

Media Release

Tuesday 4 February 2020

Global survey highlights actions Australians want on cancer

World Cancer Day survey shows Australians most concerned about affordable and equal access to cancer services

This World Cancer Day (Tuesday 4 February), Cancer Council Australia is calling for more action to reduce inequities in cancer outcomes, following a new global survey showing nearly half (45%) of all Australians believe Government should be doing more to make cancer services more affordable.

The survey led by The Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) and conducted by IPSOS, asked respondents around the world to nominate which issues they believed Governments should be addressing when it comes to cancer.

Almost one in three Australians also believed Government should be doing more to support and fund cancer research (32%) and to ensure equal access to cancer care for everyone, without regard to gender, race, income or age (30%).

Professor Sanchia Aranda, CEO Cancer Council Australia said “Australia has some of the best cancer outcomes in the world with nearly seven in 10 Australians surviving beyond five years after a cancer diagnosis however, there are a number of groups within our community who have significant lower survival rates.

“We know that our poorest Australians are 37% more likely to die from cancer than the wealthiest Australians so World Cancer Day is an opportunity for us to look at our success but also acknowledge where there is still more work to be done.

“Nearly half of all Australians believe we should be making cancer services such as medicines, treatment and care more affordable and we know that a cancer diagnosis comes with significant costs at an already incredibly stressful time.”

Of the 20 countries surveyed, only Kenyans and South Africans were more likely to rank affordable access to services as one of the top issues with 59% and 46% ranking it as a top issue respectively.

Professor Aranda said that any action needed to take account of Australia’s complex national/state and public/private health system and explained some of the steps Governments could take to improve cancer outcomes for vulnerable Australians.

“Australia has a comprehensive public health system however the concerns expressed in this survey about equal access show that more needs to be done to help some Australians take advantage of our great health system, particularly those with low incomes, First Nations Australians and those in rural and remote communities.

“We need to ensure that cost does not hamper people from accessing optimal cancer care. Attention is needed to ensure there are appropriate income support options available and that travel and accommodation support for those who must leave home for diagnosis and treatment reflects the costs incurred.



“Cancer Council supports the Federal Health Minister’s efforts to address the rising out of pocket costs experienced by people with cancer and continued attention to this issue will be required.”

The survey results support a separate study that found 19% of people with cancer reported that a cost-related factor had influenced their decision making about treatment – including the costs of travelling to and from treatment, loss of income and actual costs of treatment.

“Research from the Consumer Health Forum concluded that more than a quarter of people having treatment for cancer incurred out of pocket costs of more than \$10,000 in the two years prior to the research being conducted.

“Aside from reducing out of pocket costs for patients, doctors and healthcare providers can play a significant role in helping patients to understand their treatment options, including the charges and expected out-of-pocket costs of each option. Informed decision making must include attention to the potential for financial hardship,” Professor Aranda explained.

Affordability of cancer services was also the top issue for American respondents to the global survey. Both the US and UK also ranked supporting and funding cancer research and ensuring equal access to cancer care for everyone as top issues.

World Cancer Day is an initiative by UICC that aims to unite the world with the aim to save millions of cancer deaths every year. 2020 marks the 20th anniversary of World Cancer Day.

UICC has set a global target to reduce the number of premature deaths from cancer and noncommunicable disease by one third by 2030. The survey was the first multi-country public survey on cancer perceptions in a decade.

ENDS

For media enquiries please contact Tegan Brown via the Cancer Council Australia media line: (02) 8063 4109 (diverts to mobile outside of business hours) or media@cancer.org.au

Notes to Editors

To view UICC’s World Cancer Day 2020 press kit, including their report and multimedia library, please click [here](#).

About World Cancer Day 2020

World Cancer Day takes place every year on 4 February and is the uniting global initiative under which the world comes together to raise the profile of cancer in a positive and inspiring way. Spearheaded by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), the day aims to save millions of preventable deaths each year by raising awareness and improving education about the disease while calling for action from governments and individuals across the world.

World Cancer Day 2020 will be led by the theme ‘I Am and I Will’, an empowering call for personal commitment and represents the power of our actions taken now to reduce the growing impact of cancer.

This year follows on from the success of last year’s campaign, which saw nearly 1,000 activities taking place in 127 countries, over 700,000 social media posts, and 62 governments participating in 2019.

For more information, please visit: www.worldcancerday.org

About the survey:

The International Public Opinion Survey on Cancer is the international online survey conducted by Ipsos from 25 October to 25 November 2019 on a total sample of 15,427 adults. The survey was conducted via the Ipsos Online Panel system in 20 countries around the world: Australia, Brazil, Bolivia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Kenya, the Philippines Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and the USA. More detailed methodology can be found in the report.

Results of the question are outlined below:

| | Total | Gender | |
|--|-------|--------|--------|
| | | Male | Female |
| N unw | 1000 | 469 | 531 |
| Make cancer services more affordable, including screenings, medicines, treatment and care | 44.9 | 36.4 | 53.2 |
| Support and fund cancer research | 31.6 | 33.1 | 30 |
| Ensure equal access to cancer care for everyone, without regard to gender, race, income, age etc. | 30.2 | 25.5 | 34.8 |
| Invest in cancer health infrastructure, including investing in cancer specialists, adequate equipment, facilities and technologies | 26.2 | 27.5 | 24.9 |
| Improve timely access to cancer health services (e.g. waiting times, reduced distance to travel to cancer services) | 25.9 | 19 | 32.6 |
| Raise public awareness and improve education on cancer prevention, risk factors and signs and symptoms | 17.3 | 18.2 | 16.3 |
| Reduce tobacco use through regulating its availability and promotion (e.g. including increasing taxation on tobacco products, ensuring plain packaging, regulating tobacco marketing and creating smoke-free public spaces and workplaces) | 15.6 | 14.9 | 16.3 |
| Encourage the take up of vaccines to protect against diseases with a known link to cancer (e.g. vaccines against Hepatitis B and the Human Papillomavirus (HPV)) | 13.3 | 11.9 | 14.8 |
| Regulate the availability and promotion of other, non-tobacco products with a known link to increase the risk of cancer (e.g. sugar sweetened drinks, solariums and alcohol) | 9.7 | 9.5 | 9.8 |
| Improve air quality | 7.1 | 8.4 | 5.9 |
| Other | 0.8 | 0.4 | 1.2 |
| I don't think the government should do anything when it comes to cancer | 1.9 | 2.6 | 1.2 |
| Don't know | 10.9 | 13.2 | 8.8 |
| Prefer not to say | 4.7 | 4.7 | 4.7 |