



Hospice
Foundation of
Taiwan

HFT Newsletter

Forever Love, Endless Care

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Receives the 34th Medical Contribution Award,
the Group Contribution Award**

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The Hospice Foundation of Taiwan Receives the 34th Medical Contribution Award, the Group Contribution Award

The Hospice Foundation of Taiwan (HFT) has been honored with the Group Contribution Award at the 34th Medical Contribution Awards. This prestigious recognition recognizes HFT's significant contributions in advancing hospice care and life education since its establishment. Over the past 34 years, HFT has tirelessly dedicated itself to ensuring patients with severe illnesses receive appropriate care. HFT's mission centers on fostering compassion within society for patients, their families, and caregivers. Additionally, it has played an active role in promoting and developing hospice care and life education, leaving a profound and lasting impact in these fields.



30 Years of Commitment, Changing the Culture of End-of-Life Care

At the award ceremony, Minister of Health and Welfare Tai-Yuan Chiu served as the keynote speaker and personally presented the award to HFT. He praised HFT for pioneering hospice care in Taiwan and planting the first seeds of this vital service. Minister Chiu reflected on the establishment of Taiwan's first hospice ward at Mackay Memorial Hospital in 1990, emphasizing how hospitals have persevered in offering

this meaningful service despite financial pressures. Subsequently, Cardinal Tien Hospital and National Taiwan University Hospital also followed suit in setting up hospice wards, further advancing the field. Minister Chiu's presentation of the Group Contribution Award was a heartfelt acknowledgement of HFT's unwavering efforts and long-term impact on end-of-life care in Taiwan.


At the ceremony, Foundation Chairman Shou-Chuan Shih reflected on the organization's journey over the years. He observed that, more than 30 years ago, discussions about life and death were widely considered taboo in society,



and many patients faced futile and painful treatments in the final stages of their lives. However, thanks to HFT's professional education and advocacy efforts, societal attitudes toward end-of-life care have undergone a meaningful transformation. Chairman Shih remarked, "These achievements stem from our persistent efforts and reflect society's strong desire for a dignified and peaceful end of life."

Advancing Localized Hospice Care and Long-term Support for Diverse Communities

As society increasingly embraces the concept of hospice care, many medical institutions have begun adapting their approaches to supporting terminally ill patients. CEO Jaffa Chang emphasized that HFT is committed to advancing localized hospice care, enabling patients to face the end of life in the comfort of



familiar surroundings. Additionally, HFT aims to address the long-term care needs of diverse communities. Chang highlighted a future focus on the care of individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities, expressing optimism that with support from various sectors, hospice care will continue to advance and flourish.

Deepening the Roots of Hospice Care for the Future

Since its founding, the Hospice Foundation of Taiwan has actively collaborated with medical institutions across the nation. From its early efforts to promote the establishment and operation of hospice wards to providing specialized training for healthcare professionals and raising public awareness, HFT has been relentless in its mission. These endeavors have enabled countless patients to receive dignified end-of-life care while fostering greater societal awareness of the importance of a peaceful passing, ultimately transforming traditional perceptions of terminal care.

This year's Medical Contribution Award signifies widespread recognition of HFT's enduring efforts by both the society and various professional communities. HFT remains committed to its mission of advancing hospice care, striving to provide patients and their families with more comprehensive, compassionate, and human-centered services. Chairman Shou-Chuan Shih emphasized: "Every milestone we've achieved on this journey is the result of collective efforts from HFT and all sectors of society. We will continue to work toward making hospice care accessible, ensuring that everyone in need receives the dignity and care they deserve."

A New Chapter in Leadership

As of October 14, 2024, Jaffa Chang has assumed the role of CEO of the Hospice Foundation of Taiwan, succeeding Lin Yi-Yin. The foundation thanks Lin for her dedicated leadership and remains committed to advancing hospice care.


Journeying the Long Road of Palliative Care: Paving the Way to a Dignified End of Life

The Hospice Foundation of Taiwan (HFT) has been established for 34 years. Beginning in its third decade, HFT has organized international conferences to showcase Taiwan's capabilities in hospice care. It has actively supported the promotion of the Patient Right to Autonomy Act, undertaking the training of consultants and ensuring the proper implementation of the law's core principles. Simultaneously, HFT has extended the concept of hospice care into the realm of long-term care, allowing palliative care to flourish not only in hospitals and homes but also within care facilities, where it continues to blossom and bring comfort to those in need.



