

Europe-wide online event highlights survivorship, innovation, education, advocacy, and the future of cancer nursing

On 18 May 2026, the [European Oncology Nursing Society](#) (EONS) marked European Cancer Nursing Day (ECND26) with an online Europe-wide celebration bringing together cancer nurses under the theme “*Supporting Life Beyond Cancer.*”

Organised annually by EONS, European Cancer Nursing Day recognises the essential contribution of cancer nurses across the entire cancer continuum while advocating for greater recognition, investment, education, and support for the oncology nursing profession across Europe. This year’s theme highlighted the increasingly important role cancer nurses play in survivorship, long-term follow-up, rehabilitation, psychosocial support, palliative care, and holistic person-centred care beyond active treatment.

The online celebration enabled broad participation and meaningful exchange among members of the European cancer nursing community from across Europe and beyond. Throughout the event, presentations from EONS Board Members and Working Group representatives demonstrated not only the impact of cancer nurses in clinical practice, but also the extensive educational, advocacy, research, communication, and policy work taking place across the organisation.

Innovation, Survivorship, and the Evolving Role of Cancer Nurses

The event opened with welcoming remarks from EONS leadership, including EONS President Dr Wendy McInally, ECND26 Task Group Chair Eugenia Trigos Arjona, and EONS Board Member Matthias Hellberg-Naegele. Speakers reflected on the importance of resilience, collaboration, innovation, and compassion within cancer nursing at a time when healthcare systems continue to face increasing pressures and evolving patient needs.

One of the key presentations during ECND26 focused on how innovation and technology are shaping the future of oncology nursing practice. Associate Professor Remziye Semerci Şahin, EONS Board Member and Co-Chair of the Research Working Group, presented on integrating technology-driven innovations into cancer nursing care to enhance patient outcomes and clinical practice. The presentation highlighted the growing role of digital tools, robotics, artificial intelligence, and supportive technologies in improving patient experiences and healthcare delivery, while emphasising that compassionate, person-centred care must remain at the heart of cancer nursing.

A central focus of the day was the session dedicated to this year’s theme, “*Supporting Life Beyond Cancer.*” Matthias Hellberg-Naegele, Advanced Practice Nurse at HOCH Health Eastern Switzerland and EONS Board Member, explored the realities of survivorship and long-term cancer care, particularly for patients living with chronic and advanced cancers such as multiple myeloma. His presentation highlighted the complex illness trajectory experienced by many patients and the importance of continuity of care, symptom management, emotional support, and holistic nursing interventions throughout the cancer journey.

Education, Advocacy, and Strengthening the Cancer Nursing Workforce

The celebration also provided an opportunity for EONS Working Groups to present ongoing initiatives and future priorities, reflecting the organisation’s C.A.R.E. strategy across

communication, advocacy, research, education, and early career development.

The Communication Working Group shared activities focused on strengthening collaboration and visibility across EONS. Updates included initiatives to improve communication between Working Groups, develop communication guidelines aligned with current best practices, expand podcast collaborations, and promote “good news stories” highlighting achievements and innovation within oncology nursing. The group also emphasised the importance of increasing the visibility and impact of EONS by sharing evidence-based information and showcasing the work being carried out across the organisation.

The Advocacy Working Group highlighted ongoing activities supporting policy engagement, workforce wellbeing, and patient-centred advocacy. A major focus was the EONS Cancer Nursing Index (ECNI) 2025, which has already received over 680 responses from nurses across 37 countries. Building on previous editions, ECNI 2025 places particular emphasis on working conditions and safety in cancer nursing while helping generate national profiles and evidence to support future policy and workforce improvements across Europe. Additional updates included activities related to workplace safety accreditation, safety webinars, prevention projects, podcasts, and the Patient Advisory Council.

Research initiatives also featured prominently throughout ECND26. The Research Working Group presented updates on EONS research proposal workshops and PhD research workshops aimed at strengthening cancer nursing research capacity across Europe.

