

WHO launches new cancer control planning course

In support of cancer control efforts in countries around the world, the WHO Academy has today launched a course on National Cancer Control Planning for Programme Managers. The course is intended for those involved in strategic planning on cancer at national and sub-national levels, including policy-makers, technical experts, funding and civil society partners among other stakeholders. The course provides learners with the requisite knowledge, skills and competencies for effective leadership and governance as well as capacity to formulate evidence-based national cancer control plans that are context-specific and feasible to implement. It emphasizes the need for alignment with other health programmes and integration within the broader ministerial health strategy.

“Strong national cancer control plans are essential for preventing cancer, addressing treatment needs, and improving the well-being of people affected by cancer. This WHO Academy course equips programme managers with the practical skills needed to develop evidence-based, costed and implementable plans aligned with broader health system priorities” shared Alarcos Cieza, Unit Head, Management of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCD) Unit at the Department of NCDs and Mental Health, WHO, Headquarters.

A global review of national cancer control plans found that although 80% of countries have developed NCCPs, significant gaps remain, with just 30% incorporating prevention strategies, 48% with Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) objectives and three quarters unfunded. Inherent gaps in the quality of NCCPs affects delivery of cancer services, derailing progress in reducing the burden of cancer and improving the quality of life for cancer patients. Evidence shows that well-organized NCCPs linked to strong governance mechanisms can improve cancer outcomes.

The new course introduces the learner to the concept of cancer control and the WHO global initiatives on breast, cervical and childhood cancer, IAEA Rays of Hope and IARC Global Initiative on Cancer Registries. Upon successful course completion, learners will be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the scientific principles and core components of NCCPs;
- develop competencies in stakeholder management, and capacities in strategic coordination;
- develop skills and competencies in gap analysis, prioritization and costing of the NCCP, utilizing existing WHO tools such as the WHO cancer costing tool;
- translate prioritized interventions into SMART objectives and formulate NCCPs that are coherent, context-appropriate and feasible to implement;
- critically analyse data and conduct programme reviews, and monitoring and evaluation and optimize existing national health information systems for reporting; and
- share best practices and create a community of practice in support of the reduction of the burden of cancer and the improvement of quality of life for cancer patients.

The course offers a diverse learning experience utilizing case studies, discussion boards, reflective learning, self –assessments and in-person workshop.

Upon successful completion, learners will be awarded a certificate of completion.

News Source:

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