



### **Dr. Naheed Dosani: Winner of the 2019 CSPCP Humanitarian Award**

The Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians (CSPCP) is pleased to award the 2019 Humanitarian Award to Dr. Naheed Dosani, in recognition of his outstanding work in Canada with the homeless and vulnerably-housed population. Dr. Dosani treats an often-neglected population with dignity and compassion, whether in a shelter or on the street.

As a first generation Canadian with refugee parents, Dr. Naheed Dosani grew up understanding the challenges of social injustice, inequity and poverty. While training at McMaster University, he gained an understanding of health inequity in Canada and abroad by working in downtown Toronto and by travelling to Cambodia and Kenya to provide medical aid.

During his family medicine residency at a downtown Toronto shelter, Dr. Dosani had an experience with a homeless man who was dying of cancer, suffering with mental health issues and addictions. Despite working closely with the man to develop trust and a pain management plan, Dosani returned to the shelter one morning to learn that his patient was found dead on the street having overdosed the night before.

The experience had profound effect on Dosani and the trajectory of his career, motivating him to find ways to bridge the gap from the policy level to the individual level.

During his final year of residency in palliative care at the University of Toronto, Dosani approached the Inner City Health Associates (ICHA) with an idea: to expand ICHA's primary and mental health programs for the homeless and those with unreliable housing to include palliative care needs for those with life-limiting illness.

After a year of planning, Dosani founded and launched Palliative Education And Care for the Homeless (PEACH) on the day he graduated in July 2014.

PEACH delivers community-based hospice palliative care to society's most vulnerable

individuals regardless of their housing status or factors such as poverty or substance use. The program brings housing, mental health and healthcare providers together to plan an individual's care while recognizing, but not judging, that person's circumstances.

This model of care has inspired similar programs in other cities across the continent, including Edmonton, Calgary, Victoria and Seattle. In February 2018, Dr. Dosani received a Meritorious Service Cross from Governor General Julie Payette, for being a trailblazer in providing mobile end-of-life care for the homeless and those with unreliable housing.

Dr. Dosani also led the development of Journey Home Hospice, Toronto's first hospice for the homeless which opened in May 2018. The four-bed hospice provides clinical, psychosocial and homecare for homeless and vulnerably housed people living on the streets, in shelters, rooming houses, subsidized housing and acute care settings.

Perhaps the most important indirect impact of Dr. Dosani's work is on raising awareness of the critical need to support the provision of palliative care to the homeless and vulnerably housed. His tireless advocacy efforts include education and research, an active social media presence and coverage in national print and broadcast media. He frequently presents to medical students, physicians, and interprofessional colleagues. His work has also led to \$2M in funding to support 11 projects in Ontario to improve the palliative care needs of this population.

Dr. Dosani's colleagues note that in his work with patients, he consistently provides loving, compassionate and sensitive care and he treats every patient with incredible dignity and respect. He is described as "a striking example about what is best about the profession of medicine and especially about what is best about palliative care."