



**ESMO Statement
for the
Special Session of the World Health Assembly
to consider developing a WHO convention, agreement
or other international instrument on pandemic preparedness and response
29 November – 1 December 2021**

The [European Society for Medical Oncology \(ESMO\)](#) is a global network of more than 25,000 cancer professionals from over 160 countries.

ESMO welcomes the WHO Member States Working Group Report. We call for future pandemic preparedness and responses to be legally binding and to:

1. Reinforce health as a fundamental human right.
2. Address NCD risk factors and the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health.
3. Build up and protect the health workforce and maintain the provision of healthcare services for people with pre-existing conditions such as cancer.
4. Ensure health authorities and administrators provide ethical and methodological guidelines on how hospitals and health workers should make decisions where financial and physical resources must be re-allocated or are in shortage. The [ESMO Public Policy Webinar on Bedside Rationing](#) raises awareness of this critical topic for healthcare professionals, especially relevant during health emergencies.
5. Include participation of all stakeholders and leverage their evidence-based resources such as the [ESMO COVID-19 and Cancer portal](#) accessible at www.esmo.org.

Thank you.