Focus on Compassion

Enhancing Access to Palliative Care Worldwide

Global Connections at the EAPC World Congress

Prague, Czech Republic

The European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC) World Congress, held May 14–15 in Prague, Czech Republic, brought together nearly 2,000 participants from 76 countries for two days of learning, exchange and connection. For Global Partners in Care, the gathering offered a powerful opportunity to advance the work at the heart of our mission: building bridges across cultures, regions and contexts to strengthen palliative care worldwide.

GPIC with regional leaders from the African, Asia Pacific, and Latin American associations.

Throughout the congress, GPIC connected with regional leaders, global organizations and colleagues from across the palliative care community. The program featured scientifically rigorous presentations, posters and discussions alongside cultural highlights. Performances by the Prague Cello Quartet and the Jarošáček Children's Folk Group opened and closed the congress, grounding the global meeting in Czech culture and hospitality.

One especially strong session highlighted partnerships in the Czech Republic that have collaboratively advanced palliative care across the country. Representatives from government, civil society and private foundations shared how they worked together to develop strategy, build trust and implement sustainable system innovations that have helped palliative care grow.

Regional leadership gathering at the GPIC booth.

Leaders from APHN and EAPC co-leading a session on leadership in palliative care.

Another standout moment was the joint session hosted by the Asia Pacific Hospice Palliative Care Network (APHN) and EAPC on leadership in palliative care. The partnership between these two regional organizations offered an inspiring model for cross-regional collaboration and shared learning. Their work demonstrates how regional associations can build momentum together around specific projects and common priorities.

Click here to read more about the 2026 EAPC World Congress.

From Global Engagement to Local Impact

Global Partners in Care at NPHI Summit 2026

At the 2026 National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation (NPHI) Quality in Action Summit, Global Partners in Care (GPIC) supported global engagement by U.S. hospice and palliative care leaders through sessions focused on equitable partnerships in global health, knowledge sharing between the U.S. and abroad, and how global engagement can spark innovation in patient care in the U.S.

Workshop participants at the University of Notre Dame explore motivations for entering global partnerships.

Global Palliative Care Workshop

Prior to the summit, 24 U.S. hospice and palliative care leaders gathered for a global palliative care workshop, co-hosted by GPIC and the Eck Institute for Global Health at the University of Notre Dame. Throughout the day, participants engaged in activities aimed at building community, examining motivations, exchanging knowledge and fostering equitable collaboration and partnership. Participants also met University of Notre Dame students who have participated in the GPIC internship program and heard how each student's global engagement in palliative care has impacted their professional and personal development.

A Global Lens on a Shared Challenge

At the Summit, GPIC's engagement featured two complementary events: Dr. Richard Harding's plenary address which framed global inequities in palliative and end-of-life care and a breakout session focused on translating global impact into practical, local innovation.

Professor Harding's plenary challenged attendees to address unequal access to palliative and end-of-life care worldwide. He highlighted the scale of unmet need and the consistent drivers of high-quality palliative care across settings: person-centered care, community engagement, trained workforces and measurement that reflects what matters to patients and families. While grounded in global data, his message resonated with the U.S. audience. Workforce shortages, fragmented systems, inequitable access and misaligned metrics are not uniquely global problems – they are shared challenges that demand shared learning.

Prof. Richard Harding's keynote: Reducing the Final Inequity: Improving Access to Palliative and End-of-Life Care for All.

Lacey Ahern, executive director, with GPIC Advisory Council Members, Stephanie Johnston and Dr. Jim Cleary.

Building on the plenary, GPIC organized a breakout session, **"From Global Engagement to Local Impact,"** framed by the work of our ongoing Collaborating for Global Impact Initiative. The session focused on how innovations from global settings can inform U.S. practice – especially in rural, frontier and underserved communities. GPIC team members John Mastrojohn, Lacey Ahern and Lydia Thomas were joined by Dr. Mark Stollenberg, physician and assistant professor of medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard University, who presented his experiences in partnership formation, and Dr. Jim Cleary, physician and board chair, Worldwide Hospice and Palliative Care Alliance, who presented challenges with access to opioids globally and the need for global collaboration to solve this problem.

Click here to read more about the Pre-Summit global palliative care workshop.

Click here to read more about GPIC's engagement during the 2026 NPHI Summit.

