



World Health Assembly Adopts Landmark Resolution on Steatotic Liver Disease

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World Health Assembly Adopts Landmark Resolution on Steatotic Liver Disease, Marking a Historic First for Global NCD Policy

For the first time, liver disease receives formal recognition within the global noncommunicable disease agenda — EASL hails the adoption of WHO resolution EB158/CONF./7 as a turning point for liver health worldwide.

Geneva, Switzerland — The European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) welcomes the adoption by the 79th World Health Assembly (WHA79) of the resolution “Steatotic liver disease: a missing piece in the global noncommunicable disease response” (EB158/CONF./7). This historic vote marks the first time liver disease has been formally recognised as part of the global agenda on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) — a milestone EASL and its partners have worked towards for years.

A Historic Policy Milestone

The adoption of the SLD resolution at WHA79 represents a defining moment in global health governance. For the first time in history, WHO Member States have an explicit, formal international mandate to include liver disease in their national NCD strategies and health system planning — placing it alongside long-established priorities such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes.

Steatotic liver disease, encompassing conditions including MASLD, ALD, and MetALD, affects an estimated 1.5 billion adults worldwide. Yet for decades, it has remained absent from national health plans, global financing frameworks, and NCD accountability mechanisms. The adoption of this resolution ends that silence.

In Europe alone, the EASL-Lancet Commission 2.0, published on 30 April 2026, estimates 780

preventable deaths per day and an annual economic cost of €55 billion attributable to liver disease. These figures underscore why formal recognition is not merely symbolic — it is a prerequisite for political commitment and funding.

The resolution also signals a broader evolution in how international health policy approaches metabolic conditions. Rather than treating obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and liver disease as separate siloes, it calls for integrated, whole-of-system approaches that tackle shared risk factors and deliver joined-up care across the life course.

“Steatotic liver disease is a growing global health challenge that has been overlooked for far too long. This resolution is a critical step — but adoption alone is not enough. Every health ministry leaving Geneva this week must commit to embedding liver health in their national NCD plans. The evidence is overwhelming; what we need now is the political will to act.” — Professor Debbie Shawcross, Secretary General, EASL

What the Resolution Requires of Governments

The resolution calls on WHO Member States to take concrete action across three dimensions:

- Integrate liver health into national NCD strategies and health system planning
- Update NCD monitoring frameworks to include liver health indicators and accountability measures
- Align health financing with integrated, prevention-centred care models that address the commercial and social determinants of liver disease

EASL calls on all Member States to translate their vote into political commitment without delay and urges WHO to incorporate liver health indicators into existing NCD monitoring and accountability frameworks.

EASL WHA79 Side Event: From Vision to Action

On 21 May 2026, in the immediate wake of the resolution’s adoption, EASL convened a high-level side event at the InterContinental Hotel, Geneva: “From Vision to Action: A Holistic Approach to Metabolic Health and NCD Prevention and Care.” The event brought together health ministers from Egypt and Spain, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Regional Director for Europe Dr Hans Kluge, OECD representatives, medical and civil society leaders.

The session examined what it will take to move from a historic vote in Geneva to meaningful change in national health systems. Speakers addressed the practical steps required: updating NCD monitoring frameworks, aligning health financing with integrated care models, and ensuring equity and the commercial determinants of health are addressed alongside clinical priorities.

“Metabolic conditions are becoming an increasingly important challenge globally. Countries need

an approach that connects prevention, early detection, and long-term care across conditions and across the life course.” — Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization

Three Asks from Geneva

In closing remarks at the side event, EASL Secretary General Professor Debbie Shawcross outlined three immediate priorities following the resolution’s adoption:

- To Member States: translate their vote into political commitment by prioritising implementation of the WHO resolution at national level
- To health ministries: integrate liver health into national NCD plans by the end of 2026
- To WHO and global partners: incorporate liver health indicators into existing NCD monitoring and accountability frameworks

“The NCD community has fought for decades to put prevention at the centre of health systems. Liver disease has been a missing piece. With this resolution, we have a mandate. Now we need governments to make it count.” — Professor Debbie Shawcross, Secretary General, EASL

About the WHO SLD Resolution

The resolution “Steatotic liver disease: a missing piece in the global noncommunicable disease response” was adopted at WHA79 on 21 May 2026. It marks the first formal recognition of liver disease within the global NCD agenda and calls on governments to integrate liver health into national NCD strategies and health system planning.

<https://www.who.int/news/item/21-05-2026-seventy-ninth-world-health-assembly—daily-update-21-may-2026>

About EASL

The European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) is Europe’s leading liver association, representing more than 4,500 hepatology professionals across 100+ countries. EASL drives scientific research, clinical practice, and public health advocacy on liver disease and is home to the Journal of Hepatology and JHEP Reports. Through its Policy, Public Health and Advocacy (PPHA) Committee, EASL works with EU institutions, WHO, and national governments to place liver health at the centre of global NCD policy.

<https://easl.eu/>

About the EASL-Lancet Commission 2.0

“From Evidence to Impact: Implementing Sustainable Liver Health in Europe” was published on 30 April 2026 jointly in The Lancet and the Journal of Hepatology. The Commission provides a comprehensive evidence base and implementation framework for addressing liver disease as a

public health priority.

<https://www.thelancet.com/commissions-do/europe-liver-health>

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