

Policies and advocacy toward upgrading the 2015 Philippine status from being the 3rd worst place to die in the world (78th out of 80 countries) to 38th place in the cross-country comparison of expert assessments of the Quality of Death and Dying 2021



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The 2015 Quality of Death Index
Ranking palliative care across the world
A report by The Economist Intelligence Unit



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The Philippines is the 3rd worst place to die.

Among other concerns, it has a severe shortage of specialists trained in palliative care and no process for accrediting medical professionals in the field.

Worst places to die (2015)

Background:

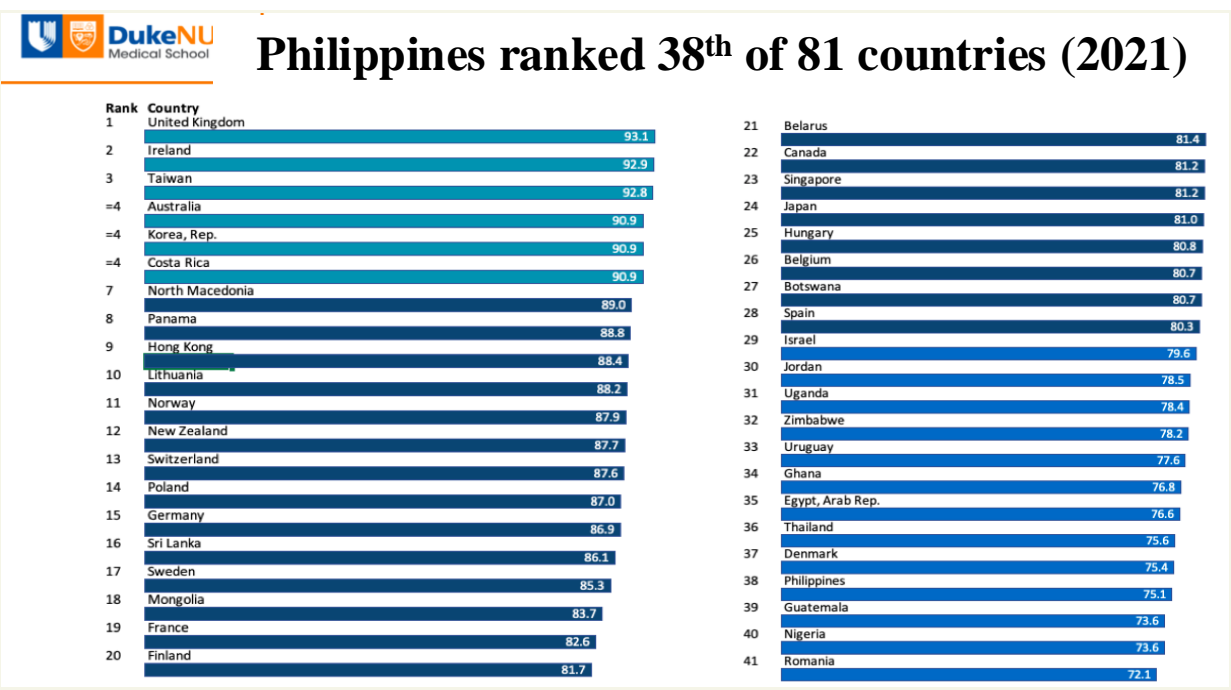
In 2014, the World Health Assembly (WHA) approved the Resolution urging national governments to carry out actions to develop palliative and end-of-life care.

Objectives:

To advocate for and develop policies and actions toward advancing palliative and end-of-life care in the Philippines.

Methods

The national movement to promote palliative and hospice care started in the early 2000s. In 2012, the Palcare Hospice Foundation organized the First Regional Conference on Palliative and Hospice Care. In July 2013, a House Bill entitled “Hospice and Palliative Care Act: Integrating Palliative and Hospice Care into the Philippine Health Care System” was filed in Congress. The bill passed the lower house in January 2015. The 2015 Quality of Death Index has listed the Philippines, out of 80 countries, as one of the worst places to die. The country scored poorly regarding the quality of end-of-life care available. In December 2015, the Department of Health (DOH) issued an Administrative Order, the “National Policy for Palliative and Hospice Care in the Philippines.”



Results

In 2019, two landmark bills were enacted: the National Integrated Cancer Control Act (NICCA) and the Universal Health Care (UHC) Law. In 2021, The Department of Health-Manual of Operations, Procedures, and Standards (DOH-MOPS) for the National Palliative and Hospice Care Program was launched. As a result of these efforts, in 2021, the global ranking of the Philippines in the Cross Country Comparison of Expert Assessment of the Quality of Death and Dying rose to 38th.

In November 2023, the Department of Health (DOH), in partnership with Jose B. Lingad Memorial General Hospital (JBLMGH), led the development of the first Philippine Clinical Practice Guideline (CPG) on palliative and end-of-life care (PEOL) for adult patients with cancer. This local CPG will be used for policy and benefit package development and disseminated widely through various channels.

Conclusion

This year, 2024, will see the roll-out of primary care physicians nationwide training on palliative and end-of-life care using the DOH-MOPS and the Philippine CPG. The DOH’s vision is to provide comprehensive cancer care and optimized cancer survival by 2025. For those who will not be able to survive cancer, it is hoped that the trained primary care physicians will still be able to render quality end-of-life so that most seriously ill Filipinos will die in comfort and with dignity.



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