Global Palliative Care Leaders Gather at 79th World Health Assembly to Address Access to Pain Management

At the 79th World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva, GPIC joined health leaders, clinicians, advocates and policymakers who came together to discuss a shared goal: to ensure that everyone, everywhere, can access effective care for pain. This gathering shone a light on one of the most overlooked challenges in global health and palliative care – pain that touches people across every disease, community and health system, yet too often goes untreated.

Pain is one of the most universal experiences of illness and injury. But while medicine has made remarkable progress in understanding and treating pain, that progress hasn't reached everyone. Today, millions of people still endure needless suffering because their pain is overlooked or left untreated. This is more than a medical gap – it's a matter of dignity and fairness.

Dr. Megan Doherty presenting on "Why Pain Matters for Global Health" at the WHA side event hosted by the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP).

This event brought attention to areas where the need for better pain care is especially urgent:

- **Pain in serious illness and palliative care** – comfort and dignity for those facing life-limiting conditions
- **Neuropathic pain in leprosy** – relief for a community too often forgotten
- **Pain in emergency and humanitarian settings** – care for people in crisis, when they are most vulnerable

Read more from Dr. Megan Doherty's report on the event.

Prof. Julia Downing introduced the "Close the Gap" campaign to reduce inequities in pain management and palliative care for children.

Rickard Wickell, World Health Organization liaison for the IASP, who hosted the event.

GPIC was also invited to attend the first meeting of an emerging interfaith palliative care advocacy network organized by the International Association of Hospice and Palliative Care (IAHPC). This was an interactive discussion with palliative care champions and leaders from various faiths represented – all with a shared interest of strengthening faith engagement in the advancement of palliative care globally. Read more from IAHPC on the event.

Close the Gap: Palliative Care for Children Everywhere

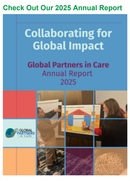
Millions of children around the world still suffer needlessly because they can't access palliative care and essential health services. ICPCN's new **#CloseTheGap** campaign – coordinated through the WHO-convened Palliative Care Working Group – is calling for urgent, coordinated action to make sure every child who needs palliative care can get it, no matter where they live. A growing global coalition has already endorsed the campaign. You can join them, explore the policy briefs and watch the launch webinar on the campaign page.

Show your support for the campaign.

Does Palliative Care Have a Role to Play in Addressing Gender-based Violence?

Thank you to everyone who joined us for this important conversation, co-hosted with the African Palliative Care Association. The webinar explored the often-overlooked intersection of palliative care and gender-based violence. We were especially proud to spotlight two **GPIC interns** as presenters: **Emily Karalus** and **Lauren Johns.** Their research and perspective brought real depth to the discussion – a wonderful example of how our interns are supporting our partners to advance the field of palliative care.

Check Out Our 2025 Annual Report



2025 was a year of growth and connection for GPIC. We are grateful for your support, collaboration and partnership.

Read our 2025 Annual Report.

Innovative Solutions to Delivering Palliative Care in Africa

We were honored to take part in a webinar, "Innovative solutions to delivering Palliative Care in Africa: Irish African Partnerships," hosted by the Irish Global Health Network and the African Palliative Care Association.

Our executive director, Lacey Ahern, was featured as a speaker alongside Mark Bikosa Mwesiga MPH, Dr. Trish Scanlan, Sr. Jane Frances, Jean Callanan and Dr. Eve Namisango. The panel explored innovative and partnership-based approaches to palliative care – highlighting children's and elderly care models, community engagement, strategic advocacy and creative fundraising.

Watch the recording here.

Stay Tuned...Exciting Changes Are on the Horizon for GPIC!

Over the last year, we have sought feedback from many of you, evaluated our programs and developed a strategic plan for the future of Global Partners in Care. Later this year, we will launch our new strategic direction and a slight rebranding of the organization. Stay in touch with us to learn more about our exciting updates!

For more frequent updates on our work, join us on LinkedIn! We post about global palliative care opportunities, stories from our network and more.

Support Global Partners in Care

Thanks to your generosity, we have been able to connect people, opportunities and resources in new ways to have a greater impact in palliative care across the globe. With your support, we will continue to advance collaborations and innovations that expand access to compassionate and high-quality palliative care for all. Join us!

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