



Palliative Care Atlas of the Americas 2025

10 Key Insights for the region

01

High need, low legal coverage

Approximately **2,984,970 people require palliative care** each year in the Americas, yet only **10 countries (28.5%) include it** as a guaranteed service in their General Health Law at the primary care level.

02

Specialized services remain concentrated

A total of **10,526 specialized palliative care services** were identified, with a regional median of **0.33 per 100,000 inhabitants**. Only **Chile, Uruguay, the United States, and Costa Rica** exceed the target proposed by the WHO.

03

Pediatric coverage remains limited

Only **22 countries report having pediatric palliative care services** (375 in total), most of which are hospital-based and not integrated at the national level.

04

Opioid use and access remain unequal

Consumption ranges from **17 S-DDD in Venezuela to 18,178 S-DDD in the United States**. Only five countries guarantee the availability of immediate-release oral morphine in urban primary care settings.

05

Insufficient medical education

In **20 out of 35 countries**, medical students do not receive **mandatory palliative care training**. While some countries offer content in other disciplines, the reach remains limited.

06

Medical specialization and multiprofessional training

13 countries offer official medical specialization in palliative care, and at least six more provide formally recognized diplomas. **Uruguay, El Salvador, and Costa Rica** stand out for offering interdisciplinary training programs.

07

Limited scientific research

Only **Canada and the United States** report a very **high level** of scientific output. 15 countries hold dedicated national palliative care congresses at least once every three years.



08

Evolving policy frameworks

12 countries have approved **specific palliative care laws**, while only three countries—**Chile, Uruguay, and the United States**—report **national policies on Advance Care Planning (ACP)**.

09

Weak governance structures

Only **five countries**, such as Uruguay and Chile, have a **well-defined technical authority** within the Ministry of Health responsible for coordinating palliative care.

10

Community engagement and civil society involvement

More than **30 countries** report **active community engagement**, and **23** countries have **national palliative care associations** leading education, advocacy, and public awareness initiatives.