



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, 26 October 2021**

## **Cancer leaders call for innovations that advance equitable care**

*COVID-19 learnings must inform attempts to address inequities*

26 October 2021, Boston, MA—Global cancer leaders have called for an urgent and comprehensive look at ways to advance health equity, using lessons learned from COVID-19 over the past 20+ months. The 2021 World Cancer Leaders' Summit, a gathering of global cancer leaders that convened this week for the first time since the pandemic began, concluded with a strong call to address inequities in cancer care. Attendees urged other health care leaders, nonprofit organisations and governments across the world to focus and collaborate on efforts to increase equity.

"Inequities and disparities in health and care have always existed, but COVID-19 brought them to the forefront of discussions about global public health," said Dr Cary Adams, CEO of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC). "We, as leaders of the cancer community, must take those experiences and use them to make cancer prevention and care more accessible and equitable."

Topics discussed by the more than 600 leaders in attendance included:

- The impact of delayed diagnoses and treatment on service delivery and future mortality
- Increasing innovation and equity in cancer care
- Developments in advanced technology (AI, multi-cancer screenings, mRNA vaccines for cancer) to prevent cancer more efficiently, detect it more quickly and treat it more effectively

Organized by UICC and hosted by the American Society for Clinical Pathology, the World Cancer Leaders' Summit brought together global health leaders from more than 100 countries to discuss critical innovations that can drive more equitable cancer care.

"I personally witnessed the horrors of inequitable access to care and its tragic consequences when COVID-19 swept through India," said Prof. Anil D'Cruz, President of UICC and Director of Oncology at Apollo Hospitals, India. "This is our generation's 'never again' moment. Health care leaders must take what they learned through COVID to address problems in the current global health care system and institute innovations that will make more people safer from the dangers of infectious diseases, and more accessible to treatments and preventive tools."

People who have survived cancer and become strong advocates for the need to include patient voices in developing efficient cancer control policies also spoke at the Summit. Based on personal experience, they highlighted the importance of a patient's support network and how the notions of risk and value or quality of life vary for each person. They also emphasised how essential it is to support people who have been successfully treated, as there are often other health implications as well as psychosocial care needs that must be addressed.

[Download a recording of the WCLS press briefing \(passcode: u8%=yMmv\).](#)

UICC will be convening the cancer community again at the World Cancer Congress on 17-20 October 2022 in Geneva Switzerland. Open to the press.

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**About the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)** — The Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) is the largest and oldest international cancer-fighting organization. Founded in Geneva in 1933, UICC has some 1,180 member organizations in 172 countries. It enjoys consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and has official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). UICC has some 58 partners, including associations, companies and foundations committed to the fight against cancer. UICC is a founding member of the NCD Alliance, the McCabe Centre for Law & Cancer and the International Cancer Control Partnership (ICCP) and established the City Cancer Challenge Foundation in January 2019. UICC's mission is to both unite and support the cancer community in its efforts to reduce the global cancer burden, promote greater equity and ensure that cancer control remains a priority on the global health and development agenda. It pursues these goals by bringing together global leaders through innovative and far-reaching cancer control events and initiatives, building capacities to meet regional needs and developing awareness campaigns. <https://www.uicc.org/>

**About the World Cancer Leaders' Summit**—The World Cancer Leaders' Summit is the preeminent annual policy meeting dedicated to furthering global cancer control at the highest levels. The event brings together key decision-makers from around the world and encourages timely debate on emerging issues related to cancer. It provides an important forum to secure a coordinated, multileveled global response to address the spiraling cancer epidemic.

The WCLS is organized by UICC in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This year it was hosted by the American Society of Clinical Pathology (ASCP), a UICC member. <https://www.uicc.org/what-we-do/convening/world-cancer-leaders-summit>