



**ESMO Statement
for the
World Health Assembly
22-28 May 2022**

Agenda item 27.4: Public health dimension of the world drug problem

Honorable Chair, Esteemed Delegates,

The [European Society for Medical Oncology \(ESMO\)](#), welcomes the Director General's Report on the World Drug Problem and the need to improve access to controlled medicines which are used for legitimate medical purposes to relieve pain and suffering.

WHO statistics state only 14% of people in need of palliative care each year actually receive it due to unnecessarily restrictive regulatory barriers*, and this is unacceptable.

To help provide solutions, the [ESMO Global Opioid Policy Initiative](#) provided 10 recommendations to reduce those barriers. We request that countries at least provide patients the palliative care medicines on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines, and that licensed physicians are properly trained to use opioid medications to relieve cancer pain.

We look forward to publication of the WHO Guidelines on the safe use and access to controlled medicines in 2022.

Thank you.

* <https://www.who.int/health-topics/palliative-care>