



MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
NATIONAL CANCER PLAN

# National Cancer Plan

## *One Year Review*

July 2023 – July 2024



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## Introduction

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In July 2023, the Ministry of Public Health launched the National Cancer Plan, designed to span a period of five years until the conclusion of 2028. The plan comprises six chapters: monitoring and surveillance; prevention and screening; diagnosis, treatment and access to innovation; supportive care; rehabilitation; and governance. This collaborative effort was meticulously developed by local experts, then further refined and strengthened through revision by local and international experts. The national cancer plan, supported by international entities including Malte Liban, Union for International Cancer Control, Organization of European Cancer Institutes, Curie Institute, National Institute of Cancer, the World Health Organization, St. Jude International and the World Bank, underscores the comprehensive and inclusive approach to addressing cancer-related challenges at a national level.

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## Objective

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Conducting a one-year review of the National Cancer Plan is crucial:

- to foster public accountability and transparency
- to assess and determine the effectiveness of the implementation phase
- to engage stakeholders and provide an opportunity for feedback
- to ensure the alignment of the plan with broader national health priorities and strategies

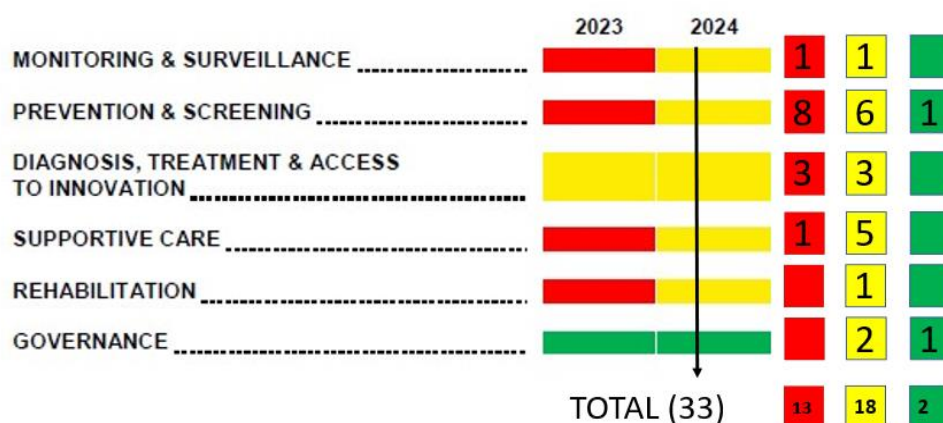
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## Methodology

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The National cancer core implementation committee at the Ministry of Public Health undertook a thorough examination and review of the National Cancer Plan and assessed the action steps that have been in progress since the start of the implementation phase. Progress made across the different chapters of the National Cancer Plan has been shared with the national cancer implementation advisory committee and with the committee of NGOs on Cancer Awareness as part of pre-arranged quarterly meetings. Stakeholders from both committees were consulted to seek their feedback and input on current progress in the plan and potential areas for improvement. Ultimately, the findings of this comprehensive review would inform evidence-based recommendations for refining and optimizing the national cancer plan to better meet the evolving healthcare needs of the population.

## Performance for Year 1



### •1• Monitoring and surveillance

#### 1A – Supporting the National Cancer Registry (NCR)

- Data entry, coding, cleaning, and analysis will include records up to 2022, with an expected completion date of December 2024.
- To align with IARC's recommendations and ensure the inclusion of Lebanese Cancer Data in the upcoming IARC publications, the National Cancer Implementation Committee is collaborating with the Epidemiological Surveillance Unit, the Biostatistics department at MoPH, and the WHO country office to integrate cancer registry data with mortality data.

#### 1B – Creating a surveillance system for cancer-related risk factors

#### Plans for 2024-2025:

Complete data collections for years 2019-2023

Continued coordination with IARC

Establishment of the cancer registry advisory committee that will ensure broader data collection, including nationality and mortality

### •2• Prevention and screening

#### 2A – Improving dietary habits and preventing obesity-related cancers

## **2B – Encouraging physical activity**

- Encouraging physical activity as a replacement to the use of tobacco products to protect health and wellbeing (as a part of the World No Tobacco Day).

## **2C – Developing a comprehensive anti-smoking strategy**

- To celebrate World No Tobacco Day, the Ministry of Public Health led a major awareness campaign on May 27 and May 28, 2024. The campaign invited students aged 7 to 15 from all public and private schools in Lebanon to join the global call to combat tobacco consumption. This awareness initiative was held in collaboration with the World Health Organization Country Office, the Ministry of Education, and UNICEF Lebanon.
- The launch of a National Media Awareness Campaign to raise awareness about the health risks of tobacco consumption, which was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the World Health Organization Country Office, and Cedars Art Production.
- The launch of a National Competition among students from all public and private schools, encouraging them to create anti-tobacco awareness videos.
- The MoPH conducted training sessions for trainers in public and private schools. These trainers will deliver awareness sessions to Grade 7 students during the Fall of the 2024-2025 academic year.

## **2D – Strengthening alcohol control**

## **2E – Controlling air pollution, pesticides and other environmental pollutants**

## **2F – Improving vaccination rate against HPV**

- Several initiatives were held throughout the year to increase awareness of the importance of receiving HPV vaccine for cancer prevention (AUB, USJ, Lebanese University...).

## **2G – Maintaining free access to Hepatitis B vaccine**

- Free access to Hepatitis B vaccine is maintained.

