



ARGENTINA

BRIDGING THE GAP

Enhancing Equitable Access & Innovation in Gastric Cancer Care in Argentina

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Argentina is making initial progress in strengthening gastric cancer care, with some awareness programs and oncology networks supporting patients. However, serious gaps remain in early detection, equitable access to diagnostics, and affordable treatment. Regional disparities, fragmented policies, and limited biomarker testing continue to undermine patient outcomes.

This policy brief evaluates the current state and outlines reforms needed to improve Argentina's gastric cancer maturity.

INTRODUCTION

Building on Awareness Gains Amid Structural Gaps

As Argentina faces an increasing burden of non-communicable diseases, gastric cancer represents a persistent public health challenge. While awareness efforts through local cancer associations and public hospitals exist, these initiatives have not yet translated into widespread early detection or equitable access to treatment.

With a **Level 2 – Developing** gastric cancer maturity, Argentina is at a critical juncture, with opportunities to leverage existing oncology infrastructure if supported by coordinated policy interventions and sustainable financing.



Argentina Ranks at Level 2 – Gastric Cancer Care Maturity Framework



GASTRIC CANCER IN ARGENTINA

Current Landscape and Strategic Gaps

Pillar	Current Status	Strength	Policy Action
Early Detection & Diagnosis	Most gastric cancers are diagnosed late, often in advanced stages due to lack of population-wide screening programs and limited endoscopy availability in rural areas.	Public hospitals in major cities like Buenos Aires offer diagnostic services.	Implement a national screening strategy targeting high-risk groups (e.g., H. pylori prevalence, family history) and expand endoscopy access in underserved regions.
Biomarker & Molecular Testing	Molecular testing is available only in select tertiary centers, mainly in urban areas, limiting precision medicine approaches.	Some specialized cancer centers have begun pilot biomarker testing.	Expand biomarker and molecular diagnostic infrastructure in public hospitals and foster partnerships with academia and industry to scale access.
Treatment Access	Access to modern therapies, including targeted drugs and immunotherapy, is uneven and largely restricted to private care; public insurance covers only a limited range.	Argentina has an established public insurance system and oncology hospitals.	Strengthen public insurance coverage to include essential modern therapies and establish procurement channels for targeted drugs.
Clinical Guidelines	No standardized national gastric cancer guidelines; treatment practices vary widely across hospitals and regions.	Major oncology institutes follow international standards.	Develop and implement unified, evidence-based national gastric cancer clinical guidelines, ensuring regional training and adoption.
Palliative & Survivorship Care	Palliative care services are growing but remain concentrated in large cities; rural patients have limited access.	Active role of NGOs and hospital-based palliative units.	Expand community-level palliative programs, train healthcare professionals, and ensure consistent access to essential pain medications.



CONCLUSION & Call to Action

Argentina's gastric cancer system is at a turning point. While there are encouraging signs—such as oncology expertise in major hospitals and NGO-driven support—these have yet to deliver equitable nationwide access to early detection, advanced treatments, and survivorship care. A coordinated national gastric cancer strategy is urgently required, integrating screening, diagnostics, treatment, and palliative support.

KEY POLICY PRIORITIES

- 1 Launch a National Screening Initiative:** Focus on high-risk populations with expanded diagnostic capacity across all provinces.
- 2 Scale Biomarker Access:** Integrate molecular testing into the public healthcare system and reimburse its use to support precision care.
- 3 Close the Treatment Gap:** Ensure equitable access to essential modern therapies through stronger insurance coverage and procurement policies.
- 4 Standardize Clinical Practices:** Develop and enforce national gastric cancer treatment guidelines, with regular audits and training.
- 5 Strengthen Palliative Care:** Expand services beyond urban centers to rural regions, ensuring nationwide access to pain management and psychological support.

CONCLUSION

With targeted reforms and strategic investments, Argentina can move from fragmented and inequitable gastric cancer services toward a more cohesive, patient-centered system. Leveraging existing oncology infrastructure and expanding equitable access will be key to improving survival and quality of life for gastric cancer patients across the country.