



# FOUNDING CANCER CHARTER

## 1. PREAMBLE

We the undersigned, in order to better combat the human and socio-economic toll of the cancer group of diseases; hereby agree to the principles contained in this Founding Cancer Charter.

## 2. STATEMENTS

- 2.1 We are deeply troubled by the profound impact of cancer on millions of human lives, and on productivity and development in South Africa.
- 2.2 Cancer is a critical public health problem and must be established as a priority matter on the South African public health agenda.
- 2.3 The humanitarian treatment of people with cancer must be promoted.
- 2.4 Access to quality health care is a basic human right.
- 2.5 South African health care resources are currently limited, and must be distributed wisely, equitably, and in a sustainable manner
- 2.6 Government should allocate cancer prevention and care resources appropriate to the relative human and economic burden of these diseases.
- 2.7 Currently achievable improvements in cancer survival remain unrealised due to insufficient emphasis on prevention and screening.
- 2.8 Patients, along with their caregivers and families, play an extremely important role in the management of cancer. They must be encouraged to become active participants in the prevention, screening, diagnosis and treatment of cancer.
- 2.9 A permanent and powerful alliance – among patients, caregivers and families, health professionals, researchers, government, funders, industry, media and the broader community – must be established to conquer cancer and the greatest obstacles to overcoming cancer: fear, ignorance and complacency.

## 3. BILL OF RIGHTS

We affirm the following fundamental rights for all persons affected by cancer regardless of their age, sex, gender, insurance or health status, marital status,



disability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, conscience, belief, educational, social or economic background.

- 3.1 All people in South Africa are entitled to knowledge and appropriate information, in a language they understand, regarding cancer, risk factors, and how cancer may best be prevented, identified and treated.
- 3.2 All patients are entitled to the provision of equitable and accessible services that will address the needs of patients, on physical, social, emotional and spiritual levels.
- 3.3 All patients are entitled to have access to the best available clinically appropriate treatment, based on accurate diagnosis, stage of disease and current evidence-based medicine, in a suitably equipped facility, within a reasonable time frame.
- 3.4 All patients are entitled to the best available and most appropriate form of palliative relief from pain and suffering.
- 3.5 All patients are entitled to progressive and reasonable national efforts to devote resources to support them from diagnosis, through treatment, to palliation.
- 3.6 All patients are entitled to a work environment free from discrimination and for reasonable accommodation of their disability in the workplace.
- 3.7 All patients are entitled to have their dignity and wishes respected.

## 4. FOUNDING PRIORITIES

We believe strongly that the following priority and urgent steps are required, in order to establish a powerful foundation to combat the human and socio-economic toll of cancer in South Africa:

- 4.1 Support the creation and maintenance of a single national population-based cancer registry, and advocate for a clear legislative authorisation for the submission of cancer data by doctors and pathologists to the National Cancer Registry.
- 4.2 Support the implementation of a National Cancer Control Plan.
- 4.3 Support and coordinate a national cancer awareness program, and additional awareness efforts regarding specific types of cancer, to inform, educate and empower South Africans.
- 4.4 Invest in expanding and enhancing cost-effective screening techniques and early management strategies, for cancers most amenable to treatment based on early intervention and sustained treatment.
- 4.5 Promote, defend and protect the rights and interests of patients, among health policy-makers, healthcare professionals and healthcare funders. Ensure patient representation at a policy level.
- 4.6 Uphold, apply and implement the tenets of this Founding Cancer Charter.

