

## Public health approaches to palliative care

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The second issue in April 2018 of *Annals of Palliative Medicine* is a focused issue entitled, “*Public Health Approaches to Palliative Care*” that is guest edited by Dr. Julian Abel of Cornwall Hospice Care in the United Kingdom and Dr. Allan Kellehear of University of Bradford also in the United Kingdom.

Such public health approaches to palliative care view the care at the end of life as everyone’s responsibility. This societal responsibility paradigm is certainly a newer but rapidly growing thought worldwide. As Abel and Kellehear describe in their preface to the focused issue, while a clinical palliative care team can and should address the needs of their patients and their families and loved ones, other interventions that can serve to advance the collective field of palliative care can happen outside of the hospital in such places as the workplace, schools, churches or temples, or other social gathering places.

A basic premise behind such thinking is that people who live with life-limiting illness, grief and loss are found everywhere and are not just in hospitals or enrolled in home hospice programs. As such, support for these common life experiences and difficulties can and should be equally diverse. While some in the academic palliative care field may have difficulty with this premise conceptually, public health approaches to health and wellness outside of hospitals and apart from vaccination campaigns are all around us in society today, from public smoking bans to incentives for physical fitness to requirements to provide caloric and

nutritional information on menus and food packaging.

This focused issue aims to highlight important practice implementation, developments, and sustained research programs in public health that currently exist worldwide. I also expect this issue will increase awareness among palliative care clinicians and researchers of the potential benefits and complementary value of public health approaches to palliative care.

This focused issue of *Annals of Palliative Medicine* features seven original research articles. Models and early results for compassionate communities and/or palliative care programs in indigenous communities in Spain, Latin America, Australia, and Canada are reported. Three review articles are also featured that address Scotland’s public health palliative care alliance, prisoners as hospice volunteers in Poland, and compassionate communities in Canada. The focused issue is concluded with a meeting report from the 5th International Public Health Palliative Care Conference 2017.

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### Footnote

*Conflicts of Interest:* The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

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