



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN  
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS

May I send my best wishes to all those taking part in this year's Palliative Care Week. The theme of this year's Week - 'It's more than you think' is a greatly important one, making as it does a profound statement regarding the generous reach of palliative care, which has been defined by the World Health Organisation as care that 'makes patients feel better'.

Palliative care is so often associated in our minds with end of life care, a resource to be drawn on when a patient is approaching the very final stage of their life's journey. We must remember, however, that for many people, palliative care is an intervention that enables them to live for many years with a serious medical condition, but one which no longer defines them.

By being kept as free as possible from any pain, suffering and mental stress and encouraged to engage in advance care planning, the quality of life of the patient is kept to the forefront of their care at all times, allowing them to live that life in comfort and peace.

It is greatly important, therefore, that as a society we understand the true nature of palliative care; that we do not shy away from it, avoid discussing it or considering it for ourselves or our loved ones due to fear or misinterpretation of its great value to those who are chronically or seriously ill.

I am deeply grateful to all those who have been involved in organising this year's Palliative Care Week, aimed at removing distressful or negative associations with the concept of palliative care. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those who work in palliative care, and who have impacted so positively on those for whom they care, bringing reassurance and relief into their lives and the lives of their loved ones.

I wish you every success during this awareness raising week, and I thank you all for your invaluable and greatly humane work.

Michael D. Higgins  
Uachtarán na hÉireann  
President of Ireland