

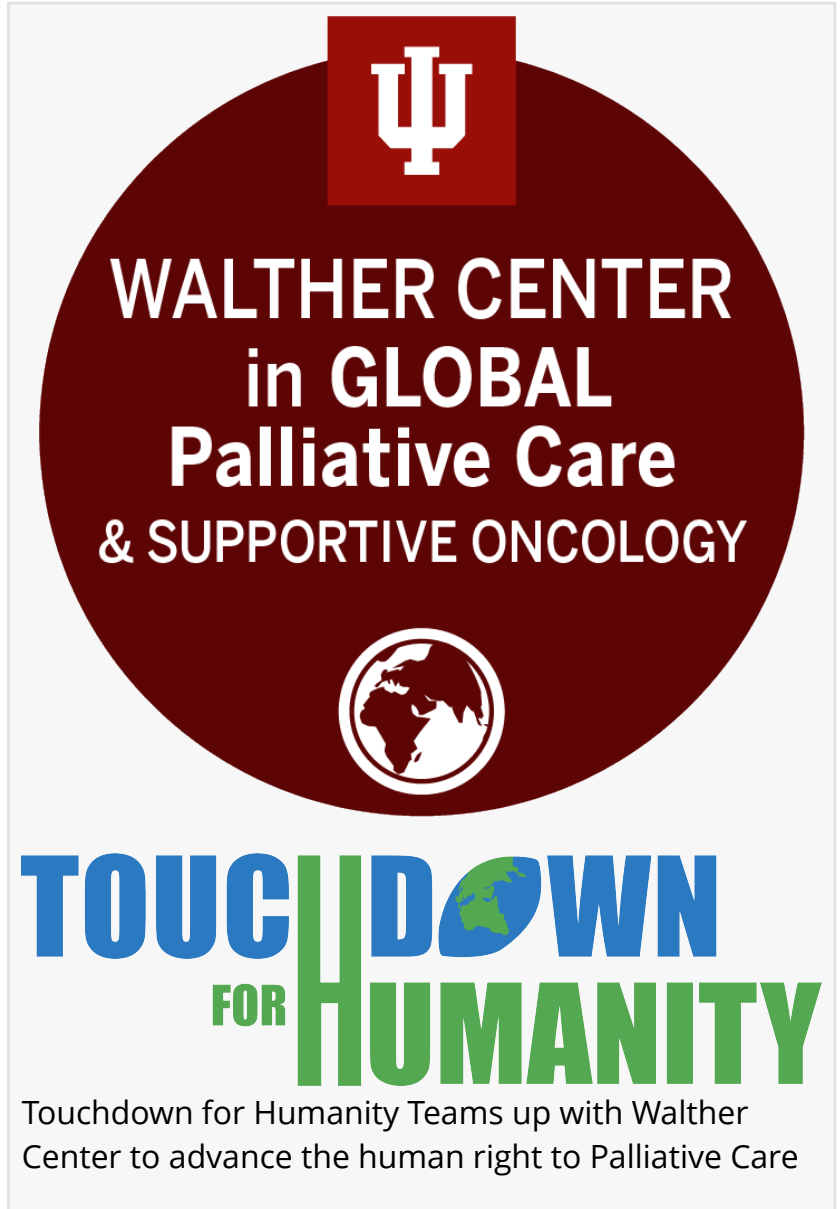
NFL Super Bowl Champion Teams-up with Global Palliative Experts to Support UN Call for Palliative Care as a Human Right

Touchdown for Humanity kicks-off a movement uniting people across the globe to ensure the human right of palliative care and access to essential medicines

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, USA, December 10, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Human Rights](#) Day on December 10 comes at a critical time for the world as a global pandemic rages on, lives continue to be devastated, infrastructures brought to the brink, further pressuring governments and societies struggling to meet basic needs. Especially now it is important is to unite in our humanity rather than be entrenched in our differences.

As such, in the team spirit of collaboration, the central tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to bolster progress in advancing [palliative care](#) worldwide, the Walther Center in Global Palliative Care & Supportive Oncology at Indiana University has teamed up with NFL [Superbowl Champion](#) Dr. George

Koonce Jr to score a "Touchdown for Humanity" by addressing the pressing inequities in global palliative care made worse by the Covid-19 crisis.



The graphic features a large maroon circle. At the top of the circle is a red square containing a white Greek letter Psi (Ψ). Inside the circle, the text "WALTHER CENTER in GLOBAL Palliative Care & SUPPORTIVE ONCOLOGY" is written in white, with "WALTHER CENTER" and "SUPPORTIVE ONCOLOGY" in all caps and "in GLOBAL Palliative Care" in title case. At the bottom of the circle is a white outline of a globe showing the Americas. Below the circle, the text "TOUCHDOWN FOR HUMANITY" is displayed in blue and green, with a small globe icon replacing the letter 'O' in "DOWN". At the bottom of the graphic, the text "Touchdown for Humanity Teams up with Walther Center to advance the human right to Palliative Care" is written in black.

