



Uganda
Cancer Society

Newsletter

Issue 4. Vol 1, OCT-DEC 2023



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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Readers,

On behalf of the Board, management and entire fraternity of the Uganda Cancer Society, am pleased to welcome you to this edition. As we wrap up the final quarter (October – December) of the year 2023, Uganda Cancer Society is filled with gratitude for the collective efforts and unwavering collaboration exhibited by all individuals and member organizations in making a difference in the lives of cancer patients, their families as well as the entire community we reside in.

In these past months, we have witnessed the resilience and strength of the patients we serve, it's truly cheering to witness the positive impact of our initiatives. From the prostate and breast cancer awareness campaigns to the generous contributions from all well wishers and donors, each action has strongly contributed to fostering a country of hope to a cancer free Uganda.

Looking ahead, the umbrella's commitment remains devoted. The upcoming year promises new opportunities to expand our reach in areas of Capacity strengthening, patient advocacy programs and the long awaited Sukuma fitness dance. As we reflect on the milestones of this 4th quarter, let's carry this energy forward into the year 2024.

I extend my deepest appreciation to every dedicated volunteer from the different member organizations, individual members, our valued partners and donors. Together we can change the narrative and contribute towards reduction of cancer in Uganda.

Wishing you all a Merry Merry Christmas, a joyous holiday season and a happy New year.

**Thank you,
Dennis Olodi
Executive Director – UCS**



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Patients Policy makers' Engagement



Above: Dr. Noleb Mugisha from Uganda Cancer Institute, Dr. Mugabe Frank from Ministry of Health and a cancer patient respectively presenting their opinions at the patients' policy makers' engagement at Fairway Hotel.



Above: Participants pose for a group picture shortly after the Patients' Polymakers engagement forum.

Uganda Cancer Society calls for cancer patients' involvement in decision making

In a bid to strengthen and increase patient involvement in decision making, Uganda Cancer Society with support from the Commonwealth Foundation conducted a patient policy makers' engagement forum on the 1st of November, 2023 under the theme "Nothing for Us, Without Us."

Importantly, this momentous step is backed by the fact that patients are the main beneficiaries whose voices and opinions have a great influence in providing an evidence based urgent need for the adoption of the Uganda National Cancer Control Plan.

It is also essential to note that this engagement attracted different partners from the Ministry of health – Uganda, Uganda Cancer Institute, Palliative Care Association Uganda and Anti-Counterfeit Network. Gladly this yielded an engaging and impactful interaction with highlights of the challenges patients face, opportunities and strategies on how the two parties can advocate jointly in the UNCCP's adoption.

Uganda Cancer Society being an umbrella and lead advocacy organization affirmed to proceed working with and through grassroots advocates to express the above issues.

Uganda Cancer Society commemorates the 2023 World AIDS Day through a community dialogue on HIV / AIDS related cancers.

Each year on the 1st of December, the world commemorates the World AIDS day. Individuals in their different capacities unite to show support for people living with HIV and also to remember those who have lost lives to this illness. Uganda Cancer Society with support from the Commonwealth Foundation leveraging on the 2023 theme "Let Communities Lead" organized a community dialogue at the Children's AIDS Fund.

This dialogue under the theme "Empowering Conversations: Dialoguing on HIV / AIDS related Cancers," brought together persons living with HIV (PLWHIV), as well as representatives from organisations actively involved in HIV prevention efforts to discuss HIV-related cancers. Dr. Noleb Mugisha the day's facilitator from Uganda Cancer Institute delved into a comprehensive discussion on the three HIV/AIDS-related cancers: Cervical, Kaposi's sarcoma, and Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. These cancers were underscored as being among the top five most prevalent cancers in Uganda, according to Globocan's data from the year 2020.

Dr. Mugisha not only shared the signs and symptoms indicative of these cancers but also underscored the importance of proactive measures such as cancer screening, vaccination, and the adoption of a health-conscious lifestyle. Recognizing that HIV weakens the immune system, he emphasized the potential of lifestyle modifications to mitigate the risk of cancer development.

The educational session paved way for an engaging dialogues where participants shared their personal experiences, insights, and action plans. These initiatives included increased awareness campaigns, regular screening practices, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, and advocacy for the implementation of the National Cancer Control Plan, with a specific focus on individuals with unique healthcare needs.



Above: Picture moment of the community dialogue participants together with staff members from Children's AIDS Fund and Uganda Cancer Society.



A Call to Action! stakeholders demand for expedited adoption process of the Uganda National Cancer Control Plan.



Above: Picture moment of the community dialogue participants together with staff members from Children's AIDS Fund and Uganda Cancer Society.

Uganda Cancer Society in partnership with Uganda Cancer Institute and Ministry of Health held a press conference on the 04th of December. The primary objectives were to urgently advocate for an expedited process leading to the adoption the Uganda National Cancer Control Plan and to disseminate information regarding the upcoming 2023 National Cancer Symposium.

