M.R. Rajagopal, MD

FATHER OF PALLIATIVE CARE IN INDIA | 2018 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE NOMINEE

Modeling How Each One of Us Can Gently Change the World

"Alternately wearing the hats of clinician, health program administrator, academic, spokesperson and activist, Dr. Rajagopal has been a major global force behind efforts to implement and promote the right of patients with severe pain to live and die with dignity."

— remarks delivered at the awarding of Dr. Raj’s Alison Des Forges Award for Extraordinary Activism from Human Rights Watch

M.R. Rajagopal, MD, or Dr. Raj as he’s known, is an anesthetist who became the leading advocate for pain management and palliative care in India. He was also a mentor in OhioHealth’s Leadership Development Initiative.

In January 2018, Dr. Raj received India’s highest civilian honor – the Padma Shri. Now, he is a nominee for the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize. His story and passion for palliative care unfolds in the film Hippocratic: 18 Experiments in Gently Shaking the World, narrated by David Suchet, CBE.

After his training, Dr. Rajagopal travelled all over rural Kerala to offer pain relief to patients too sick to come to his clinic. In 1993 he and his colleagues founded the Pain and Palliative Care Society. Two years later, it was recognized as a model demonstration project by the World Health Organization and eventually became the largest palliative care center in India. Now it is widely recognized as the most successful community-based palliative care program in the world. In 2003, Dr. Rajagopal founded Pallium India, a charitable trust that aims to improve the coverage and accessibility of quality palliative care in India. In 2006, he founded the Trivandrum Institute of Palliative Sciences.

Dr. Rajagopal was among the first to frame access to pain relief as a human right. In 1997, he and a fellow doctor filed a successful complaint with the Delhi High Court, arguing that the government had an obligation to provide pain treatment. When the government failed to implement the resulting ruling, Dr. Rajagopal and several others initiated a public interest litigation case before the Supreme Court of India, seeking to compel states to ensure availability of pain treatment and palliative care services. Significant legislative reform was achieved and Dr. Rajagopal has worked tirelessly to ensure that the new laws are adopted nationwide.

Dr. Raj’s film can be screened at HippocraticFilm.com
Modern Hippocratic Oath

I swear to fulfill, to the best of my ability and judgment, this covenant:

I will respect the hard-won scientific gains of those physicians in whose steps I walk, and gladly share such knowledge as is mine with those who are to follow.

I will apply, for the benefit of the sick, all measures that are required, avoiding those twin traps of overtreatment and therapeutic nihilism.

I will remember that there is art to medicine as well as science, and that warmth, sympathy and understanding may outweigh the surgeon’s knife or the chemist’s drug.

I will not be ashamed to say “I know not,” nor will I fail to call in my colleagues when the skills of another are needed for a patient’s recovery.

I will respect the privacy of my patients, for their problems are not disclosed to me that the world may know. Most especially must I tread with care in matters of life and death. If it is given me to save a life, all thanks. But it may also be within my power to take a life; this awesome responsibility must be faced with great humbleness and awareness of my own frailty. Above all, I must not play at God.

I will remember that I do not treat a fever chart, a cancerous growth, but a sick human being, whose illness may affect the person’s family and economic stability. My responsibility includes these related problems, if I am to care adequately for the sick.

I will prevent disease whenever I can, for prevention is preferable to cure.

I will remember that I remain a member of society, with special obligations to all my fellow human beings, those sound of mind and body as well as the infirm.

If I do not violate this oath, may I enjoy life and art, respected while I live and remembered with affection thereafter. May I always act so as to preserve the finest traditions of my calling and may I long experience the joy of healing those who seek my help.

Written in 1964 by Louis Lasagna, Academic Dean of the School of Medicine at Tufts University, and used in many medical schools today.
5 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO GENTLY SHAKE THE WORLD

1. Donate to Pallium India USA www.palliumindiausa.org
2. Host a Screening www.hippocratesfilm.com/see-the-film
3. Own the DVD or Blu-Ray www.moonshineagency/shop
4. Stream the Film Online www.vimeo.com/ondemand/hippocrates
5. Watch it free on Campus www.canopystreaming.com/product/hippocrates

“A remarkable portrait of one extraordinary man and his life’s work to ease the suffering of his fellow humans.” Hippocratic - “Experiments in Gently Shaking the World” is a must-see. Not only for people interested in palliative care, certainly for everyone working in healthcare, but also for each of us as human beings.” - Hospice