

## *DECLARATION of the Armenian Cancer Patient Advocates Alliance (ACPAA)*

Yerevan, October 21, 2019

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Adopted by the participants of the Armenian delegation of the 9<sup>th</sup> WE CAN Eastern Europe and Central Asia Advocacy Summit on Breast and Cervical Cancer held in Yerevan, Armenia, on October 11-12, 2019 (hereinafter referred to as the Armenian Cancer Patient Advocates Alliance, ACPAA).

We, the participants of the above-mentioned international summit, who are members of the ACPAA, presenting themselves as civil society organizations of the Republic of Armenia, individuals and cancer patients and survivors, who are engaged in protecting the interests of cancer patients, while being concerned about the prevalence of malignant tumors in the Republic of Armenia and the continuing growth of cancer cases among the general population of the country, are committed to work together to prevent cancer and provide cancer patients with personalized support, provide access to care and treatment, and protect their healthcare and social rights.

Cancer knows no bounds. It continues to remain one of the ontological problems of the mankind, endangering the notion of the natural survival of the mankind.

We are committed to join our efforts in executing the public awareness campaign among the general population of the Republic of Armenia in order to prevent cancer and provide access to its treatment by participating in campaigns, projects, and activities initiated by various international organizations.

In view of the above, we call on the Government of the Republic of Armenia, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia, the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, Yerevan State Medical University, state and non-state stakeholder organizations to:

1. Support the organizational activities of the annual summits of cancer patient advocates, which will continuously bring together all stakeholders and year by year will expand the Armenian network and its potential and geography;
2. Regulate by respective legislation the VAT exemption of target drugs which are used for treating cancer and are listed in the updated guidelines, thus allowing a better access to treatment with these drugs, as well as allocate state funding for provision of access of cancer patients to the drugs from the WHO essential drugs list;
3. Provide complete patient pathways of comprehensive treatment, including surgical treatment, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, target therapy, for any cancer cases

## *DECLARATION of the Armenian Cancer Patient Advocates Alliance (ACPAA)*

detected within the cervical cancer screening that is currently underway in Armenia and the breast cancer screening to be implemented in 2020-2021;

4. In order to improve the patient-physician and patient-nurse relationship and make future physicians' and nurses' communication with patients more efficient and effective, within the curriculum of the Yerevan State Medical University shift the subject "Psychology" from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> year of medical studies, as well as replicate the experience of developed countries by introducing a new subject "Communication skills"; in addition, within the curriculum of nursing technical colleges introduce new subjects of "Psychology" and "Communication skills" and a course on palliative care;
5. Conduct in-depth evidence-based research at the state policy level in the mining centers of the Republic of Armenia, in the affected and adjacent communities (the enlarged communities of Alaverdi, Akhtala, Shnogh, Teghut, Mets Ayr, Shamlugh, Odzun, Mghart, Vardenis, Sotk, Kapan, Kajaran, Artsvanik, Artsvanik) to determine the impact of mining activity and environmental pollution on the health of people living in those areas by compiling and comparing the rates of cancer morbidity and mortality and establishing the possible causal relationship between them,
6. Ensure the complete and comprehensive registration of all cases diagnosed with malignant tumors among the population of the Republic of Armenia by developing and properly operating and maintaining a National Cancer Registry in compliance with international standards;
7. In compliance with the RA Law on Protection of Personal Data, provide citizens and stakeholder organizations with access to information of the National Cancer Registry by making statistical data accessible by filters of the place of residence of the RA citizens diagnosed with cancer, the actual site of treatment administration and other details, as well as statistical data on cancer-prone deaths by using modern technologies (online database, etc.),
8. In medical centers where surgical treatment of cancer cases is performed and covered by state funding mandate the staff position of an oncopsychologist to provide cancer patients with psychosocial support during cancer treatment;
9. Improve the capacity of the personnel of the provincial polyclinics and the quality of communication of the medical staff when dealing with cancer patients, particularly in the areas of psychosocial support, professional delicacy, ethics and counseling in eligibility to state-regulated coverage and programs;
10. Provide all provincial polyclinics with approved positions of an oncologist and fill the existing vacancies with appropriate oncology specialists;
11. Develop and implement a national public awareness program on malignant tumors aimed at preventing cancer in Armenia, reducing cancer morbidity, promoting early

## *DECLARATION of the Armenian Cancer Patient Advocates Alliance (ACPAA)*

detection of cancer, raising awareness of citizens about available cancer treatment options and state coverage programs;

12. Amend and make changes in the legislative framework of the public health protection, for the legislative definition and application of a number of public health components, such as healthy lifestyle, healthy food, and other internationally accepted elements, contribute to the prevention of malignant tumors.

