

PRESS RELEASE

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The frontline oncology workforce unites to reduce the burden of cancer before it hits

LUGANO, Switzerland, and BRUSSELS, Belgium, 9 September 2022 – ESMO, the leading professional organisation for medical oncology, together with EONS, a pan-European membership organisation for cancer nurses, today announced the launch of the ground-breaking, Europe-wide “Cancer Prevention Across Europe” campaign (PrEvCan) aimed at reducing the burden of cancer. The announcement was made at the opening press conference of the ESMO Congress 2022 in Paris.

According to reported data from across Europe, the year 2020 saw over 4 million new cancer diagnoses (excluding non-melanoma skin cancers) and close to 2 million deaths from cancer—which, on average, translates to a toll of 11,000 new cancer cases and 5,000 cancer deaths per day over the course of 12 months (1). By 2040, the number of new cancer cases in Europe will climb to an estimated 5.96 million, with mortality expected to rise to 2.91 million patients (2,3). “A worldwide increase in cancer cases of this magnitude imposes great physical, psychological and financial burdens on individuals, their families and communities,” said ESMO Public Policy Director Dr. Rosa Giuliani. “There is an urgent need to intervene before cancer hits in order to reduce its burden. That means intensifying efforts in prevention, which the WHO (4) has already put forward as the most cost-effective long-term strategy for the control of cancer.”

The PrEvCan campaign is initiated and led by EONS with ESMO as key partner, alongside the [European Cancer Patients Coalition \(ECPC\)](#) and more than 50 other international and national organisations. The campaign is based on the European Code Against Cancer (ECAC) (5), which sets out 12 recommendations ranging from physical activity and dietary guidelines all the way to tobacco use and second-hand smoke. Over a period of 12 months starting from October 2022, each month will be dedicated to promoting one of these recommendations and highlighting the scientific evidence supporting it, with the dual objective of increasing awareness of how to prevent cancer among the general public and of providing healthcare professionals with a more comprehensive toolkit for communicating the importance of cancer prevention effectively.

“EONS firmly believes that it is vital to bring together nurses and medical oncologists at the front of cancer care,” said Johan de Munther, EONS President, and explained: “The 12 recommendations will be tailored for the purpose of targeting different audiences, especially hard-to-reach and disadvantaged demographic groups, as inequalities in access to screening measures and resources are known to adversely affect populations like the elderly, people with disabilities and various underserved or underrepresented minorities.” Lena Sharp, Project lead, PrEvCan and Senior advisor EONS, added: “Nurses are the largest group of health care workers and also one of the most trusted professional groups. Patients interact with us throughout their lifetime, which gives us an opportunity to intervene early on with advice and support in cancer prevention.”

“ECPC is glad to share this initiative with EONS and ESMO,” said Francesco De Lorenzo, ECPC President. “The coalition’s contribution, by sharing the campaign messages with more than 470 members across Europe, will help to strengthen and more widely disseminate the importance of healthy living. The PrEvCan campaign also represents an excellent opportunity for collaboration among cancer patient organisations, physicians and oncology nursing societies in Europe, who are at the frontline of cancer care,” De Lorenzo concluded. Kathi Apostolidis, ECPC Chair of the

Scientific Committee and Past President added that “ECPC will continue its long-standing collaboration with EONS and ESMO in the PrEvCan campaign, aiming to reduce cancer risk and increase health and well-being.”

“One may wonder why the society representing medical oncologists, the doctors who treat patients with cancer, should deal with cancer prevention,” noted Giuliani, and explained: “Committing to cancer prevention is one way in which ESMO can contribute to helping people reduce their risk of developing cancer, and to support the overall sustainability of healthcare systems. By reducing the number of cancer cases upfront as well as by increasing the rate of early diagnoses, where appropriate, we can substantially increase the number of healthy individuals and improve patient outcomes. At the same time, we can alleviate the strains on our health ecosystem in areas such as sourcing and access to medicines.”

In the context of the PrEvCan campaign, [ESMO is contributing to closing the care gap](#) through raising awareness of research-based prevention and serving as a dissemination network of education for oncologists, who have a crucial role to play by becoming knowledgeable and leading by example in this important field of action against cancer.

“Prevention is the responsibility of each individual person, but it is also a team effort. We as oncologists, together with nurses, have the duty to promote all preventive initiatives, and we are called on to act as role models for our patients. We have to demonstrate that not only we work in cancer care, but also apply the oncology science to the daily lives of the general population, ourselves and our patients,” said ESMO President Prof. Solange Peters.

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Notes to Editors

Please make sure to use the official name of the meeting in your reports: **ESMO Congress 2022**

Official hashtags: **#ESMO22 #EONS15 #PrEvCan**

References:

1 Dyba, T., Randi, G., Bray, F., Martos, C., Giusti, F., Nicholson, N., ... & Bettio, M. (2021). The European cancer burden in 2020: Incidence and mortality estimates for 40 countries and 25 major cancers. *European Journal of Cancer*, 157, 308-347.

2 World Health Organization. [Global Cancer Observatory 2040](#). Global Cancer Observatory.

3 ECIS - [European Cancer Information System](#)

4 [World Health Organization](#), *Cancer* (2022).

5 "The European Code Against Cancer is an initiative of the European Commission, is a project coordinated by the [International Agency for Research on Cancer](#), with financial support from the [EU Health Programme](#)

About the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO)

ESMO is the leading professional organisation for medical oncology. With 25,000 members representing oncology professionals from over 160 countries worldwide, ESMO is the society of reference for oncology education and information. Driven by a shared determination to secure the best possible outcomes for patients, ESMO is committed to standing by those who care about cancer through addressing the diverse needs of #ONEoncologycommunity, offering #educationforLIFE, and advocating for #accessiblecancerCARE. www.esmo.org

About the European Oncology Nursing Society (EONS)

The European Oncology Nursing Society (EONS) is a pan-European membership organisation for cancer nurses with a current membership of almost 28,000 cancer nurses from all over Europe, the largest group of healthcare workers in the oncology workforce. EONS provides leadership in all areas of cancer nursing: research, practice, continuing education, communications and advocacy for better recognition of cancer nursing across Europe. www.cancernurse.eu

About the European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC)

The European Cancer Patient Coalition is the largest European cancer patients' umbrella organisation. It was established in 2003 and has currently over 450 Members in 50 countries. ECPC represents patients affected by all types of cancers, from the rarest to the most common and works for a Europe of equality, where all European cancer patients have timely and affordable access to the best treatment and care available, throughout their life. ECPC believes that cancer patients are the most important partners in the fight against cancer and against all the cancer-related issues affecting our society. ECPC works for the recognition of cancer patients as partners in their own healthcare and invites policy makers, researchers, health care professionals and industry to work all together in this direction. www.ecpc.org