The Education Working Group shared updates on several major educational initiatives led by EONS. This included progress on the EONS Cancer Nursing Education Framework Update Study, a flagship initiative designed to define core competencies for specialist cancer nurses across Europe. The framework covers the full cancer care continuum and aims to strengthen consistency, quality, and professional development in oncology nursing education internationally.

The group also presented updates on the ESO-EONS Masterclass in Oncology Nursing, which prepares cancer nurses for advanced and future leadership roles while strengthening evidence-based clinical practice. Additional educational activities included webinars, educational collaborations, and professional development opportunities supporting cancer nurses across different stages of their careers.

The Early Career Nurses Group highlighted strategic projects planned for 2026, including research publications, webinars, podcasts, blogs, and representation within major EONS initiatives and advisory councils. Their presentation reflected EONS’ strong commitment to empowering the next generation of cancer nursing leaders and ensuring early career professionals remain actively involved in shaping the future of cancer care across Europe.

Recognising Compassion, Leadership, and Life Beyond Cancer

As part of the celebration, ECND26 also featured a video competition highlighting inspiring examples of person-centred oncology nursing care. The competition invited participants to creatively reflect on this year’s theme, “*Supporting Life Beyond Cancer*,” and showcase the impact cancer nurses have on patients’ lives every day.

The winning entry was awarded to Núria Aguado Machancoses and the team from INCLIVA Instituto de Investigación Sanitaria in Valencia, Spain, for their powerful and moving video demonstrating the

importance of compassionate, holistic cancer nursing care. The competition formed an important part of the ECND26 campaign, celebrating innovation, empathy, and the dedication of cancer nurses across Europe.

European Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare Olivér Várhelyi shared a public message marking European Cancer Nursing Day 2026 and acknowledging the vital contribution of cancer nurses across Europe.

In his statement, Commissioner Várhelyi emphasised that *“cancer care is more than treatment”* and recognised the central role cancer nurses play in patient-centred care. He highlighted their contribution in supporting patients and families through diagnosis, treatment, recovery, survivorship, and long-term follow-up, while also helping manage symptoms, provide emotional and psychological support, and improve quality of life throughout the cancer journey.

The Commissioner also reaffirmed the European Commission’s continued commitment to improving cancer prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship through Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan, while thanking cancer nurses for *“helping people live beyond cancer.”*

EONS President Dr Wendy McNally also reflected on the significance of this year’s theme and the continuing role of cancer nurses in survivorship and long-term care. In her ECND26 address, she emphasised that cancer care extends far beyond active treatment and highlighted the essential contribution cancer nurses make in helping people rebuild their lives after cancer.

“As cancer nurses, we know that supporting life beyond cancer is not simply about when treatment ends; it is about helping people truly live afterwards,” said Dr McNally. *“Every day, cancer nurses provide not only clinical expertise, but also compassion, guidance, and continuity of care. They support individuals and their families through recovery, survivorship, uncertainty, and hope. On 18 May, we celebrated the dedication, resilience, and impact of cancer nurses across Europe who make a lasting difference in the lives of people affected by cancer.”*

Dr McNally also reaffirmed EONS’ commitment to advancing person-centred cancer care through education, advocacy, leadership, research, and workforce support, ensuring that every person affected by cancer receives high-quality care throughout their entire journey.

Throughout the event, speakers repeatedly emphasised that supporting life beyond cancer also means supporting the cancer nursing workforce itself. Investment in education, leadership, workforce wellbeing, research, advocacy, and international collaboration remains essential to ensuring sustainable, high-quality cancer care for the future.

The online format of ECND26 demonstrated the strength, adaptability, and connectivity of the European cancer nursing community. The event created an inclusive platform for professionals from different countries and healthcare settings to exchange perspectives, share good practice, and reflect on common challenges affecting cancer care across Europe.

As ECND26 concluded, the celebration served not only as recognition of cancer nurses across Europe, but also as a powerful reflection of the extensive work being carried out within EONS to advance cancer nursing education, research, advocacy, communication, and person-centred care. EONS expressed its gratitude to all speakers, contributors, Working Groups, national societies, partners, and participants who joined the celebration and helped make European Cancer Nursing Day 2026 a success.