



ESMO Statement

148th WHO Executive Board Meeting, 18-26 January 2021 Agenda Item 14.1: COVID-19 response

Honourable Chair, Esteemed Delegates,

The European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) is a global network of more than 25,000 cancer professionals from over 160 countries. ESMO joins in applauding WHO's efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

We call on WHO and Member States to ensure the availability of essential health and cancer services, and to make the protection of cancer patients through immunisation against COVID-19 a public health priority.

To address this issue, ESMO launched a 'Call to Action on COVID-19 vaccinations and patients with cancer', endorsed to date by around 40 cancer societies and patient organisations. In the context of the Member States developing their vaccination strategies, ESMO would like to request they consider the following:

1. Vaccinate all cancer patients in line with the WHO principles aiming to reduce deaths and disease burden. Patients with active disease or receiving anticancer treatment deserve an additional priority in case of limitations only.
2. Diligently collect data via suitable registries, in order to monitor the effects of the vaccines in the vulnerable population, including patients with cancer and immune response monitoring.
3. Educate and instil confidence among the public and patients in receiving the vaccines and provide them with up-to-date information in lay language.

ESMO has also published statements to address issues and concerns on immunising patients with cancer against COVID-19. In addition, the 'ESMO COVID-19 and Cancer Portal' includes the 'ESMO recommendations for cancer management in the era of COVID-19' for oncology professionals, a guide for patients, a webinar series, an ESMO-CoCARE registry to gather clinical data, and has links to WHO norms and guidance. To access all of the above, please visit www.esmo.org

Because people living with NCDs are at higher-risk of worse outcomes of COVID-19, we ask Member States to add an NCD sub-item to this agenda topic at the 2021 World Health Assembly to accelerate policy actions and investments in NCD prevention and care. Thank you.