



AECA Mobilizes International Efforts for Cancer Patient Refugees

For more than two decades, the American Eurasian Cancer Alliance (AECA) has maintained a mission to pool intellectual and scientific resources to further research and training in cancer prevention and clinical treatment strategies. Responding to the current geopolitical crisis in Ukraine, AECA is uniquely positioned to optimize its vast network of individual and institutional collaborators throughout Eurasia to ensure timely and appropriate delivery of healthcare services to those in need.

The situation in Ukraine has resulted in millions leaving the country to seek refuge in neighboring territories, as well as across the European and Asian continents. Given emergency services are prioritized in times of turmoil, AECA's organizational partners within the international cancer control community are collaborating to ensure Ukrainian cancer patients will not be severely neglected. Over the past twenty years, AECA has developed a network of governmental, clinical, and scientific leaders that have worked together to implement standardized treatment pathways across many participating countries.

According to the nation's Ministry of Health, more than 150,000 Ukrainians are diagnosed with cancer each year. Not only have Ukraine's medical facilities and supply chains been severely disrupted, with more than 150 hospitals closed throughout the nation, cancer treatment has been interrupted for those who have remained in the country. For individuals who have left Ukraine, they face a range of challenges related to accessing necessary medical services in their new host nation.



Ukrainian refugees flee the country with their personal belongings

A key priority of the World Health Organization (WHO) relief effort is to work with health authorities to minimize disruptions to the delivery of critical healthcare services within Ukraine and in countries hosting refugees, an effort which AECA is proud to join. AECA's assistance has included engagement of administrative and clinical leaders across Europe and Eurasia to implement best practices for sharing of medical records across disparate nations and coordination of necessary logistics to deliver clinical care. Leveraging prior efforts to develop standardized treatment protocols across many health authorities, AECA is now able to facilitate the rapid initiation of patient treatment in host countries. This urgent and united effort with international collaborators has enabled the delivery of more timely cancer care and has created an opportunity for cancer patients to achieve their intended treatment outcome.

Additionally, AECA's continued emphasis on educational opportunities among European and Eurasian healthcare professionals is now being applied through real life experiences. Past physician training on unified, internationally-accepted protocols in countries where AECA has a footprint, provides refugees with access to exceptional healthcare services during these most extenuating circumstances.

Following decades of cancer control efforts throughout the Eurasian region, AECA continues to identify synergistic opportunities to offer its capacity and coalition building expertise in support of Ukrainian refugees. AECA, operating in coordination with leading international partners and Eurasia-based health systems, is expanding its strategic networks. AECA's devotion to improving the quality of life for cancer patients globally continues, the current conflict will be monitored closely to adapt to the quickly evolving needs of Ukrainian cancer patients and healthcare providers.



AECA-affiliated physicians provide front-line care to Ukrainian refugees