

EASL Position Statement in Support of the WHO Draft Resolution: “Steatotic Liver Disease – A Missing Piece in the Global Noncommunicable Disease Response”

Geneva, 17 February 2026

The European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) strongly supports the proposed WHO draft resolution on steatotic liver disease (SLD) [EB158/CONF./7] and welcomes its recognition as a critical and currently under-addressed component of the global noncommunicable disease (NCD) agenda. This resolution represents a historic opportunity to correct a long-standing policy gap by embedding liver disease within NCD frameworks, prevention strategies, and health system planning worldwide.

The draft resolution rightly recognises that SLD represents a spectrum of chronic liver disease with the potential to progress to fibrosis, cirrhosis and liver cancer. It further highlights that SLD is driven by modifiable risk factors common to major NCDs, including unhealthy diets, obesity, alcohol use, and physical inactivity. Importantly, it underscores the close association between SLD and major metabolic conditions such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and chronic kidney disease, reinforcing the need for integrated, comprehensive public health responses.

EASL also applauds the recognition within the resolution of the broad spectrum of liver disease, including disease driven by metabolic dysfunction combined with alcohol use. This reflects the evolving scientific understanding that liver disease frequently results from overlapping metabolic and alcohol-related drivers rather than isolated risk factors, and supports more accurate patient stratification, prevention strategies, and clinical management approaches across diverse populations.

The public health relevance of this resolution is particularly urgent in the context of current global metabolic trends. The draft resolution notes projections indicating a marked and continuing increase in the global burden of SLD, including progression to advanced liver disease and liver cancer, alongside growing demand for specialised care and increasing strain on health systems. Of particular concern is the increasing prevalence of SLD among children and adolescents, linked to rising rates of obesity, unhealthy dietary patterns and physical inactivity, with potentially lifelong health and economic consequences.

The resolution also recognises the profound economic consequences of SLD, including increased healthcare expenditure, productivity losses and long-term disability, disproportionately affecting populations with limited access to equitable care and health-promoting environments. Integrating liver disease into NCD strategies will support more efficient use of health system resources by enabling earlier detection, coordinated management of multimorbidity, and alignment of prevention strategies across conditions sharing common risk factors.

EASL further welcomes the growing global political momentum behind this agenda. The inclusion of this draft resolution on the agenda of the Seventy-Ninth World Health Assembly reflects broad

international recognition that SLD must be addressed as a global health priority. This is consistent with sustained advocacy from the global liver community to ensure liver health is fully integrated into WHO and United Nations NCD frameworks.

Call to Action

EASL urges all WHO Member States to vote in favour of the resolution at the upcoming World Health Assembly and to commit to its full adoption and implementation.

EASL also call on Member States to:

- Integrate liver disease and SLD into national NCD strategies and action plans.
- Strengthen surveillance, data collection and monitoring of liver disease burden.
- Invest in prevention strategies targeting shared metabolic and behavioural risk factors.
- Expand access to early detection, diagnosis and treatment across the continuum of liver disease.
- Embed liver health into universal health coverage and primary health care delivery models.
- Support research and innovation to accelerate prevention, diagnostics and therapeutics in liver disease.

Without decisive action, the global trend will drive preventable liver-related morbidity and mortality. Conversely, by embedding liver disease within NCD frameworks, Member States can accelerate progress towards reducing premature mortality, improving population health, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

EASL stands ready to support Member States, WHO and global partners in implementing this agenda. We strongly encourage all Member States to endorse and support this resolution at the forthcoming World Health Assembly, recognising that without liver health, the global response to NCDs will remain incomplete.

About EASL

The European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) is a leading global medical association dedicated to advancing research, education, and clinical care in liver health, and promoting the prevention and treatment of liver diseases worldwide.

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