

S10.1

Palliative Care

10:45 Convention Hall C

End-of-life Care in Singapore*Goh-fung CR**Asia Pacific Hospice Palliative Care Network; Division of Palliative Medicine, National Cancer Centre, Singapore*

Palliative care in Singapore started from the hospice movement. In 1986, volunteers at St Joseph's Home organised themselves to provide care for patients dying in their own homes. They first joined the Singapore Cancer Society and later formed their own organisation, now known as HCA Hospice Care. From the late 1980s to 1990s, various charitable organisations provided both inpatient hospice care and hospice home care.

The Singapore Ministry of Health started giving support to these charities, known as Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs) from 1990 in the form of grants, and later subventions that fund partially the services being provided. The policy then, as now, was that the government would fund acute care in hospitals, which were organised into business units wholly owned by a government holding company, but intermediate and long-term care would be provided by VWOs, licensed by the Ministry of Health. Development of these services would be guided by the various channels of funding provided by the government to accredited units.

A majority of deaths (over 60%) occur in hospitals, so currently, all government acute care hospitals have palliative care services, mostly consultative services. Step-down care in community hospitals is being ramped up, and all health clusters (currently re-organised to three) have community hospitals which have palliative care beds. This is in anticipation of the lack of caregivers to provide care at home now that families are smaller and two-income households are the norm. Hospice home care services run by VWOs continue to serve the majority of patients at home, enabling over 50% of these patients to die at home. A priority currently is the integration of palliative care into nursing homes to enable people to "age and die in place".