We, the undersigned, call on civil society organizations to pay close attention to the prevalence of cancer and treatment of malignant tumors in the Republic of Armenia, as well as to jointly ensure access to information and facilitate participatory decision-making in this field.

1. HENARAN charitable foundation, cancer patient advocacy organization, Martirosyan Hripsime, cancer survivor, cancer patient advocate, Yerevan
2. “Bridge of Health Armenia” pediatric cancer treatment support foundation, Barseghyan Anahit, cancer survivor’s mother, Yerevan
3. “Center for rights development” NGO, Zopunyan Violetta, Yerevan
4. “Saunders Center” healthcare NGO, Movsesyan Narine, palliative care expert, Yerevan
5. “Hand to hand” Armenian association of health protection NGO, Ohanyan Olya, cancer survivor, cancer patient advocate, Ijevan, Tavush
6. “Time and result” legal and social development NGO, Kirakosyan Armenuhi, cancer patient advocate, Chambarak, Gegharkunik
7. “Effective governance and community development” NGO, Petrosyan Hripsime, cancer patient advocate, Krashen, Shirak
8. “Center for community mobilization and support” NGO, Dulgaryan Oleg, cancer patient advocate, Alaverdi, Lori
9. “Friends’ home” NGO, Beglaryan Diana, cancer patient advocate, Yerevan
10. “Community Support Center for Women and Youth Assistance” NGO, Asatryan Anik, cancer patient advocate, Zangakatun, Ararat
11. “Armash rural communities support and development center” NGO, Matevosyan Tigran, cancer patient advocate, Armash, Ararat
12. TATEVIK charitable NGO, Petrosyan Lyusya, cancer patient advocate, Maralik, Shirak
13. TARON youth development NGO, Dilanchyan Hermine, cancer patient advocate, Nerkin Khndzoresk, Syunik
14. “Talin Women’s Resource Center” development foundation, Khachatryan Gayane, cancer patient advocate, Talin, Aragatsotn

*DECLARATION of the Armenian Cancer Patient Advocates Alliance (ACPAA)*

15. Association of European Cancer Leagues, Ter-Hovhannisyan Vaghinak, Armenia's Youth Ambassador, cancer patient advocate, Yerevan
16. Soghoian Knarik, cancer patient on active treatment, cancer patient advocate, Yerevan
17. Gishyan Lilit, cancer patient advocate, Noyemberyan, Tavush
18. Davtyan Elen, YSU Faculty of Philosophy and psychology, APOA member, cancer patient advocate, Yerevan
19. Sahakyan Luiza, cancer survivor, cancer patient advocate, Yerevan
20. Aleksandrova Maria, nurse-anesthetist, Kanaker-Zeitun Medical Center, Coordinator of Nursing palliative care program, cancer patient advocate, Yerevan
21. Hurumyan Armenuhi, cancer patient's family member, cancer patient advocate, Stepanakert, Artsakh
22. Lazaryan Marine, cancer patient advocate, Stepanakert, Artsakh
23. Abgaryan Anna, cancer patient advocate, Yerevan
24. Martirosyan Marine, cancer patient advocate, Yerevan
25. Mughdusyan Mariam, cancer patient advocate, Yerevan
26. Armenian Psycho-Oncology Association (APOA), Asribabayan Yeva
27. "Fund 100" pediatric cancer treatment assistance foundation, Baloyan Tigran
28. RA National Assembly deputy, Chair of the Standing Committee on Protection of Human Rights and Public Affairs, Zohrabyan Naira
29. Young Oncologists Group of Armenia
30. Pediatric hematology and oncology group
31. Armenian Association of Hematology and Oncology

*DECLARATION is open and any NGO or individual, who is concerned with the problem of rights and interests of cancer patients in Armenia, is welcome to join it.*