

The approval of National Oncology Program Action Plans for 2021 – 2025 should improve citizens' health in Slovakia

May 3, 2021 – Cancer affects the lives of almost every family in Slovakia. Systematic implementation of Slovak National Oncology Program (NOP) Action Plans may improve the health of our population for whom cancer is the second leading cause of death after cardiovascular diseases.

Oncological diseases continue to be in the center of attention in countries around the world even though the COVID-19 pandemic has been interfering with all areas of life for more than a year. Oncological diseases rank second worldwide per number of deaths. Cancer was diagnosed to 2.7 million people in EU countries last year and 1.3 million people succumbed to its consequences. According to NHIC, more than 30,000 new cases of cancer arise in Slovakia each year. The incidence as well as prevalence of oncological diseases in Slovakia keeps increasing.

“Living with cancer brings many health- and work-related and psycho-social problems during treatment and after it that need solving. The paradigm of cancer as an unequivocally incurable disease has now changed and oncological diseases are considered chronic in many cases, with early diagnostics and accessible adequate treatment influencing the prognosis heavily. It is extremely important that National Oncology Program and its Action Plans have proper political and financial support in order to really improve our country's health in terms of oncological diseases,” underline **Michal Mego, M.D., D.Sc., Prof. Chief expert for clinical oncology of the MoH SR** and **Mária Rečková, M.D., PhD., Director of National Oncology Institute**.

Fight against cancer has become an urgent and key topic of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan which was approved by the European Commission on February 3. **As a member state of the EU, our country can fulfil this pledge to its full extent via National Oncology Program of the SR.** Action plans of this strategic public health plan focus on prevention – both primary and secondary (including population-wide screening), early diagnostics, early and optimal treatment, supportive care, follow-up after treatment, palliative care and end-of-life care as well as research and development focused on innovative solutions and use of data.

In this regard, we consider it **crucial to preserve the continuity of NOP by Action Plans for the coming period 2021 – 2025.** Updated NOP Action Plans follow up on Action Plans first approved by the government of the SR in January 2019 for the period 2019 – 2020. The NOP Strategy also stipulated the establishment of National Oncology Institute itself within NCI in August 2018 to coordinate and implement NOP Action Plans. **The government of the SR will discuss the updated NOP Action Plans in June 2021.**

“Europe's Beating Cancer Plan is the pillar of a strong European Health Union and we consider it a pledge not only to the citizens of Slovakia, but also to the European community. Although the implementation of NOP Action Plans was severely affected in 2020 by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic which still has a significant effect on the Slovak society, it is necessary to continue our efforts to prevent and control oncological diseases on a national level,” emphasises **Dr. Daniela Kállayová, PhD., MPH, Department of Public Health, Screening and Prevention, MoH SR.**

Press release

Annexes:

Summary of NOP Action Plans 2019 – 2020:

<https://www.noisk.sk/about-us/national-oncology-program>

First comprehensive **Report on the State of Three Cancer Screenings in Slovakia in 2020**, including a vision for 2021: [2021-04-09-noi-rocenka-skriningy-2020.pdf \(noisk.sk\)](#)

State of Oncology in Slovakia Annual Report for 2020:

<https://www.noisk.sk/files/2021/2021-04-29-vyrocnna-sprava-2020-stav-onkologie-v-sr-sk.pdf>

National Oncology Institute (NOI) was established within National Cancer Institute on August 1, 2018. The mission of NOI is to serve as a platform of coordination, implementation, clinical research and education for activities carried out in order to fulfil the National Oncology Program in five areas: prevention and screening, diagnostics and treatment, research and development and supportive care. Data about the epidemiology of oncological diseases, oncological diseases and their diagnostics and treatment, information about cancer clinical trials in Slovakia, registered cancer drugs in Europe and possibilities of help coping with cancer are available on the NOI website in Slovak and English: www.noisk.sk. You can find important information on NOI's Facebook page as well: [NOI - Národný onkologický inštitút | Facebook](#)