

From Policy to Practice: Integrating Palliative Care Into Public Health Systems in Low- and Middle-Income Countries - Lessons, Barriers, and Innovations From the Western Cape Province

Pre-Congress Side Event

Saturday 5 September 2026 • 12:00–3:30 PM • CTICC (Cape Town International Convention Centre)

About

In 2017, South Africa adopted a National Policy Framework and Strategy for Palliative Care aimed at integrating palliative care into public sector health services. Historically, palliative care services had largely been provided by non-governmental organisations and hospices, contributing to significant inequities in access, particularly within lower- and middle-income country contexts where fewer than 20% of individuals requiring palliative care were able to access these services. In response, the Western Cape Department of Health and Wellness launched its provincial implementation strategy in 2018, guided by a health systems strengthening approach aligned to the World Health Organization health system building blocks.

This pre-congress workshop will critically reflect on the Western Cape's journey from policy development to implementation practice between 2018 and 2026, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as both a disruptor of routine services and a catalyst for strengthening palliative care integration. The workshop will explore key barriers, enabling factors, economic factors, innovations, and implementation lessons emerging from efforts to embed palliative care within public sector health services.

Structured as a participatory and collaborative learning space, the session will combine short presentations with facilitated interactive dialogue, scenario-based engagement, and shared reflection among participants from diverse global public health contexts. Particular emphasis will be placed on implementation experiences relevant to lower- and middle-income countries, health equity, workforce capacity building, and cross-sector collaboration.

The workshop aims to strengthen global dialogue on palliative care integration, promote shared learning across regions and disciplines, and support the translation of policy into sustainable public health practice through collective reflection on practical implementation challenges, opportunities, and innovations.

Registration

Please contact: Juanita.Arendse@westerncape.gov.za

Speakers

- Dr Juanita O. Arendse
- Dr Jennie Morgan
- Dr Katya Evans
- Dr Rene Krause
- Dr Nousheena Firfirey-Brijlal

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