



## ESMO Public Statement regarding the 2023 UN Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage, 21 September 2023

The European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) welcomes the 2023 UN Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as an opportunity to accelerate action on cancer prevention and control globally.

ESMO urges each UN member state to guarantee their entire population Universal Health Coverage benefit packages that include a core set of comprehensive, safe, affordable, effective, and high-quality services for prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment according to guidelines, palliative care, and rehabilitative services for cancer, that are well funded and delivered by an adequate number of well-trained and well-resourced health workforce. These services should be considered essential and should not result in financial hardship for patients nor lead to catastrophic and generational impoverishment.

The political declaration needs to be put into action now to ensure that millions of cancer patients are not left behind. As such, ESMO encourages the member states to:

- Strengthen and develop robust referral systems across the continuum of care to ensure timely and affordable access from primary, to secondary and tertiary care levels where cancer patients are predominantly treated
- Ensure access to cancer medicines, including opioids for pain relief
- Ensure strengthening of primary, secondary and tertiary care with a view to increase preparedness and response to health emergencies and pandemics
- Ensure that essential cancer services include supportive and palliative care that addresses quality of life, side-effects, and all aspects of toxicity
- Ensure adequate funding of, and access to, clinical trials, including academic clinical trials to ensure that the specificities of rare cancers are properly taken into account
- Make population-based disease registries mandatory, and ensure they include the comprehensive incidence, relapse, and mortality data required for evidence-based healthcare planning; in order to measure national health policy effectiveness, and demonstrate the number of lives saved

ESMO stands ready to support member states in their efforts to reduce the burden of cancer, with ESMO's cancer resources available to help deliver each of the three dimensions of Universal Health Coverage:

- [ESMO Global Curriculum in Medical Oncology](#) to support training the necessary workforce to 'increase population coverage'.
- Evidence-based [ESMO Clinical Practice Guidelines](#) and our [Pan-Asian Adapted Guidelines](#) to support decisions to optimally 'expand essential health services'.
- [ESMO-Magnitude of Clinical Benefit Scale](#) and [ESMO Scale of Clinical Actionability of Molecular Targets \(ESCAT\)](#) to prioritize the use of cancer medicines, improve health outcomes and 'reduce the financial burden of health services'.