

The Role of Nursing in Palliative Care Policy  
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Globally, nurses play a key role in the development and delivery of palliative care programs. Research has demonstrated that nurses are cost effective health care professionals, frequently living and working in communities where it is often impossible and/or impracticable to retain more costly health care providers. Indeed, in many developing countries, nurses are the sole providers of professional health care. Survey after survey confirms that nurses hold the public trust – which is an integral component to the delivery of effective and efficient palliative care programs. Due to nursing's unique role within the mosaic of society, the profession has a history of advocating for quality patient care. The growing capacity to provide effective health care, together with diminishing economic means to sustain the capacity indefinitely, creates the circumstances for the conflict between individual rights to health care and the states responsibility to provide it. Health care as a private and common good is at the centre of this struggle of distributive justice. This conflict is economic and political as well as moral. Palliative care policies must be recognized as an important global public health issue that is regarded as an inherent Human Right for all global citizens as outlined in Article 25, United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 2001. The profession of nursing collectively and in collaboration with other members of the health care team, must develop a stronger leadership role in the development of healthy public policy initiatives in general and more specifically in palliative care.