



Ulrika Årehed Kågström, Secretary General, Swedish Cancer Society

“Over the last decades, there has been substantial progress in cancer care, with key advances across the core pillars of surgery, radiotherapy and medicines. However, the significant and growing threat of drug-resistant bacteria can undermine all these efforts.

Today, it is estimated that at least one in five cancer patients need antibiotics during their treatment. The consequences for cancer treatment when antibiotics are no longer effective against resistant bacteria are serious because people living with cancer rely on antibiotics for the prevention and treatment of infections. Whether it is for surgery, chemotherapy or stem cell transplants, the availability of antibiotics is crucial for cancer care outcomes. Today, the threat of antibiotic resistance is a major issue that needs to be urgently addressed to ensure cancer control.

Antibiotic resistance spreads across borders, and efforts to address it must therefore be conducted both nationally and globally. The Swedish Cancer Society is actively engaged in the important activity of spreading awareness at the national level as well as advocating for the threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) to be put high on the international political agenda.

Ensuring access to effective antibiotics largely depends on global efforts in slowing down the development of resistant bacteria and developing new antibiotics. Therefore, we must strengthen an already huge international commitment regarding antibiotic resistance, and ensure everyone’s right to effective antibiotics by working in parallel in three areas:

- ➔ Advocacy – Ensuring that the issue of addressing AMR for better cancer care outcomes is high on the global health agenda.
- ➔ Engagement of the health workforce – Health-care personnel are leaders in addressing this issue and have an active role in drawing attention to AMR, ensuring the appropriate use of medicines and strong infection control practice in medical settings, as well as providing key input to national policy on AMR.
- ➔ Ensuring access to treatment – Prioritizing access to and rational use of antimicrobials and ensuring access to diagnostics.”

Ulrika Årehed Kågström is Secretary-General of the Swedish Cancer Society and has successfully led the organization since 2016. It is now the largest fundraising organization in Sweden.

She is also an active leader in the Nordic Cancer Union and a board member of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), where she serves as President-elect as well as an initiator and active member of various UICC task forces and committees.