



The Bern declaration 2024

Worldwide, each year millions of people experience serious illness or are grieving. In many countries, death and bereavement are kept out of sight and often kept within the confines of healthcare institutions, leaving many people unable, unprepared or reluctant to discuss it openly and leading to unnecessary additional and preventable suffering. A change in how societies support the seriously ill and bereaved is urgently needed.

In this context, **Public Health Palliative Care International** (www.phpci.org) urges governments, city administrations and all civic organisations within communities and cities to commit to the following health promotion principles and actions for the end of life for ALL people:

1. Support citizens to become more familiar with supporting and caring for the seriously ill and bereaved through conversations and experiences that **improve health and death literacy** – the knowledge and skills that people need to navigate this challenging part of every life.
2. **Create learning opportunities in compassion and connectedness** during caregiving, end of life, death and bereavement in the general community.
3. **Share stories and experiences of people dying and grieving in everyday life** from all parts of society through media and in public spaces to provide representation and a realistic understanding of what happens at the end of life and in grief and loss.
4. Actively address loneliness and promote a sense of security, connection and belonging for everyone nearing the end of life by **nurturing relationships through neighbourhood and community networks**, as a central part of serious illness and bereavement support.
5. **Make visible the strengths and needs of informal caregivers (families and volunteers)**, increasing their confidence through education and connection, and feeling supported in caregiving; acknowledging the disproportionate role women play in caregiving.
6. Work together to craft and amend policies to **enable financial reimbursement** to end-of-life caregivers over days, months and even years, to support end-of-life and palliative care.
7. **Promote civic policies and practices** for supportive care inside all civic sectors – from workplaces, schools, or faith groups to social clubs, cultural centers, and neighborhoods.