



**ESMO Statement for the  
World Health Assembly, 20-28 May 2019, Geneva, Switzerland**

**Agenda Item 11.7: Access to Medicines and Vaccines**

Honourable Chair, Esteemed Delegates,

The European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) is a global network of over 20,000 oncologists from more than 150 countries.

ESMO welcomes the WHO draft road map for access to medicines, vaccines and other health products, 2019–2023, and its emphasis on the importance of clinical practice guidelines. Cancer medicines on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines (EML) are recommended in the evidence-based [ESMO Clinical Practice Guidelines](#), and used to treat the majority of cancers. Most cancer medicines on the EML are inexpensive, and also available as generics and biosimilars. They should be on national essential medicine lists, prioritised for reimbursement, and protected against shortages.

When deciding to include cancer medicines in UHC packages, countries should consider those on the WHO EML, and those with high scores on the [ESMO-Magnitude of Clinical Benefit Scale](#), a tool which indicates the level of benefit of a cancer medicine to patients.

To guide stakeholders in the use of biosimilars for cancer, ESMO launched an [ESMO biosimilars portal](#), which provides scientific, educational, and regulatory information to ensure stakeholders, including patients, understand the complexities, and so patients are prescribed the safest and most effective treatment possible.

For the roadmap target of ‘increasing availability to essential medicines,’ ESMO proposes to expand access from primary healthcare to secondary and tertiary healthcare where cancer treatment is provided, otherwise cancer patients will be left behind.

For the roadmap’s target of ‘increasing availability of oral morphine for palliative care,’ ESMO proposes to increase the target from 50% to 100% to avoid leaving half of patients suffering unnecessarily or dying in pain, especially considering that oral morphine is very inexpensive.

ESMO proactively addresses access to cancer medicines and is pleased to share its expertise with WHO and Member States to improve cancer care worldwide.

Thank you.