

Media Release

--for immediate release--

Barcelona hosts EASL Congress 2026, Europe's largest liver health meeting

Barcelona, Spain, 27 May 2026, Liver disease remains one of the world's most pressing public health challenges, affecting more than 1.5 billion people globally and causing over 2 million deaths each year. The growing burden continues to place increasing pressure on healthcare systems, economies, and societies worldwide. Yet much of this impact remains preventable through earlier detection, stronger public health policies, improved awareness, and coordinated action across healthcare and policy sectors.

Today marks the opening of EASL Congress 2026, Europe's largest liver health meeting, hosted by the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL).

From 27 to 30 May, more than 8,000 healthcare professionals, scientists, policymakers, industry leaders, and community advocates from around the world are gathering in Barcelona to exchange knowledge, foster collaboration, and explore the latest advances in hepatology.

The Congress comes at a pivotal moment for liver health, following months of intensified advocacy and collaboration led by EASL and its partners to elevate liver disease on the global health agenda.

This April, the new EASL–*Lancet* Commission 2.0 on Sustainable Liver Health in Europe was officially launched in Brussels as a call for action. The message delivered to policymakers and other stakeholders was clear: liver disease is becoming an escalating public health crisis across the WHO European Region, causing nearly 780 deaths every day. The report also highlighted the significant economic consequences of inaction, estimating that liver disease reduces GDP across EU and associated European countries by approximately €55 billion annually through healthcare costs, lost productivity, and premature mortality. The main messages will be discussed during EASL Congress.

[From evidence to impact: Second report of the EASL-Lancet Commission on sustainable liver health in Europe - A tribute to Michael Manns; Friday 29 May, 8:30 – 9:45; EASL Studio – Hall 8.0](#)

At the same time, the newly launched European Health Alliance on Alcohol (EHAA) has strengthened collaboration among medical and public health organisations to advocate for evidence-based alcohol policies and reduce alcohol-related harm across Europe, particularly among children and young people. Alcohol use contributes to

approximately 800,000 deaths annually in the region and plays a major role in more than 200 health conditions, including cirrhosis and cancer.

[European Health Alliance on Alcohol: Alcohol and the liver – Turning clinical evidence into policy action; Wednesday, 27 May, 11:45 – 13:00; Burroughs – Hall 8.0](#)

The congress also takes place at a critical moment for viral hepatitis elimination. With the WHO 2030 elimination target rapidly approaching, viral hepatitis remains an under-prioritised public health challenge in Europe and globally. In response, EASL has launched the Viral HOPE Programme, combining research grants to address key evidence gaps, high-level policy roundtables in Brussels to strengthen political action, and a flagship Viral HOPE Conference to advance implementation and collaboration towards elimination goals.

[EASL-WHO-ECDC Symposia: Bridging the gap – Tackling inequities and moving towards viral hepatitis elimination; Thursday, 28 May, 17:00 – 18:15; Mondelli – Hall 8.0](#)

[Jean-Pierre Benhamou clinical State-of-the-Art: Advances in diagnosis and treatment in viral hepatitis; Friday, 29 May, 14:00 – 14:45 – Tiribelli – Hall 8.1](#)

“EASL Congress represents the culmination of months of scientific, policy, and public health momentum across the liver community. The challenges facing liver health today cannot be solved in isolation. This meeting provides a vital platform to connect science, policy, prevention, and patient care, while bringing together the global expertise needed to drive meaningful action and long-term change,” said **Prof. Debbie Shawcross**, EASL Secretary General.

The scientific programme spans the full spectrum of liver disease and liver health, featuring more than 190 scientific sessions and over 2,000 abstract presentations. Topics include metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease, alcohol-related liver disease, viral hepatitis, liver cancer, cirrhosis and transplantation, alongside developments in precision medicine, digital health, public health policy, and early detection strategies.

“EASL Congress 2026 is where many of the key conversations shaping the future of liver health come together. From emerging therapies and precision medicine to prevention, metabolic health, and public policy, the Congress showcases the breadth of innovation happening across hepatology while creating opportunities for collaboration and new solutions that can improve outcomes for patients worldwide,” said **Prof. Ana Lleo**, EASL Vice-Secretary.

Alongside the scientific programme, EASL is also expanding its community outreach initiative, [Love Your Liver](#), marking the programme’s largest public awareness campaign to date.

Taking place across Barcelona during the congress, the public awareness initiative brings liver health prevention and education directly into the community through a series of public-facing activities. This year's programme includes a record-breaking school outreach initiative, with local hepatologists visiting 10 primary schools across the city and engaging more than 600 students, the highest number reached to date.

Complementing this effort is a free liver testing and education village located outside the congress venue. Open to the public, the initiative targets liver health awareness through offering non-invasive liver testing for stiffness and fat accumulation alongside one-to-one discussions with healthcare and public health professionals about diet, alcohol use, viral hepatitis, and overall liver health. Visitors can also access educational resources, including a recipe book, children's comic, and infographics, as well as participate in interactive activities such as stationary cycling challenges.

“Love Your Liver demonstrates the importance of bringing liver health beyond the Congress venue and directly into communities. Prevention, education, and early detection are essential if we want to reduce the future burden of liver disease, and local initiatives such as these play a critical role in helping people better understand and protect their health,” said **Dr Sabela Lens**, EASL Governing Board Member, and Hepatology Specialist at the Hospital Clinic Barcelona.

#ENDS

Further Information

Media Registration: Accredited media can apply for free registration [here](#)

Programme: For updates to the congress programme see [here](#)

Embargo Policy: Media representatives are asked to familiarise themselves with the official policy EASL Congress 2026 [Embargo Policy](#)

Further Information:

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