



BRIDGING THE GAP

Advancing Colorectal Cancer Care in the United Arab Emirates

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

United Arab Emirates (UAE) has significantly strengthened its colorectal cancer (CRC) care framework over the past decade, with organized screening programs, advanced treatment availability, and strong government investment in healthcare infrastructure. However, disparities persist in participation rates for screening, access to molecular testing, and survivorship support services.

With a **Level 3 – Advanced** maturity level, the UAE is positioned to build on its progress by ensuring equitable access across all emirates and integrating comprehensive survivorship programs into its cancer care strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Leveraging Strong Infrastructure to Address a Growing Burden

Colorectal cancer ranks among the most common cancers in the UAE. Strong investment in healthcare, public awareness initiatives, and the availability of advanced treatment modalities have improved patient outcomes. Nonetheless, gaps remain in achieving widespread screening participation, ensuring equitable access to biomarker testing, and providing systematized survivorship care.

Continued reforms, combined with patient-centered policies, will be critical to moving closer to world-class colorectal cancer care.





COLORECTAL CANCER IN THE UAE

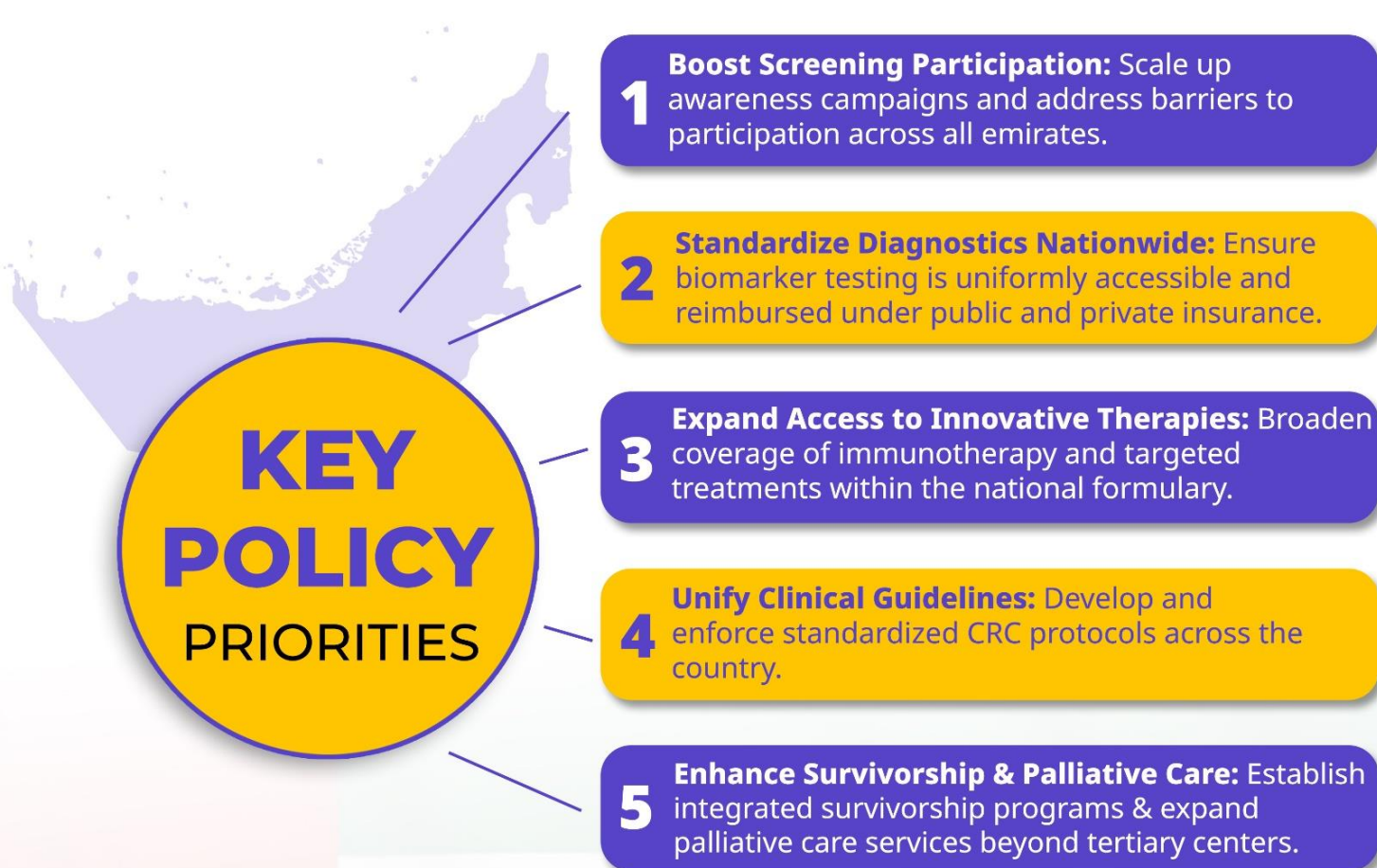
Current Landscape and Strategic Gaps

Pillar	Current Status	Strength	Policy Action
Early Detection & Diagnosis	Organized screening programs exist, targeting men and women over 40–50 years, but participation remains uneven across emirates.	Government-backed initiatives promoting early screening.	Strengthen outreach to boost participation rates, particularly among expatriate communities and in rural areas.
Biomarker & Molecular Testing	KRAS, NRAS, BRAF, and MSI testing are available in major hospitals but not uniformly accessible in all regions.	Advanced diagnostics capacity in leading tertiary hospitals in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.	Standardize access to biomarker testing across all emirates and include it under national health coverage schemes.
Treatment Access	Wide access to surgery, chemotherapy, and radiotherapy; targeted therapies and immunotherapies available in specialized centers.	Strong infrastructure with modern oncology centers.	Expand access to innovative therapies nationwide, ensure affordability, and enhance referral pathways between smaller hospitals and specialized centers.
Clinical Guidelines & Quality Standards	National treatment protocols largely align with international standards but are variably applied across emirates.	Strong reliance on international best practices in leading hospitals.	Develop unified national CRC guidelines and ensure consistent adoption across all healthcare providers.
Palliative & Survivorship Care	Palliative care is developing, but survivorship care is not yet fully integrated into cancer services.	Presence of palliative programs in select hospitals.	Establish structured survivorship programs, including psychological, nutritional, and rehabilitation support, and expand community-based palliative care.



CONCLUSION & Call to Action

The UAE's healthcare system provides a strong platform for colorectal cancer care, but regional disparities and uneven screening participation need to be addressed. Moving forward, the UAE can further enhance its cancer maturity by ensuring equal access, boosting awareness, and integrating holistic survivorship support.



CONCLUSION

With **Level 3 – Advanced maturity**, the UAE has built a strong foundation for colorectal cancer care, anchored by modern healthcare infrastructure and access to advanced therapies. The next step is ensuring **equity, consistency, and comprehensiveness**—so that every resident, regardless of location or socioeconomic status, can access early detection, world-class treatment, and survivorship support. Sustained commitment to national coordination and patient-centered care will enable the UAE to further reduce CRC mortality and improve long-term outcomes.