

EUROPEAN COUNTRIES CONSULTATION:

Anchoring EUCCC Certification
in National Realities

WP5 – Inclusion, Certification and
Adherence to EUCCC Certification

IRELAND COUNTRY PROFILE

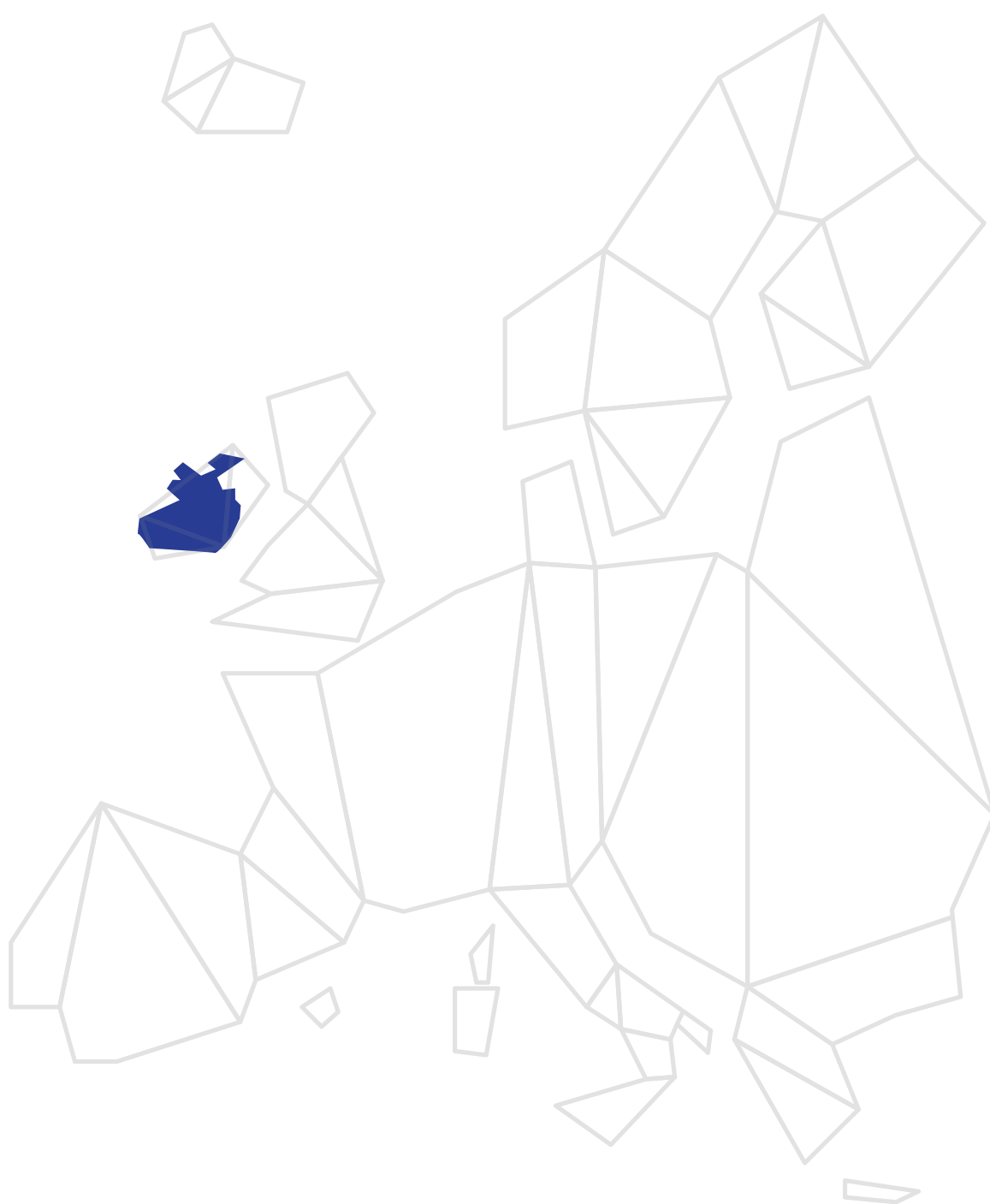


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THE EUROPEAN COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTRE NETWORK





Context: existing certification systems and organization of cancer care

Ireland currently does not have a formal, governmental certification system for hospitals.

The HIQA (Health Information and Quality Authority) National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare were approved by the Minister for Health in June 2012 and became immediately applicable to all health services provided or funded by the HSE including but not limited to: hospital care, ambulance services, community care, primary care and general practice.

