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Written contribution from the European CanCer Organisation (ECCO) to agenda item (5) (G)  
**Accelerating primary health care in the WHO European Region: organizational and technological innovation in the context of the Declaration of Astana**

The European CanCer Organisation (ECCO) congratulates the WHO for its undiminished attention to the need to accelerate the advancement of primary healthcare in the WHO European region.

Representing the healthcare professional community in Europe who provide quality care for cancer patients, we have, for some time, been enthusiastic promoters for an increased role for primary care professions in the delivery of care to cancer patients.

This is vital for not only ensuring earlier detection and diagnosis of cancer, so central to achieving improved outcomes, but also for meeting the obvious health service challenges posed by increasing incidence of cancer in the context of ageing populations.

As with all over-arching challenges in oncology, ECCO, as the facilitating and unifying body for cancer related healthcare professions, and aided by its energetic Patient Advisory Committee, has been keen to play our role in helping Europe achieve the obvious need to accelerate primary healthcare's advancement in cancer care.

Consequently, we identified a need to strive for a consensus position from the cancer community on what we precisely identify and agree, together, are the key roles of primary care healthcare professionals in respect to ensuring health systems delivering high quality cancer care.

Embarking upon a lengthy but necessary process of deliberation between representative professional organisations, such as for GPs, community pharmacists, occupational therapists, and many others, we have now been able to publish "The ECCO Essential Requirements for Quality Cancer Care: Primary Care."

I commend this publication to all with an interest in achieving the desired acceleration of primary care. Just a short summary of its key points that I want to bring to your attention today include:

- The critical role of **guidelines and cancer decision support tools** to improve referral pathways between primary care and specialist cancer services
- The role of primary care professionals in **encouraging patients to seek attention for symptoms at earlier stages** and to combat the various fears that prevent this, including unwarranted concern of wasting a clinician's time
- **The potential for primary care to better support population based cancer screening programmes**, including in promoting uptake, providing relevant information
- **The need for primary care to be at the forefront of HPV vaccination campaigns** (thereby simultaneously supporting the WHO's Cervical Cancer Elimination campaign).
- The happy outcome of greatly increasing cancer survivorship for many tumour types consequently driving **increased need for long term follow up and after care within the primary care system, not least in respect to the psycho-social needs of patients**, and also relatives, following often traumatic treatment periods.
- The need to **address cancer registry deficiencies** in order to better support the highest standard of health service planning in respect to primary care. An inability to register cancer

recurrences, for example, means that health and social systems do not have numbers needed to plan certain support services, including primary care.

All of this we supplement with a range of illustrative and inspiring case studies of countries and health systems who have grasped the possibilities of primary care acceleration in respect to cancer care and achievable notable improvements.

We also, of course, in this publication, make frequent reference to the excellent leadership activity of the WHO on primary care, such as in the compilation of compelling research and evidence for change, gaining new shared understandings in contested space and setting ambitious but achievable targets.

We all must work together to accelerate primary care and there are many ways in which we can achieve this. One such way is for all of us present today to digest, familiarise and take up the ECCO Essential Requirements for Quality Cancer Care: Primary Care.

Statement endorsed by the following organisations:

- European CanCer Organisation (ECCO)



- AGE Platform Europe



- Council of Occupational Therapists for European Countries (COTEC)



- European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD)



- International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO)



- International Association for Hospice & Palliative Care (IAHPC)



- Studiorum



- World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT)

