

## PALLIATIVE CARE INITIATIVE: EASTERN EUROPE AND THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

In January 2000, the Open Society Institute announced a new initiative to enhance hospice and palliative care in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union — a three-year program co-sponsored by OSI's Public Health Program and the Project on Death in America. The initiative provides \$500,000 each year for health care professionals, associations, and organizations working to expand the capacity of programs in the countries of Eastern Europe to improve the care of the dying in this region.

The Eastern Europe Palliative Care Initiative has targeted initial funding efforts in the following program areas:

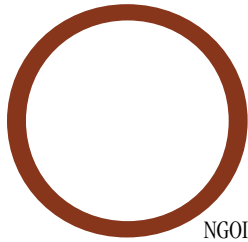
- Regional resource and training centers for professional education;
- Regional policy-maker meetings to convene health ministers, drug regulators, and economists to discuss health care policy and drug regulation and reform;
- Regional professional education programs to provide local and regional educational

opportunities for physicians, nurses, social workers, and pastoral care providers;

- National professional education programs to provide opportunities for physicians, nurses, social workers, and pastoral care providers;
- Palliative care scholarships for end-of-life care experts to spend time training at centers of excellence;
- Travel grants for health care professionals to attend international conferences;
- Grants to translate existing palliative care educational materials into local languages.

Of 200 applications for the first award-cycle, the EEPIC Initiative awarded 53 grants in Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia.

## COMMUNICATIONS



ONGOING public discussion is essential to a better understanding of the modern experience of dying, the options available to patients and families, and the obligations of communities to those approaching death. The Project on Death in America's communications program serves as the underpinning of our public information plan, conveying the mission of the project, and raising awareness of the work done by our grantees to improve care of the dying.

### Public and Professional Media

In the last six years the media has gone from treating death as a “taboo subject” to identifying both death and palliative care as topics of broad interest. PDIA serves as a resource center for the media, providing reporters and editors with the latest research and an extensive and knowledgeable roster of researchers, clinicians, educators, and direct service providers. PDIA's communications efforts have helped to expand knowledge and coverage of dying beyond the debate over physician-assisted suicide.

The PBS program *On Our Own Terms: Moyers on Dying*, which ran in September 2000, reached over 19

million viewers and featured over a dozen PDIA grantees and faculty scholars. The series drew an enormous audience, strong viewer reactions, and extensive media coverage. The series encouraged open, balanced national discourse that represents the complex issues patients and families face as they care for family members at home or in the hospital.

On a weekly and monthly basis, every major medical journal has had at least one, if not several, articles written by one of our faculty scholars, grantees, or board members. These original articles, commentaries, and editorials span discussions of the psychiatric, social, medical, legal, and economic issues confronting patients with serious life-threatening illness and have helped to frame the critical research information necessary to change hospital policies, professional education programs, and the economics of care.

### Publications

PDIA's newsletter, press releases, and research briefs comprise another component of efforts to address the national discourse. These materials are available on our website and are distributed to 8,000 individuals and organizations.

PDIA's website, [www.soros.org/death](http://www.soros.org/death), visited by over 500 people a day, is a continually expanding collection of information about the Project on Death in America and a gateway to resources on palliative care, dying, and bereavement. It includes detailed information on grant programs, including current funding initiative deadlines, application materials, a complete listing of grants funded, information about ongoing developments in the field, and extensive links to other initiatives and resources in end-of-life care.

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*Designer:* Jeanne Criscola/Criscola Design

*Printer:* Herlin Press, Inc.

*Photography:*

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Bastienne Schmidt and Phillippe Cheng received a PDIA grant for a photographic exploration of death and dying.

*At Night* by Deidre Scherer



SWEET BE

THEIR SLUMBER.



**“For most of human history, people died fast. Now suddenly, we have the opportunity to grow old, to have an illness for a long period of time, and to know what’s coming. We could make this an important phase of life.”**

Joanne Lynn

Americans for Better Care of the Dying



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