In alignment with the 2024 theme for World Hospice and Palliative Care Day, set by the Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance (WHPCA), it is worth reflecting on a 2014 call by the

World Health Assembly (WHA) urging nations worldwide to integrate and strengthen palliative care within their healthcare systems. Taiwan, however, began its journey in palliative and hospice care as early as 2000. Throughout this journey, HFT has remained a steadfast partner, starting with advocacy and education, and



advancing to support the legislative and policy implementation of related laws. Today, Taiwan continues to progress towards a patient-centered approach that respects medical autonomy and self-determination.

Hosting the APHC for the Second Time: Declaring Taiwan's Readiness

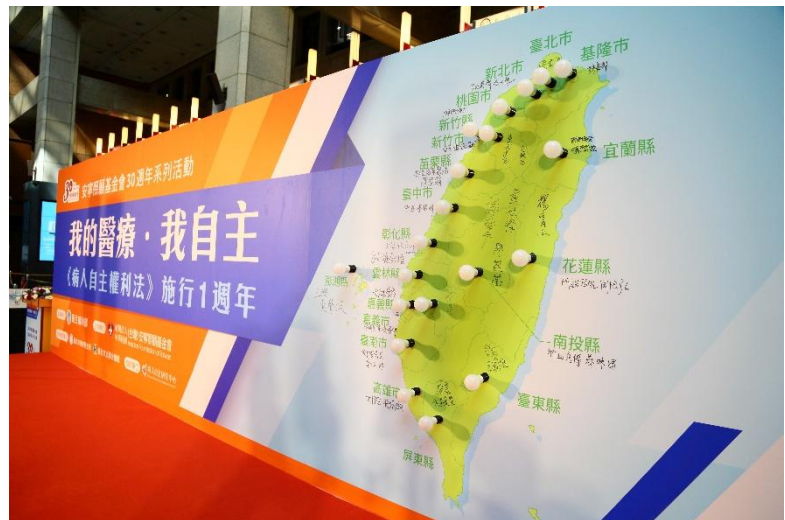
"The year after the WHA's global call to action, Taiwan—recognized as one of the leading nations in the Asia-Pacific region for hospice and palliative care development—undertook the significant responsibility of hosting the 11th Asia Pacific Hospice Palliative Care Conference (APHC)," recalled Yi-Yin Lin, the then-CEO of HFT. Reflecting on the impactful year of 2015, Lin highlighted that the conference attracted over 1,315 hospice care professionals from 24 countries. "It not only set a new attendance record in APHC history, but also marked Taiwan as the first country in the Asia-Pacific region to have hosted the APHC twice."

"When the Hospice Foundation of Taiwan submitted its application to host the conference, our aim was to showcase Taiwan's strength in hospice care and demonstrate our achievements to the international community," Lin recalled. At the time, Taiwan had already achieved significant milestones in areas such as developing clinical hospital wards, coordinated care, and home-based care models; the inclusion of non-cancer terminal illnesses in national health insurance coverage, the successful amendment of the Hospice-Palliative Care Act, the promotion of spiritual care and also of advance care planning. "Through this international conference, we declared not only that Taiwan was ready but that we were also at the forefront of global hospice care development."

Facilitating the Implementation of the Patient Right to Autonomy Act: Realizing the True Essence of a Dignified End of Life


Following the successful conclusion of the APHC, HFT faced its next challenge: assisting the government in promoting the “Patient Right to Autonomy Act” (PRAA), which was passed in its third reading by the Legislative Yuan on December 18, 2015.

The PRAA is Taiwan’s first patient-centered medical legislation and the first comprehensive law in Asia to fully safeguard patients’ autonomy. It revolutionized the traditional healthcare perspective by prioritizing



patients as the central decision-makers, ensuring their rights to informed consent, choice, and decision-making. Unlike previous laws, it applies not only to terminal patients but also extends the right to choose a dignified end-of-life path to individuals with various clinical conditions.

