Swiss Cancer League:
From prevention to palliation

The Swiss Cancer League is a national organization that intervenes at political, social and individual levels in the interests of people threatened or affected by cancer and who suffer from the consequences of cancer, and increasing the numbers of people who are cured of cancer and who receive care and help.

The programmes and activities of the Swiss Cancer League provide long-term support both to people threatened or affected by cancer and to specialists in the field. The themes of the best-known prevention programmes are protection against the sun, the dangers of smoking, and the importance of a healthy diet. Most of its public campaigns are conducted in coordination with health services, in order to achieve the best possible response. These campaigns include ‘Cream Attacks’ at open-air events (run with well-known manufacturers of sun-protection products), which have been found to have great appeal. Interactive Internet games to sensitize people to the dangers of smoking, teaching materials for schools and presentations in major distribution centres and canteens, betting on encouraging people to eat five portions of fruit or vegetables a day, have also been very popular. Its policy of providing information for early recognition of cancer diseases—particularly breast cancer and bowel cancer—also includes the possibilities and limits of screening, so that an interested person is in a position to make a conscious decision. For several years, the many Cancer League events held as part of Breast Cancer Month (October) have received much attention throughout the country.

The Cancer League’s Cancer Helpline call centre, run by professionals, provides a readily accessible point of contact for everyone. The League also offers psychosocial counselling and support to people suffering from cancer and to their relatives, in the 68 advice centres operated by the 20 cantonal Cancer Leagues and by means of free brochures written especially for the purpose.

Health professionals are supported by advanced training courses in palliative care and communication skills and a post-graduate course in psycho-oncology. The Swiss Cancer League proposes a quality management system for clinics, which includes medical and nursing standards and teaching materials in the fields of palliative care, chronic pain and fatigue.

French League against Cancer
Cancer is a public service association founded in 1918 after WWI when cancer was recognised to be a spreading epidemic.

The League’s goal is to come to the aid of cancer patients, their family and friends. Since its founding, the League has developed into a strong network and leads the fight against cancer on three levels: research, information and prevention, and psycho-social assistance for patients.

The network
The league is a federation of 102 departmental committees that are active in relaying the mission of the administrative council and the national scientific council. 30 000 volunteers keep the network active by leading the fight and generating the essential resources of the league.

A battle on all fronts
The League believes that the battle against cancer needs to be fought in 3 areas simultaneously:

Support in fundamental and clinical research
70% of resources are dedicated to supporting research. This investment is dedicated to promoting projects in fundamental research such as the Tumor Identity Card, in clinical research such as the implementation of new treatments and the improvement of existing treatments, and in social sciences research to make sure that quality of life issues for patients are also taken into consideration.

Prevention and Early Detection
Considering that 50% of cancers could be avoided through access to better information on prevention techniques, the league continuously develops campaigns to inform the public on tobacco addiction, alcoholism, sun exposure, nutrition, and carcinogenic materials. The league is also a partner in the “Pouvoirs Publics” for the implementation of the necessary tools for effective early detection techniques, in particular those for the early detection of breast cancer.

Psycho-social support for patients and their loved ones
Since its founding, the league has been dedicating a large portion of its resources and actions to the social and financial aid of patients and their families. For the past 5 years, under the leadership of its President Henri Pujol, the league has developed programs for psychological assistance allowing patients to break out of their confinement to change social perceptions on cancer. In 1998, the first general assistance allowing patients to break out of their confinement to change social perceptions on cancer. In 1998, the first general assistance allowing patients to break out of their confinement to change social perceptions on cancer.

The League is proud to have contributed to a new outlook on cancer and have successfully participated with the implementation of a national cancer control plan which the President of the Republic, Jacques Chirac, has listed amongst the top national priorities.

With 630 000 members, 30 000 volunteers, 102 departmental committees and 300 salaried staff, the League is a major player in the fight against cancer in France today.

Collaborating Organisations
Growing global cancer burden
Each year, 6 million people die from cancer, and 10 million new cases are diagnosed. If current global trends continue, an estimated 10 million people will die of cancer in 2020, and the number of new cases will increase to 15 million per year. In today’s world, each and every person will be touched by cancer either as a patient, a family member or a friend. If rising global trends are to be reversed, then present knowledge must be put into effect on a wider scale.

Cancer is a worldwide public health problem
Often cancer is regarded as a disease of the developed world, but as developing countries experience improved living standards and longer life expectancy, cancer incidence is on the rise. In most developed countries, cancer is already the first leading cause of premature death, and epidemiological evidence points to the emergence of the same trend in developing countries. By 2020, an estimated 60% of all new cancer cases will occur in the developing world. Responsible for 12% of all deaths worldwide, cancer claimed twice as many lives as AIDS in 2002.

Concerted effort towards cancer control
As the largest independent, non-profit, non-governmental association of 280 cancer-fighting organisations in over 80 countries, UICC is a global resource for action and voice for change. UICC brings together individuals in the global campaign against cancer from a wide range of organisations including advocacy groups, patient and survivor support networks, voluntary cancer societies, public health authorities, and research and treatment centres.

UICC, its vision and mission
UICC is the only international non-governmental organisation that is dedicated solely to the global control of cancer. Its vision is of a world where cancer is eliminated as a major life-threatening disease for future generations.

UICC’s mission is to build and lead the global community that is engaged in:
• sharing and exchanging cancer control knowledge and competence equitably,
• transferring scientific findings to clinical settings,
• systematically reducing and eventually eliminating disparities in prevention, early detection, treatment and care of cancers, and
• delivering the best possible care to all cancer patients.