## **2H – Expanding the coverage of cervical cancer screening**

## **2I – Strengthening the national breast cancer screening program**

- Launching of the national breast cancer awareness campaign in Oct 2023, highlighting the importance of prevention, screening and early detection. This initiative was a collaborative effort involving MSD, Barabara Nassar Association, and LSMO.
- Launching of the Breast Cancer Awareness event in collaboration with the Lebanese Breast Cancer Foundation.


**2J – Improving the uptake of colorectal cancer screening** 

- Launching of the national colorectal cancer awareness campaign in March 2024, in collaboration with SAID NGO, bringing to the forefront the importance of early screening and detection of colon cancer.

**2K – Screening for lung cancer** 

**2L – Screening for prostate cancer** 

- Launching of the National Prostate Cancer Awareness Campaign in November 2024, in collaboration with the Lebanese Urology Society.

**2M – Involving Primary Health Care Centers (PHCCs) in primary prevention** 

**2N – Involving PHCCs in early detection/screening** 

**2O – Conducting research and cost-effectiveness studies for cancer screening and prevention** 

**Plans for 2024-2025:**

Implementation of the school education program

Improving breast cancer screening

Improving lung cancer screening

Development of comprehensive prostate cancer awareness campaign

Establishment of the tobacco control consortium

Continued work on better access for HPV vaccine

Better coordination with PHCCs

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**•3• Diagnosis, treatment and access to innovation**

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**3A – Developing conditions for systematic coordination among all healthcare players** 

- The Ministry of Public Health's National Cancer Plan is actively coordinating with healthcare stakeholders, including the Cancer Advisory Committee, various NGOs engaged in Cancer Awareness, and pediatric oncologists in Lebanon, to enhance coordination and bolster initiatives aimed at combating cancer.

**3B – Improving medical diagnostics of cancer patients** 

**3C –Improving access to innovative diagnostic and therapeutic tools** 

- It encompasses all aspects of enhancing access to medications through the MediTrack and Aman Programs.

**3D –Strengthening paramedical training programs through focused training** 

**3E –Improving care provided to children with cancer through adapted care provision**



- Lebanon has been designated as a focus country in the Global Initiative of Childhood Cancer.
- Assessment of the current childhood cancer situation and mapping of national resources and capabilities.
- Creation of a checklist/criteria for classifying pediatric oncology centers, specifying requirements for comprehensive cancer centers, pediatric oncology sites, and supportive (satellite) centers, and developing a Care Network system.
- Establishment a multidisciplinary tumor board for new and relapsed cases.

**3F –Adapting oncology care to the specific needs of patients aged 70 and older** 

**Plans for 2024-2025:**

Define accreditation criteria for various medical centers

Improving pediatric oncology

Improving geriatric oncology

Improve training for para-medical specialties

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**•4• Supportive care**

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**4A– Raising public awareness on palliative care and its integration into routine cancer care** 

- Experts and NGOs are working together to promote palliative care and its integration into routine cancer care.
- The Lebanese Society for Palliative Care was recently established.
- Lebanon is now part of the scientific committee working with St Jude global and the Pediatric Oncology East and Mediterranean group (POEM), organizing a regional workshop to strengthen the provision of pediatric palliative care in the region.

**4B –Enabling patient-centered care and shared decision-making: Integrating truth-telling and advanced care planning into cancer care across different care settings**



- The order of nurses completed a national palliative care training including truth telling and advanced care planning.
- Educational sessions will be delivered at the national level for healthcare professionals and community during the national pc month as part of the awareness campaign.

**4C –Making palliative care available and accessible to all cancer patients. Building capacity of primary care teams and specialist palliative care providers through education, training and continuous professional education**



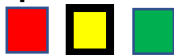
- Currently developing an online Palliative Care diploma at AUB Medical Center.
- Working with the Lebanese Order of Physicians and the Ministry of Public Health to ensure that this diploma becomes a recognized certification for Palliative Care physicians.

**4D –Making palliative care available and accessible to all cancer patients. Reimbursing palliative care services across different settings**



- Reimbursement of palliative care by the NSSF and insurance companies.

**4E –Making palliative care available and accessible to all cancer patients. Supporting the development of hospital and community-based palliative care services across the country**



- Progress in access to opioids which is now available through a local manufacturer.

**4F– Promoting palliative care research**



**Plans for 2024-2025:**

Better access to palliative care services through training and education

Establish criteria for home-based care and hospital-based palliative care

Encourage palliative care research

Continue to work on better access to opiates

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**•5• Rehabilitation**

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**5A –Addressing social barriers affecting cancer patients**



- Visit to a rehabilitation center in France.
- Ongoing research work on the best way to establish a rehabilitation strategy in Lebanon.

## Plans for 2024-2025:

Develop a strategy for better support of cancer survivors

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### •6• Governance

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#### 6A –Creating the “Cancer Program” within MOPH

- Decree is ready for the « Cancer Program » at MOPH.

#### 6B –Guiding the implementation of the National Cancer Plan with health technology assessment (HTA)

- HTA is under active development at a national level for all therapeutic domains.
- Trainings are ongoing and international cooperation with French Haute Autorité de Santé (HAS)

#### 6C –Inviting all Lebanese healthcare organizations and societies to refer to the National Cancer Plan

- All stakeholders are now together to support the National Cancer Plan.

## Plans for 2024-2025:

Finalize the legal structure of the “Cancer Program”

### Download the National Cancer Plan

Scan the barcode to access the online page of the National Cancer Plan

