



## **ASCO and WHO Sign Project Collaboration Agreement to Address Challenges to Access to Quality Cancer Care Internationally**

Cancer is one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide, affecting 92% of families around the world, summarized in [WHO Global status report on cancer 2026](#). The highest health, social and economic burdens occur in low- and middle-income countries, where limited access to high-quality care causes avoidable harm to communities.

Determined to improve access to quality cancer care internationally, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) have formally signed a collaboration agreement. The agreement is designed to elevate quality as a priority in the global cancer agenda and to support governments in implementing programmes that improve access and, ultimately, survival.

Under the terms of the agreement between ASCO and WHO, three defined areas are prioritized: capacity building in core health professional competencies in cancer care; improving access to cancer clinical trials; and strengthening quality, accessibility, and accountability in cancer care.

### **Capacity Building: Training**

Bringing together WHO's extensive global network and ASCO's expertise in training and education programs, the two organizations will utilize both virtual and in-person measures to strengthen and expand the capacity of the oncology workforce. Drawing on ASCO's existing [Global Courses](#), these training efforts will be in consultation with WHO Member States and tailored to the specific needs and context of individual countries.

### **Access to Clinical Trials: Research**

In partnership with WHO Member States, WHO and ASCO will jointly work to improve access to clinical trials and support alignment of research priorities with national cancer burdens and contexts. Proposed activities will include virtual forums to foster dialogue amongst national stakeholders around strengthening clinical trials as well as virtual and in-person training to enhance research capacity and regional cancer research collaboration.

### **Strengthening Quality, Accessibility, and Accountability**

ASCO and WHO are well poised to enhance the quality and accessibility of cancer care at the facility level. Drawing on WHO's established efforts to support governments in their national cancer programmes and ASCO's quality care certification and training programs, the collaboration aims to deliver quality care programs to countries where they will have the most significant impact.

## NOTES TO EDITOR:

WHO is the specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for directing and coordinating international health. Through its Department for Noncommunicable Diseases, the organization is working with Member States to strengthen cancer control programs, including through WHO global cancer initiatives in breast, cervical, and childhood cancers.

With more than 50,000 members in more than 150 countries, ASCO is the world's largest professional organization for physicians and oncology professionals caring for people with cancer. Through research, education, and promotion of high-quality patient care, ASCO works to conquer cancer and create a world where cancer is prevented or cured, and every survivor is healthy.

### **Quote from ASCO:**

*"This agreement is a pivotal step in our collective effort to improve access to quality cancer care globally. By combining WHO's global health leadership with ASCO's clinical and educational expertise, we are establishing a truly collaborative framework. Together with WHO Member States as partners, we will work to strengthen the oncology workforce, support vital research, and help bring high-quality, evidence-based care to patients in diverse resource settings worldwide."* - Julie R. Gralow, MD, FACP, FASCO, ASCO Chief Medical Officer & Executive Vice President

### **Quote from WHO:**

*"No one should have to wonder whether the cancer care they receive is safe and effective. Yet in too many countries, low-quality care causes avoidable harm. Available care is not enough on its own; that care must be of high quality. This agreement takes the valued partnership between WHO and ASCO to a greater scale, for greater impact. Working with governments and health professionals, we will strengthen policies and services so that everyone affected by cancer receives care that meets the standards they deserve."* - André Ilbawi, MD, Team lead, cancer, World Health Organization