017 in the city of Medellín, this manifesto is made public so that the entire Colombian society and each citizen is invited to join the vocation and responsibility of caring for the people around them who are going through a period of advanced illness facing the last phase of their life.

To face death is a natural fact and must be socially assumed as a transcendent period. It is the responsibility of any human being to care for people who are in final stages of life with dignity, compassion and respect, as well as, to help and accompany their relatives and closest caregivers. We must return to the beginning, making a caring society for loved ones when faced with difficult circumstances that require help a reality.

Compassion is an innate characteristic of the human being that needs to be valued and cultivated because it is basic to our existence; it is the ability to recognize suffering and mobilize ourselves to relieve it as much as possible; it is to desire the well-being of those around us and to collaborate to enhance it, while understanding our own limitations. To live compassion, is to act with humanity, sensitivity, empathy, solidarity and motivation, while understanding the relevance of each gesture as part of our shared humanity.

Anyone who is in the final period of life has the right to die in peace and with dignity. They deserve to die accompanied by their loved ones. They deserve to be cared for by sensitive and competent people who try to understand their needs and should receive humane, compassionate, kind and sensitive treatment. They have the right to receive care by social and health professionals who do so with an integrated vision, offering the best care with kindness and respect, while understanding the importance of each act, in the process of alleviating their suffering and that of their family. Every person deserves to live the end of their life according to their spirituality and with consideration of how important their existence has been.

We solemnly claim to be able to live in a compassionate society, which awakens the values of caring for and accompanying people at the end of life. We encourage and experience with enthusiasm a new model of palliative care via community involvement in the development of a network of Compassionate Communities in our country.

Public institutions and private organizations, universities and academic organizations, scientific associations and professional groups, must gradually join the present call of solidarity. As advocated by the Public Health and Palliative Care International Association and the Charter for Compassion in Palliative Care: "The best care at the end of life is the responsibility of each and every one of us as citizens; as such we have the beautiful call to join this collective movement. "

Those who sign this statement are committed to the mission of helping to build a better society by promoting compassionate, humane and quality care in terms of caring for those with advanced diseases and in the final stages of life. We will:

- Remind the population of their right and the importance of receiving adequate palliative care at the end of life.
- Promote compassion amongst all citizens and health professionals, as an essential value of society and a fundamental part of the human approach required by health systems.
- Encourage the participation of citizens in the care and support of their loved ones and those close to them when they are at the end of life, facilitating and promoting access to the necessary training resources.
- Promote the development of aware and empowered community networks and volunteers to contribute to the accompaniment of people at the end of life, when their family and close relatives require support.
- Defend the community as an essential part of Palliative Care.
- Contribute to building an ecosystem of care, fostering community coordination with health and social professionals to collectively provide relief, attend to the needs of people during the process of advanced disease.

The development of communities and compassionate cities will be an important vehicle to face the end of life with dignity and transcendence in our country; this initiative begins within each one of us and connects us with our loved ones, our community and our society, stemming from the experience of our own responsibility towards every human being.

(You can sign the "Medellín Declaration for a Network of Compassionate Cities in Colombia" at the end of life, with this [link](#).)

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