

The MASH Cities Declaration on Ending the MASLD/MASH Public Health Threat in Cities

Preamble

We, the undersigned representatives of the Municipality of Bergamo, commit to addressing the emerging challenge of metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD) and its progressive form, metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH) as set out by the MASH Cities initiative in the eight actions below.

Despite being the most common liver disease globally, MASLD remains largely unknown to the public, underdiagnosed by health systems, and unaddressed by most public health policies. As a municipality, we recognise our responsibility and unique capacity to improve the conditions in which people live, work, and grow. We will act locally through civic and political leadership, coordinating action across city agencies and partnerships to raise awareness, promote prevention, and integrate liver health into the broader urban health agenda.

1. Acknowledge MASLD/MASH as a Public Health Threat

We acknowledge MASLD and MASH as a public health threat within our city's agenda on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), health equity, and sustainable urban living. We will integrate liver health promotion into existing programmes addressing obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular health, and healthy lifestyles.

2. Raise Awareness and Improve Health Literacy

We will lead local information campaigns to increase public and professional awareness of MASLD, its risk factors, and its links to other metabolic conditions. We will work with schools, workplaces, community organisations, and the media to promote inclusive, stigma-free messages that support prevention and timely action.

3. Facilitate Timely Identification and Linkage to Care

We will collaborate with local health services, family doctors, and community health centres to support opportunistic risk assessment and awareness among healthcare providers, particularly in primary care, diabetes, obesity and cardiology clinics. Our role will focus on enabling community-level access and facilitating pathways between municipal health promotion initiatives and regional healthcare structures.

4. Create Environments that Support Liver Health

We will use municipal policies and planning tools to create environments that promote physical activity, healthy diets, and overall well-being. This includes integrating health objectives into urban design, transport, and food policies.

5. Strengthen Local Data and Innovation

We will support the collection and sharing of local data on metabolic risk, obesity, and liver health to inform municipal policies. We will encourage partnerships with research institutions, health agencies, and innovation initiatives.

6. Build Cross-Sector and Community Partnerships

We will foster collaboration across municipal departments and engage local patient associations, migrant and youth organisations, and NGOs to co-design solutions.

7. Ensure Equity and Inclusion

We will prioritise communities facing social and economic disadvantages, ensuring that prevention and awareness initiatives reach those at higher risk.

8. Monitor Progress and Maintain Accountability

We will establish measurable objectives for local MASLD-related actions and review progress annually as part of the city's health and well-being reporting.

Annex – City of Bergamo

In alignment with the MASLD City Declaration, the Municipality of Bergamo and ASST Papa Giovanni XXIII commit to implementing the following city-specific actions:

- **Prevention and awareness activities with family and community nurses from ASST Papa Giovanni XXIII** Healthcare professionals of the ASST Papa Giovanni XXIII - including specialist physicians, Primary Care Physicians, and Family and Community Nurses - carry out ongoing activities in training, prevention, and health education, in close collaboration with Primary Care Physicians and Family and Community Nurses. At both the national and Lombardy regional levels, there is a notable shortage of up-to-date epidemiological data on MASLD. This gap underscores the need to establish shared criteria for patient management and referral pathways, promoting consistent and integrated care across different levels of the healthcare system. In parallel, the promotion of awareness and educational initiatives targeting the general population - implemented within Community Health Centers as well as in other community settings (such as schools, universities, civic centers, and public events) - represents an essential strategy for disseminating healthy lifestyle behaviors and effectively preventing the disease.
- **Scientific dissemination through social media and local channels** Qualified professionals from ASST Papa Giovanni XXIII deliver educational interventions on nutrition and physical activity in a widespread and community-proximal manner, within the framework of the corporate Laboratory for the Promotion of Physical Activity and Movement. These activities are organized close to where people live and carry out their daily routines, ensuring accessible and locally integrated health promotion initiatives.
- **Engagement of secondary school students in graphic and media campaigns promoting awareness and prevention** ASST Papa Giovanni XXIII makes its scientific

expertise available for the development of materials and publications on relevant topics, with the aim of supporting primary prevention and promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors.

- **Collaboration with general practitioners for early identification and prevention initiatives** ASST Papa Giovanni XXIII provides its expertise to support the development of informative materials and to address the communication needs identified within the population.
- **Community-level prevention campaigns on nutrition and physical activity across city districts and neighbouring municipalities** With a view to ensuring continuous integration between hospital and community care, ASST Papa Giovanni XXIII has implemented a training program and the development of disease-specific Preventive-Diagnostic-Therapeutic-Care Pathways (PDTCP), aimed at supporting prevention, early detection, and community-based management.
- **Engagement of associations related to comorbidities** (e.g. diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, etc.) There is close collaboration between the social and healthcare institution and third-sector organizations, within the framework of the social–health integration established for the development of Community Health Centers.

Signature:

Municipality of Bergamo

ASST Papa Giovanni XXIII

The Declaration on Ending the MASLD Public Health Threat in Cities was produced by MASH Cities, an initiative of the Global Think-tank on Steatotic Liver Disease. MASH Cities was launched in 2024 at the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy in New York City.