



Joint Declaration

National Decade against Cancer 2019 – 2029

Our Motivation

Cancer continues to be one of the major challenges in modern medicine. It is the second leading cause of death and the most feared disease in our society today. The number of new cases of cancer will double worldwide over the next 20 years while many people will live with the disease for many years. In Germany alone, the number of new cases per year is expected to rise from 500,000 to 600,000 within the next decade. Ageing societies and an unhealthy lifestyle are significant causes for this increase.

Research on new possibilities for early detection, diagnosis, treatment and aftercare is necessary and must be transferred from bench to bedside as fast as possible in order to further enhance the prospects of cancer patients. Effective methods of prevention need to be developed and realized to reduce the number of new cases of cancer in the long term. Around 40 percent of all cancer cases are the result of modifiable risk factors and could thus be prevented by taking suitable preventive measures.

That is why Germany needs a long-term research strategy to combat cancer, in addition to the National Cancer Plan that focuses primarily on the continuing development of oncological care. We need to increase the awareness among all actors of effective cancer research and prevention, strengthen clinical trials, enhance the coordination of research and care and speed up the translation into practice of new preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic approaches. There is also a need for a new openness among the population to talk about this sensitive issue.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research has therefore joined forces with the Federal Ministry of Health and many other partners to launch a new ten-year initiative, the “National Decade against Cancer”. This initiative is unique in that it brings all of us together who represent the diverse realms of politics, cancer research, research funding, health care, industry and civil society. We share the objective of mobilizing all forces in Germany to make the targeted fight against cancer a success. We call upon all groups in society to join and contribute to this initiative.

Our Mission

We will work on the further strengthening and targeted promotion of cancer research in the areas of prevention, early detection, diagnosis and innovative treatments. We want that people benefit faster from the results of research and make the experiences and insights gained in oncological care available to research so that it can further enhance day-to-day care. We will advance these efforts together with cancer patients and their families as well as the different actors in the health care system, industry and civil society. In this way, we will strengthen Germany as a leading and sustained location for cancer research. Together with partners from all over the world, we will achieve global progress in the fight against cancer.



Objectives

- We will enhance the lives of cancer patients by research and the fast application of research findings into oncological care. By the end of the National Decade against Cancer, we will be able to use state-of-the-art early detection and treatment methods to cure or control cancer in the long term in three out of four patients, while also ensuring a good quality of life for these patients.
- Cancer prevention will reduce the number of new cases. We will carry out sustainable prevention measures with a long-term perspective. Today's rate of around 40 percent of preventable cancers is going to be reduced by 10 percent per decade, i.e. to 36 percent in 10 years and 32 percent in 20 years. However, as cancer can take decades to develop, this effect can be measured for the first time in 2040.
- All people in Germany will have access to high-quality oncological care and innovations in cancer research with proven benefit, largely thanks to nearby research hubs for translational cancer research and their links with regional and supraregional health care institutions. Close collaboration between research institutions, university hospitals, qualified hospitals and subspecialized practices are key to achieving this goal.
- The public will have developed an awareness for cancer prevention and suitable measures will have increased trust in cancer research. Citizens are to be actively involved in cancer prevention and research.
- Motivated researchers with excellent qualifications and health care professionals will ensure Germany's position as a leading international location of patient-centred cancer research and oncological care.

Fields of Action

1. Expanding cancer research:

We will further strengthen oncological research in Germany and expand our international top position. We aim to develop new personalized treatment methods and advance existing treatments to enhance the quality of life and survival prospects of cancer patients. Extensive networking among the actors involved and the realization of clinical trials form the major basis for achieving these goals. The use of digital technologies and processes can substantially enhance the quality, medical precision, safety and efficiency of oncological care.

Funding will be provided to innovative ideas addressing pressing research issues in a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach. This includes not only the further development of oncological diagnostics and treatments but also aftercare and care for long-term cancer survivors.

2. Making active use of progress in cancer research:

We will work to advance and expand Germany's cancer research structures, including the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) and the Comprehensive Cancer Centers, to ensure access for cancer patients across Germany and also to network with regional and supraregional health care institutions. At the same time, we will fund state-of-the-art structures and methods to make the latest findings from cutting-edge research available to all physicians in Germany caring for cancer patients. Furthermore, experience and data by hospitals and practices will increasingly be fed into scientific projects. This approach will give more people the opportunity to benefit from outstanding care and scientific excellence from a single source. We will strengthen the broad implementation of innovative medicines and strategies with proven benefits, as is already possible in Germany. We support networking among regional and supraregional health care and research institutions.



