



**European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Statement
for the joint plenary meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body to draft and negotiate a
WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention,
preparedness and response and the Working Group on Amendments to the International Health
Regulations (2005) for Member States, Associate Members, regional economic integration
organizations, and relevant stakeholders – 21 and 24 July 2023**

Honourable Chair, Esteemed Delegates,

The European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) represents more than 28,000 cancer professionals from over 160 countries. We welcome this opportunity to provide our view to promote coherence and complementarity between the WHO CA+ and the International Health Regulations (IHR).

Given estimations that one in five people will develop cancer at some point in their lives, it is crucial that both the WHO CA+ and the IHR specifically include reference to secondary and tertiary healthcare services to avoid leaving millions of patients behind during and beyond pandemics.

The current amendments to the IHR refer specifically to 'secondary' and 'tertiary' care in terms of service delivery and health workforce in '**Annex 1A on Core capacity requirements for surveillance and response, in New Section 7 on Health Systems Capacities**'. However, the WHO CA+ does not.

Therefore, we urge the negotiating parties to align the WHO CA+ accordingly, and include specific wording on 'secondary' and 'tertiary' care into '**Article 6, point 4(a) on Preparedness, readiness and resilience**' in the Bureau's final text.

Specifically, we propose that the first part of Article 6, point 4(a) reads that countries should strengthen and reinforce public health functions for the continued provision of quality routine and essential health services during pandemics, including **primary, secondary and tertiary care**, and mental health care and immunization, with a focus on primary health care, and referral health services **from primary to secondary and tertiary care**, and community-level interventions....;

We note that other WHO health-related documents also include the wording secondary and tertiary healthcare, and for consistency request the WHO CA+ do the same.*

ESMO remains available to assist your invaluable efforts to prepare for, and respond to, health emergencies.

Thank you.

*Examples - WHO work in health emergencies (A76/11); WHO Intersectoral Global Action Plan on Epilepsy and Other Neurological Disorders 2022-2031 (A75/10 Add.4)