

Establishment of a Hellenic national cancer institute: providing policy advice and coordinating cancer research



TYPE
STATUS

Planned legal framework

LAST
UPDATE

September 2021

GREECE • NATIONAL
Cancer control governance and coordination

PROBLEM & OBJECTIVE

PROBLEM Cancer is a disease that poses a significant challenge to healthcare systems and an obstacle to sustainable economic growth. The need for disseminating knowledge and research results, prevent disease, but also responsible, holistic and patient-centered treatment through the formulation of a National Strategy for the disease is imperative and necessary as cancer is one of the leading causes of death in Greece and a major national and global health problem.

OBJECTIVE Once established, the Hellenic National Cancer Institute (HNCI) will be the competent authority responsible for providing recommendations to the Ministry of Health on the overall management of neoplastic diseases, and for coordinating the development and implementation of the National Strategy for Cancer. The mission of the Institute will be to coordinate and assist actions for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of solid and hematological neoplastic diseases of patients of all ages, to promote research, to inform the public and the ongoing training of health professionals, including in the areas of palliative and end-of-life patient care.

CONTACT

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KEY COMPONENTS / STEPS

- The first meeting of the HNCI's temporary steering committee took place in April 2019 for the planning of actions for the establishment and operation of the Institute.
- HNCI will provide an integrated approach that includes the medical, social and economic dimension of the treatment of neoplastic diseases in all areas of intervention, prevention, control, care and research.
- HNCI will be responsible for the promotion of research and training to health care professionals.
- HNCI will cooperate with primary, secondary, tertiary health care services.
- HNCI will publish evidence based guidelines, develop basic research and epidemiological studies as well as clinical trials.
- The institute will consist of five departments: the Research Directorate, the Directorate of Cancer Registries, the Directorate of Prevention, the Directorate of Early Diagnose and Palliative care, the Directorate of Pediatric Hematology and the Directorate of Administrative support. A working group of health professionals under the coordination of the General Secretariat of Public Health was appointed by the MoH, in order to prepare the HNCI for operation.
- HNCI is planned to launch operation in 2022.

KEY CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

- The Hellenic National Cancer Institute (HNCI) was established by law (4600/2019) in March 2019. The institute is under supervision of the MoH which entails financial and management control, approval of the budget and appointment of the Chairman and the Board of Directors.
- Its resources will be retrieved from the annual budget of the Ministry of Health, the public Investment Program, and other revenue sources from the implementation of programs funded or co-financed by the European Union or other international organizations, donations, legacies or any other subsidies from third parties, any other service provision and research programs.
- HNCI will benefit from Patient Registries established by law in March 2019. The Cancer Registries will include breast cancer, prostate cancer, colon cancer, lung cancer, Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia and Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia.
- The National Action Plan for Public Health (NAPH) 2021-2025 is a strategic choice of the ministry of health for making prevention a way of living for all Greek citizens, under which an action plan for cancer will be implemented.

MAIN IMPACTS / ADDED VALUE

- HNCI will be the competent authority responsible for the coordination at national level of actions against cancer providing an approach that includes medicine, social and economic dimension of coping of neoplastic diseases in all areas: intervention, prevention, control, care and research, for the benefit of patients and their relatives and the wider society as a whole. The institutionalization of an authority responsible for the formulation of a cancer strategy at national level was anticipated by all stakeholders, scientists and patients.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The National Action Plan for Public Health (NAPH) 2021-2025, under which an action plan for cancer will be implemented, boosted the development and operation of the HNCI. NAPH is based on a legislative framework and has secured (a) the necessary resources for its implementation and (b) the reorganization of public health services with the support of European Union experts. HNCI's institutional role will facilitate the implementation of NAPH in the area of cancer control.

REFERENCES & DOCUMENTATION

- Law 4600/2019 (greek only)

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