WALTHER CENTER
in GLOBAL
Palliative Care
& SUPPORTIVE ONCOLOGY

TOUCHDOWN
FOR HUMANITY

Touchdown for Humanity Teams up with Walther Center to advance the human right to Palliative Care

Palliative Care is a desperately needed health service globally during the pandemic, as it treats all domains of a person facing life-threatening disease and is imperative for symptom control even

for Covid-19. Yet, 84% of the world population have limited or no access to pain relief and palliative care. The Covid-19 crisis has exacerbated massive global inequities in access and availability.

“Palliative Care reminds us of the meaning of being human. Palliative care is a matter of dignity. We must use our voices as a platform for the benefit of others” said Dr. Tedros of the World Health Organization (WHO) in a recent meeting among international officials from the WHO, United Nations, Palliative Care organizations and experts, patients and other advocates. Around the globe, healthcare workers, patients and families are resonating with Dr. Tedros’ recommendation especially for those with life-threatening illnesses such as cancer, AIDS/HIV, malaria or even Covid-19.

Specifically, Dr. George Koonce is putting to action what Dr. Tedros urges. A star linebacker for the NFL Superbowl Champion Green Bay Packers, and currently Senior Vice President for University Relations at Marian University, Dr. Koonce is particularly committed to heighten awareness and bring tangible actions to addressing human rights, especially the right to palliative care and essential controlled medicines. A major impetus emerges from Dr. Koonce’s personal journey that includes the height of professional sports success in winning the NFL Superbowl to the depths of tragedy as his first wife dealt with the challenges of advanced cancer that eventually took her life.



Dr. George Koonce, Superbowl Champion and Senior Vice President for University Relations, Marian University

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There are millions of people worldwide fighting alone without palliative care or essential medicines. There’s a new team now. A team for human rights, especially Palliative Care for people everywhere”

Dr. George Koonce, Superbowl Champion and SV President, Marian University

In a poignant video made for “Touchdown for Humanity” in conjunction with the Walther Center in Global Palliative Care and Supportive Oncology (<https://vimeo.com/488259090>), Dr. Koonce draws the metaphor between professional sports and the treatment of life-limiting disease. He speaks specifically about the need for a team-based, holistic approach which is the hallmark of Palliative Care. He shares how he witnessed first-hand the profound value of the holistic team approach of palliative care and how imperative it is from the moment of diagnosis and throughout the course of a life-limiting disease. Palliative Care brings “a touch of humanity” and human rights are honored as it softens the

suffering.

Dr. Koonce acknowledges that despite his wife facing a painful and treacherous battle with cancer, his family was fortunate to have access to Palliative Care and essential medicines, while many around the world do not. "There are millions of people worldwide fighting alone without palliative care or essential medicines. There's a new team now. A team for human rights, especially Palliative Care for people everywhere," says Dr. Koonce.

Touchdown for Humanity will be a movement to unite people across the globe to ensure the human right of palliative care and access to essential controlled medicines for pain. Elizabeth Mattfeld, Program Officer of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is a collaborative partner in this movement and states "never before has the world faced such a need and, as such, the time is optimal to unite around our humanity to ensure access to and availability of essential medicines for medical and scientific purposes, especially for palliative care. Each step, no matter how small toward achieving equitable and adequate access is a success for those who suffer and indeed is a Touchdown for Humanity."

Dr. Jim Cleary, MD, Director of the Walther Center in Global Palliative Care and Supportive Oncology at Indiana University reinforces the power of the message and the purpose of the movement of Touchdown for Humanity, "It's quite amazing that we're teaming up with Dr. George Koonce of the Green Bay Packers who has earned a Super Bowl ring. It's also sad at the same time, that Dr. Koonce is sharing his story of the experience of his wife dying of cancer, the impact on him, children, his family, dealing with this and the importance of palliative care. So, this is not just a footballer. This is not just someone who's come along and said, 'let's do some good.' This is someone who is taking the human experience of the death of his spouse and how palliative care makes a profound difference and saying 'this needs to be extended throughout the world, and provided to all humankind, to go global. To soften the suffering and together, score a Touchdown for Humanity."

To learn more about the Walther Center visit: <https://walthercenter.iu.edu/>

To team up with Touchdown for Humanity, view: <https://vimeo.com/488259090>
and visit: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc6x-jDAcRDRSRPK4gmd6wl7pw0HLjtSVEqddOmrYTF1KXK4g/viewform>

To schedule interviews, contact Dr. Barbara Hastie at bhastie@iu.edu or (317) 278-4006.

Dr. Barbara Hastie

Walther Center in Global Palliative Care

+1 317-278-4006

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