3. Improving prevention and good health:

We will intensify research on the advancement of measures for prevention and the maintenance of good health as well as for early cancer detection in close collaboration with the National Cancer Plan. This applies to prophylaxis (e.g. lifestyle, vaccinations) as well as early detection (e.g. screening programmes, the development of effective risk-adjusted early detection methods for people with an increased risk of cancer).

4. High priority for young talent:

We will work to promote young researchers with a view to strengthening cancer research in Germany for the long term.

5. Strengthening participation:

Health research can only be successful if it translates into tangible benefits for the people. We will therefore involve the public in oncological research issues, for example through self-help groups or other patient organizations. This will ensure the active participation of the citizens in the National Decade against Cancer and enable us to benefit from their insights and expertise.

6. Increasing awareness / enhancing communication:

We want to raise awareness among the general public and close relations of cancer patients of the important role of cancer research. We aim to dismantle taboos, increase the public visibility of the progress and successes we have achieved in cancer research, and raise awareness for active prevention and early detection. We will use different instruments ranging from participatory decision-making and dialogue to technical information and public relations work to achieve these goals.

7. Verifying effectiveness:

The National Decade against Cancer was conceived as a learning strategy. A Strategy Committee will be set up to draft the work programme in coordination with our partners and monitor its implementation. The strategy will be continually adapted to current developments. This also means that the strategy will be evaluated internally and externally in due course.

Cooperation

A permanent Strategy Committee chaired by Thomas Rachel, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister of Education and Research, and Prof. Michael Baumann, Chairman of the DKFZ German Cancer Research Center, provides a platform for the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the Federal Ministry of Health as well as other partners to elaborate the National Decade against Cancer. The Strategy Committee and its working groups develop targets and milestones to be achieved by the end of the initiative. Other groups in society can join the initiative and become involved in its development. There will be close cooperation with the members and bodies of the National Cancer Plan.

Contributions of the Partners

All partners declare their willingness to contribute with their work to the National Decade against Cancer.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research will step up its funding for cancer research. A first call for proposals will provide funding to potentially practice-changing clinical trials to verify and compare established methods of prevention, diagnosis and treatment with a view to enhancing patient benefit. Moreover, a funding initiative will be launched to explore the great unresolved issues in cancer research. The interface between cutting-edge research and day-to-day care will be strengthened through the establishment of new sites of the National Center for Tumor Diseases.



The Federal Ministry of Health will work to dovetail cancer research and oncological care even closer in the future. To this end, it will be able to draw on its experience with all the relevant actors in oncological care it has been bringing together for many years in a constructive exchange under the umbrella of the National Cancer Plan.

Cancer self-help groups represent the patients' perspectives. They rely on the experience they have gathered through their involvement in clinical trials and patient advisory councils.

The National Decade against Cancer will also be able to take advantage of the research infrastructures and expertise of Germany's medical schools and the DKFZ; this close cooperation will enable the generation of critical mass and synergies to achieve outstanding results with regard to particularly pressing challenges in cancer research. Germany's university hospitals are distributed throughout the country. They give patients access to state-of-the-art diagnostics and treatments as well as the latest clinical trials, also in the context of complex or rare cancers.

The DKFZ and German Cancer Aid (Deutsche Krebshilfe) plan to forge a new strategic partnership and establish a "National Cancer Prevention Centre" that is genuinely path-breaking by international comparison. The centre will be aimed at driving the systematic expansion of prevention research and applied prevention in Germany and cooperating with its partners to establish these fields across the country.

The networks and expertise of the scientific medical societies and professional associations will establish, for example, new processes in health care and channel experiences from day-to-day care back into research. The German Cancer Society has certified more than 1,000 centres across Germany and boasts considerable experience of quality assessment and development in oncological care. The subspecialized practices represented by the Professional Association of Office-based Hematologists and Oncologists in Germany (BNHO) come with their medical treatment networks to safeguard the quick transfer of knowledge. They collaborate closely with other health care providers. Data from oncological care help to verify the effectiveness and practicability of innovative ideas under clinical real-world conditions.

The National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds (GKV) works to ensure that innovations with proven patient benefit will be covered by statutory health insurance.

Over 30 associations, businesses, service providers and partners from the health care industry will share their expertise and know-how with regard to biotechnology, medical technology, telemedicine and diagnostics. In particular, we will work to bring Germany to the forefront of data-driven innovation for health care research and oncological health services.

The Members of the Strategy Committee of the National Decade against Cancer

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