



ESMO Statement

UN High-Level Event on Universal Health Coverage: Multi-Stakeholder Hearing 29 April 2019, New York, USA

The European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) is a global network of over 20,000 oncologists from more than 150 countries. We support Universal Health Coverage (UHC) because health is a human right, not a privilege, and no cancer patient should be left behind without affordable quality cancer and palliative care services.

Cancer causes 1 in 6 deaths globally. We should focus on preventing the 30-40% of cancers that are preventable, and build up workforce and treatment capacity for the millions of people whose cancers are not preventable.

Therefore, we request the UN Political Declaration state **“Country governments must guarantee their entire population Universal Health Coverage benefit packages that ensure financial protection, and include a core set of comprehensive, safe, affordable, effective and high-quality services for prevention, diagnosis, treatment and palliative care of all NCDs, including cancer, delivered by an adequate, and well-trained workforce.”**

This will reduce cancer deaths by:

- Promoting prevention and enabling early, accurate diagnosis
- Securing timely access to affordable quality treatment
- Providing survivorship care
- Ensuring palliative care, including opioids for pain control

This requires:

- Strengthening of primary care for early diagnosis, screening, and supportive and palliative care
- Referral services across the continuum of care to ensure timely access to secondary and tertiary facilities where cancer treatment is received
- Making population-based disease registries mandatory, ensuring they include the comprehensive incidence, relapse (crucial for advanced/metastatic cancers) and mortality data required for evidence-based healthcare planning, measuring national health policy effectiveness, and demonstrating the number of lives saved

ESMO is committed to sharing its expertise to support making Universal Health Coverage a reality and positively affecting the health and life of everyone.