

# MEDIA RELEASE



**Palliative  
Care  
Australia**

## Palliative Care Australia Inc.

Suite 4, 37 Geills Court, Deakin ACT 2600 | PO Box 24, Deakin West, ACT 2600  
t: 02 6232 4433 | f: 02 6232 4434 | w: [www.palliativecare.org.au](http://www.palliativecare.org.au) | e: [pcainc@palliativecare.org.au](mailto:pcainc@palliativecare.org.au)

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012

## **‘Together it is possible’ – making a difference this World Cancer Day**

Palliative Care Australia (PCA) and the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) are using World Cancer Day, 4 February 2012, as an opportunity to highlight the fact that each year tens of millions of people around the world with life-threatening illnesses suffer unnecessarily from severe pain because they lack access to palliative care and pain relieving medications.

‘We are facing a global crisis,’ said Dr Yvonne Luxford, PCA Chief Executive Officer. ‘The UICC’s Global Access to Pain Relief Initiative estimates that 3.3 million terminal cancer patients die each year without getting adequate pain treatment. That is too many people suffering preventable pain at the end of their lives.’

The majority of these deaths occur in low to middle income countries, including some of our closest neighbours in the Asia-Pacific region. ‘Recent studies have shown that half of the countries in the Asia-Pacific have no palliative care provision and no access to opioid medications whatsoever,’ said Dr Luxford. ‘We need to questions ourselves in Australia – could we do more to help?’

PCA is holding a screening of the award-winning documentary *LIFE before Death* on 8 February to raise awareness of these issues. The film uses powerful footage gathered from 11 countries to illustrate the consequences of the lack of effective pain treatment and palliative care services. Filmmakers Mike Hill and Sue Collins will be in Canberra for the screening, ‘To date, there has been insufficient media coverage of the topic that would arouse enough public concern to drive change. There is almost zero public understanding that the solution to this appalling problem is essentially simple,’ they said.

‘We urge every Australian to use World Cancer Day to make a pledge to join in the global fight against cancer, untreated pain, and access to palliative care.’

Visit <http://www.worldcancerday.org/> for more information.

## **Ends**

Contact: Claire Maskell – PCA National Communications Officer – 02 6232 4433/0406 258 722

PCA is the peak national organisation representing the interests and aspirations of all  
who share the ideal of quality care at the end of life

*Patron: Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia*

**About Palliative Care Australia**

Palliative Care Australia is the peak national organisation representing the interests and aspirations of all who share the ideal of quality care at the end of life. PCA works to raise awareness of palliative and end of life care, improve the understanding and availability of services across Australia, and encourage discussion to support improved knowledge networks.

**About UICC**

UICC is a membership organisation that exists to help the global health community accelerate the fight against cancer. Founded in 1933 and based in Geneva, UICC's growing membership of over 460 organisations across 120 countries, features the world's major cancer societies, ministries of health, research institutes and patient groups. Together with its members, the World Health Organization, World Economic Forum and other key partners, UICC is tackling the growing cancer crisis on a global scale.

UICC has responsibility for the World Cancer Declaration, World Cancer Day, World Cancer Congress and the World Cancer Leaders' Summit. Additionally, it is a founding member of the NCD Alliance, a global civil society network that now represents almost 2,000 NCD organisations in 170 countries.

**About LIFE before Death**

LIFE Before Death is a multi-award winning documentary series that asks the fundamental question underpinning our mortality. The project is presented by the Lien Foundation and produced by Moonshine Movies.

This beautifully filmed journey takes us to 11 countries as we follow the remarkable health care professionals battling the sweeping epidemic of pain that threatens to condemn one in every ten of us to an agonising and shameful death. Through the eyes of patients and their families we discover the inherent humanity that empowers the best of us to care for those beyond cure

LIFE Before Death has received four international film awards and is narrated by acclaimed British actor David Suchet (Poirot, Maxwell). From February 1 the public are invited to support the cause and purchase the Special Edition 2-Disc DVD Box Set from <http://www.lifebeforedeath.com/Movie/index.shtml>