The National Standards provide a vision for high-quality, safe healthcare and provide a roadmap for improving the quality, safety and reliability of healthcare. It is envisioned that these Standards would underpin a system for licensing of designated healthcare providers at some point in the future.

Following the launch of the Patient Safety (Notifiable Incidents and Open Disclosure) Act 2023, HIQA monitors compliance against the National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare in healthcare services provided or funded by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and private hospitals. HIQA publishes the findings of their inspection reports on their website.

Organization of cancer care around 8 designated centers

The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP), part of the Health Service Executive (HSE) in Ireland, was established in 2007. The NCCP works with partners to prevent cancer, treat cancer, and improve survival and quality of life for people with cancer. It is responsible for implementing many of the recommendations of the National Cancer Strategies. Ireland's second national cancer strategy, 'A Strategy for Cancer Control in Ireland', published in 2006, included a strong focus on centralisation, highlighting the fact that international research has consistently demonstrated that better cancer outcomes are achieved in larger centers through the centralisation of resources, skills and expertise, facilitated by a critical mass of patients.

In line with the 2006 National Cancer Strategy, the NCCP designated eight adult hospitals as cancer centers, primarily based on surgical centralisation. The initial diagnosis, treatment planning and primary surgery for many cancers was centralised to these cancer centers. The NCCP have set policy requirements for what is required of a designated cancer center.

These requirements cover areas of governance, pathways & services, tumour/treatment specific designations, monitoring & reporting, research, clinical trials & education and externally procured services. Designation of approved sites for surgery is further specified based on each tumour type, reflecting the evidence where available and considering activity volumes to ensure appropriate expertise can be maintained. Designation can be from a maximum of eight centers in the case of cancers requiring less complex management (e.g. breast) to as few as one or two centers in the case of those cancers requiring more complex or specialised management e.g. neurological tumours.

Systematic Anticancer Therapy, such as chemotherapy and immunotherapy, for solid and haematological cancers is provided in 26 public hospitals. There is one designated cancer center for cancer in children. This center works with other hospitals to provide cancer care for children around Ireland. A dedicated adolescent young adult cancer service network (AYACSN) made up of four designated cancer centers has been designed and is in place.

Public Radiation oncology is also centralised to 5 sites some of which are co-located with the designated cancer centers, one of these is also a network across 3 of the sites. The HSE also has service arrangements with two private providers for the provision of radiation oncology services to patients attending University Hospital Limerick and University Hospital Waterford. The North West Cancer Center (NWCC) provides a radiation oncology service at Altnagelvin Hospital in Derry for Donegal patients who would previously have attended St Luke's Radiation Oncology Network, or Galway University Hospital. The Health Research Board (www.hrb.ie), a statutory body under the Department of Health, is the lead public funder of cancer research in Ireland.

Some adult cancer centers have engaged with international accreditation models and currently one Irish designated cancer center has obtained OEIC Comprehensive Cancer Center status and three others are OEIC accredited Cancer Centers. A further two are currently in the OEIC cancer center accreditation process and another has become a member of OEIC and are starting work towards seeking OEIC accreditation as a Cancer Center.

There is an active private sector treating and managing patients with cancer. These private sector hospitals have generally engaged in international hospital accreditation.¹

Identified enablers towards the implementation of EUCCC certification in Ireland

- To achieve the best outcome for patients, the NCCP ensures that designated cancer centers for individual tumour types have adequate case volumes, expertise and concentration of specialist skills by utilising cancer care networks and multidisciplinary teams.
- This centralisation has led to improved survival rates for most cancer types – including breast, pancreatic, rectal, stomach and lung cancers. All breast cancer surgery and most rectal and prostate surgery now occurs in these designated centers, with further consolidation planned².

Identified barriers towards the implementation of EUCCC certification in Ireland

- The perceived main barrier to the implementation of an additional EUCCC certification would be any duplication of effort for cancer centers that already have achieved accreditation/certification status.

Conditions for successful EUCCC certification implementation in Ireland

In Ireland it is important:

- That any EUCCC certification model allows for the linking of primary, secondary and tertiary care in line with Sláintecare, which is the HSE and Department of Health's overall improvement plan for Ireland's health and social care system³.
- Reinforces the application of national services, policies, KPIs and QIs across services as a minimum standard.

