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**Press release**

For immediate release

**Hospice and the Department of Correctional Services partner in palliative care**

Palliative care is a human right for all those suffering from life-threatening illnesses. Everyone, including those in prisons, has a right to receive quality medical care including palliative care. Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing problems associated with life threatening illnesses, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychological and spiritual. Palliative care can be provided in any setting including correctional services facilities.

**PARTNERING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES:**

The Hospice Palliative Care Association of South Africa (HPCA) together with the Department of Correctional Services of KwaZulu-Natal have signed a Service Level Agreement to facilitate the establishment of palliative care programmes within correctional services facilities and have implemented a pilot programme to provide palliative care to offenders in two facilities in KwaZulu-Natal. The goal of the programme is to offer quality palliative care to offenders, awaiting trial detainees and the accompanying children of female offenders by offering training and mentorship of health care providers and care givers.

The partnership also seeks to address effective and efficient referral of patients to palliative care providers should they be released or placed back in the community on medical parole through Community Corrections.

**HOSPICE'S RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Hospice's main role is to support the development of palliative care services in correctional service facilities through mentorship and training of staff. It also provides input on the principles and practice of palliative care plus assists and supports the development of policies, procedures and standards for palliative care in these facilities.

## THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES' RESPONSIBILITIES:

The DCS's main responsibility is to create and maintain the hospice programmes in Correctional Facilities and to develop specific policies and procedures for palliative care in a correctional environment. The Department is also responsible for identifying the needs for hospice and palliative care in the various facilities and the different training needs. The Department also has the responsibility of ensuring that appropriate patients receive the appropriate medication.

## ESTABLISHING THE PILOT PROGRAMME:

Pietermaritzburg Med A partnered with Msundusi Hospice, and Durban Med B partnered with Highway Hospice. Both have been identified as the pilot sites for the introduction of the palliative care programme into correctional facilities in KwaZulu-Natal. Once the pilot programmes have proved to be successful after an initial trial period of 12 months, they will be implemented into other facilities across the region.

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