"The PRAA was officially announced by the President in 2016 and took effect in 2019. During the three-year period, HFT undertook numerous responsibilities," explained Yi-Yin Lin. In addition to raising public awareness about the PRAA, HFT convened expert meetings and conducted training sessions to clarify the distinctions



between the PRAA and the Hospice Palliative Care Act (HPCA), addressing areas where the overarching law lacked precision. HFT also actively trained instructors to support relevant personnel, ensuring that the PRAA could be effectively implemented and applied in clinical settings.

In just three years, the Hospice Foundation of Taiwan, in collaboration with Taipei City Hospital, launched core instructor workshops and Advance Care Planning (ACP) consultation training courses. This effort helped establish comprehensive consultation teams across all 22 counties and cities in Taiwan. As the first country in the world to implement the Patient Right to Autonomy Act, Yi-Yin Lin acknowledged that the training process was challenging and without precedent. As the official implementation date approached, the pressure on HFT intensified. Fortunately, the results were rewarding, with numerous heartfelt stories emerging from clinical consultations once the PRAA was officially put into practice.

Dr. Ping-Jen Chen, a family medicine specialist at Kaohsiung Medical University Chung-Ho Memorial Hospital, shared one such story: A single mother with cancer brought her two adult children to a consultation session. During the session, the mother expressed her wish to spare her children the emotional burden of making difficult medical decisions on her behalf in the future. She explained that they had discussed these matters extensively at home before coming to the hospital to formalize her Advance Decision (AD).

Even though it was evident that the family had thoroughly considered their decision, the consultation staff carefully explained each medical option covered by the PRAA. When asked whether she would accept Artificial Nutrition and Hydration to extend her life briefly, her children assumed she would decline. However, to their surprise,


the mother resolutely accepted the decision, explaining with moving sincerity: “If IV nutrition can help me live a few more months, I’ll have a few more months to spend with my children.”

“This is the kind of love that shines through the consultation process,” Yi-Yin Lin remarked. “The son never expected his typically easygoing mother to willingly endure more pain in her final stages of life, just to spend more time with them.” Lin emphasized that while the legal framework is complex, it depends on the trained teams to guide individuals and their families through meaningful discussions about life, death, and personal values. This, she stated, encapsulates the core spirit of the PRAA.



The Next Decade: Advancing Palliative Care in Long-Term Care

Beyond assisting the government in refining regulations, the Hospice Foundation of Taiwan has long set its sights on the future. As early as 2014, HFT identified a significant and underserved group in need of hospice and palliative care: elderly residents in long-term care facilities, who had been excluded from hospice care



services. These individuals were left waiting for the compassionate touch of hospice and palliative care they deserved. In response, HFT proactively engaged with long-term care institutions, hosting seminars and gradually introducing principles of palliative care into this sector. Additionally, It trained long-term care staff to become seeds of palliative care awareness, enabling them to deliver this much-needed care to elderly individuals.

"However, challenges abound in the long-term care setting," explained Yi-Yin Lin. Issues such as a shortage of caregiving staff, established caregiving practices, and a lack of medical support pose significant barriers to implementing hospice care in these facilities. Despite these obstacles, HFT has never considered giving up. Instead, it has sought solutions to empower long-term care institutions that lack the necessary resources. By organizing both online and offline training sessions, HFT hopes to gradually integrate hospice care principles into long-term care practices. In addition to focusing on long-term care facilities, HFT also recognizes the needs of elderly people in rural areas, working tirelessly to assist clinic doctors and nurses to bring palliative care to even the most remote communities.

"This journey is still a long one, but isn't the hardest part always the beginning?" Yi-Yin Lin remarked. With the government's decision in June 2022 to officially include terminally frail elderly in the National Health Insurance's palliative care coverage, Lin is even more optimistic: "Looking back over the past decade, Taiwan has achieved many remarkable milestones in palliative care. As for what we aim to accomplish in the next decade—we have already begun."

The *Namaste Care* Movement Reaches Taiwan

In 2003, Joyce Simard, a U.S. social worker with over 40 years of experience in long-term care, developed the Namaste Care model to provide better care for patients with advanced dementia. This approach emphasizes gentle touch, individualized attention, and meaningful activities to improve patients' quality of life while promoting their psychological and emotional well-being.