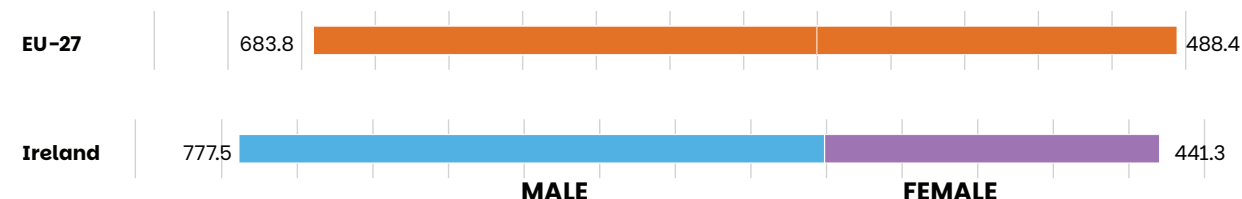
Number of OECI-certified CCCs: 1

Number of EUCCC pilot centers: 0

Epidemiology: incidence, mortality and survival rates

Incidence rate:

Estimated incidence, both sexes, all sites but non-melanoma skin, 2022 (per 100 000 population)

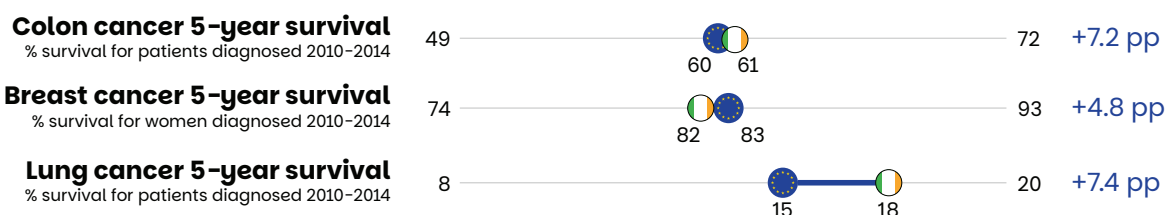


Mortality rate:



Survival rates:

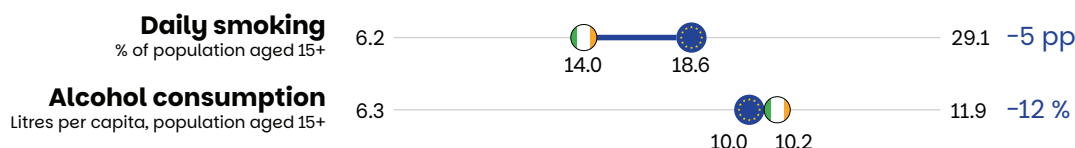
For the selection of cancers:



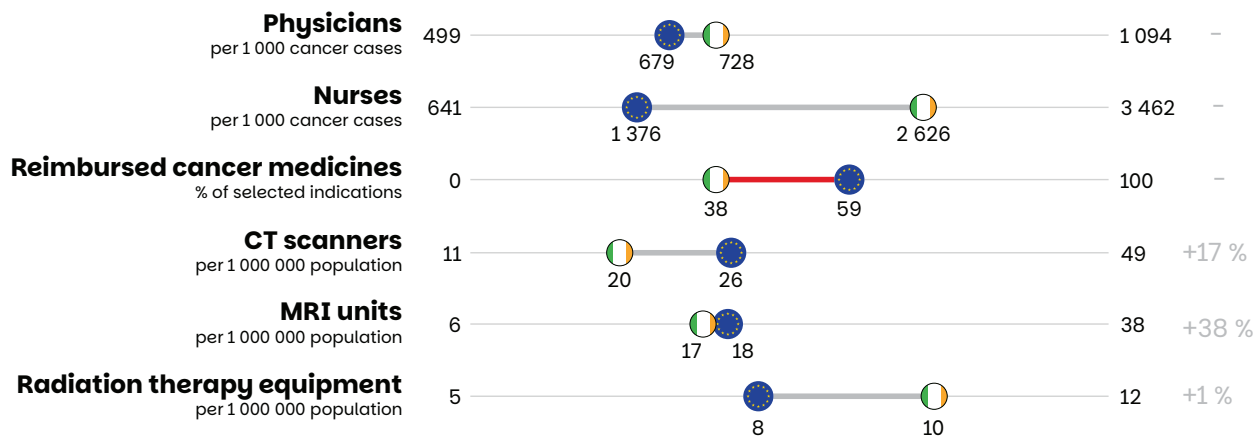
Screening performance



Risk factors



Human resources and infrastructure



Number of clinical trials: 240

Endnotes

1. St. Vincent's University Hospital: JCI & ENETS; Beacon Hospital: JCI; Bon Secours Cork Cancer Center, Cork: ESMO
2. EU Country Cancer Profile: Ireland 2025 | OECD
3. Sláintecare



**For more information,
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