With Taiwan on the brink of becoming a super-aged society, the development of hospice and palliative care is entering a new phase. By 2020, the Namaste Care model had spread to 11 countries, and its influence reached Taiwan in 2024. The increasing

number of frail elderly and dementia patients presents new challenges for palliative care professionals. According to the Global Quality of Death and Dying Index 2021, terminally ill patients prioritize pain management and alleviation of discomfort in their final days, followed by a quiet and safe environment. However, for frail and dementia patients, environmental comfort and the respect and acceptance of caregivers are often more important than symptom management. The essence of Namaste Care lies in honoring those under care, reducing their fear of death through companionship, and helping them rediscover peace, joy, and a sense of being loved.

In response, under the recommendation of the International Namaste Care Association, Dr. Ying-Wei Wang, former Director-General of Taiwan's Health

Promotion Administration and current Board Member of the Hospice Foundation of Taiwan and Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital Palliative Care Center, reached out to the Namaste Care representative for Asia—the Hong Kong Chinese Christian Churches Union Kwong Yum Care Home. Wang invited instructors from Kwong Yum Care Home to lead hands-on workshops in Taiwan, leveraging the center’s experience in establishing the Spiritual End of Life Care Center two years prior. These workshops aimed to help Taiwan learn and integrate Namaste Care practices, with the goal of developing a uniquely Taiwanese version of the Namaste Care model.



In early August, Vennus Yuen-Wai Ho, Superintendent of the Kwong Yum Care Home, along with On-Chun Lau, Social Service Officer, and Hau-Yi Yuen, Manager of the Spiritual End of Life Care

Center, conducted two online educational training sessions. Later, in mid-August, the three instructors visited Taiwan, holding hands-on workshops in Taipei, Taichung, and Hualien. These workshops invited palliative care professionals interested in Namaste Care to participate. Upon completing the foundational training for beginners, participants were awarded an international Namaste Care certificate.


Elderly individuals in advanced stages of illness face challenges beyond physical decline and multiple chronic conditions. Their cognition, sensory perception, functional abilities, social interactions, and emotions are all affected. As their ability to manage daily tasks and solve problems diminishes, and brain function

deteriorates, they often experience anxiety, loss of motivation, and heightened sensitivity. The Namaste Care model provides nine core principles: dignity, family, life story, meaningfulness, comfort, ease, nourishment, the five senses, and presence. "Person-centered Namaste Care values the elderly's individual life, background, interests, and abilities, responding appropriately to their needs and tailoring a personalized care plan," explains Ying-Wei Wang. By creating a calm and comfortable environment and offering sensory stimulation—such as touch massage, soothing or rhythmic music, and aromatherapy—caregivers can alleviate the anxiety that many elderly patients experience.

Furthermore, Namaste Care encourages interdisciplinary teams to conduct comprehensive assessments and collaborate with the elderly and their family to discuss an Advance Care Plan (ACP). This process ensures the elderly's wishes are heard and respected without judgment or imposing expectations, allowing them to express themselves authentically. If the elderly choose not to participate in the activity, their decision should be honored. Various forms of spiritual support help maintain their confidence and hope during the later stages of life. Taiwan has long embraced diverse palliative therapies, including essential oil massages, aromatherapy, and music therapy. This indicates that the foundational elements of Namaste Care are already present in Taiwan, and the next step is to integrate and adapt these practices to suit the local cultural context.



In early December, coinciding with a seminar in Hong Kong featuring Namaste Care founder Joyce Simard, UK's Rishi Jawaheer, and Australia's Sara Karacsony, Taiwan invited them,



along with Hong Kong's Kwong Yum Care Home Superintendent Vennus Yuen-Wai Ho to visit Taiwan. During their visit, the experts participated in an international Namaste Care conference, sharing experiences of implementing Namaste Care across different countries. The conference also showcased the early efforts following the August workshops, with Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital and Taitung St. Mary's Hospital beginning to implement Namaste Care. The dedication of professionals striving to honor and meet the needs of their elderly clients was remarkable, vividly demonstrating the core spirit of Namaste Care.

Namaste Care is not just about physical care but also about soothing the spirit. Through multi-sensory stimulation and emotional support, Namaste Care helps the elderly in their final stages of life feel respected, loved, and accepted. This holistic approach requires caregivers not only to possess professional skills but also to build deep emotional and spiritual connections with those they care for, providing comprehensive support. The hope is that this heartfelt movement, born out of compassion, will grow into a powerful force that takes root and flourishes throughout Taiwan in the years to come.