Notable figures present at the event included Mr. Dennis Olodi, the Executive Director of the Uganda Cancer Society, Dr. Noleb Mugisha, the Coordinator of the Uganda National Cancer Control Plan, and Dr. Oyoo Charles, the commissioner of Health Services-Non-Communicable diseases at the Ministry of Health. The conference gathered representation from prominent media stations and organizations, including the Uganda Health Communication Alliance, Cancer Information and Support Society of Uganda, NBS, Bukedde print, Radio one, Sanyu, and CBS fm. This collaborative effort reflects a strategic and cooperative push for the adoption of the UNCCP.

The proceedings of this event centered around a press statement that addressed the cancer burden in Uganda and providing insights into the current status of the Uganda National Cancer Control Plan (UNCCP). Additionally, this platform was used to highlight the then upcoming National Cancer Symposium slated under a theme, "Driving Change: Adopting the National Cancer Control Plan." With many actors, partners and stakeholders convened, it was indicated that this symposium was centered on rallying policymakers and key stakeholders inclusive of the media to recognize the urgency of addressing the cancer epidemic and take concrete steps towards the UNCCP adoption.

In his closing remarks, the Executive Director of the Uganda Cancer Society, emphasized that ensuring universal access to cancer services is imperative in the 21st century. He mentioned the centrality of National



Uganda Cancer Society hosts the 2023 National Cancer Symposium



Above; Dr. Jatho Alfred presenting an overview of the Uganda National Cancer Control Plan before stakeholders at the National Cancer Symposium.



Cancer is a major public health concern in Uganda and on a global level with its consequences causing death and hindering life expectancy due to the high incidence and mortality rates. Recognizing that the impact of cancer reverberates across various facets of society, it becomes imperative to engage stakeholders from diverse sectors in a joint effort to address this pervasive health issue. Cancer's far-reaching effects extend beyond the realm of healthcare, infiltrating economic, social, and educational domains. The economic burden of cancer is substantial, with direct and indirect costs affecting individuals, families, and the wider community. The strain on healthcare resources, loss of productivity, and the ripple effect on various industries necessitate a collaborative effort that goes beyond the confines of the healthcare sector.

The 58th World Health Assembly resolution on cancer prevention and control adopted in May 2005 called upon member states where Uganda falls to further intensify actions against this illness through developing and reinforcing control programs followed by a commitment integrated approach re-affirmation in the year 2017. In response to this initiative, Uganda Cancer Society with support from the Commonwealth Foundation has spearheaded advocacy efforts for a specific law and policy that provides support for cancer control in the country which is called the , "Uganda National Cancer Control Plan."



On the 07th of December, Uganda Cancer Society in partnership with Uganda Cancer Institute hosted the National Cancer Symposium, under the theme, “Driving Change Together, Adopting the Uganda National Cancer Control Plan” at Imperial Royale Hotel. It brought together range of participants including key actors, partners and stakeholders from both national and grassroots levels. The goal was to facilitate a comprehensive national discussion on the pressing issue of cancer within the country.

This significant event provided a platform for a deeper understanding of the objectives outlined in the Uganda National Cancer Control Plan (UNCCP), as explained by Dr. Jatho Alfred. The symposium also featured collaborative actions for change, with panelists from various sectors sharing their experiences and innovative approaches to advocating the plan.

Furthermore, the symposium engaged the audience in a dynamic question-and-answer session. This interactive segment sparked discussions on improving cancer service delivery across different regions of the country, ranging from primary to secondary prevention and treatment. The symposium thus served as a sophisticated forum for knowledge exchange, collaboration, and strategic planning in the collective effort to address the challenges posed by cancer in Uganda.

Representing Prime Minister Hon. Robina Nabbanja, the Third Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Nakadama expressed the government's dedication to tackling the dynamic challenges presented by the complexities of the contemporary global landscape. The emphasis was particularly placed on the overarching objective of nurturing a population that is both healthy and productive.



Above: The Third Deputy Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Lukia Isanga Nakadama (first row, 5th right) and other delegates from different sectors pose for a picture after the National Cancer Symposium.



Uganda Cancer Society boosts capacity of health workers in Western Uganda.

Uganda Cancer Society with support from International Cancer Institute, Kenya conducted a 3-day training of Health workers from 21 health facilities in Mbarara, Bushenyi and Sheema district from the 24th to 26th of October. This training aimed at equipping health care professionals with comprehensive knowledge and skills to enhance cancer care and awareness within the community.

Conducted by two specialists from Uganda Cancer Institute, this training was focused on imparting knowledge about cancer prevention, recognizing warning signs, and explaining treatment strategies. The training also placed significant emphasis on cervical cancer, acknowledging its prevalence as the most common type among women in Uganda. This objective was to equip the participants with basic skills for early detection and accurate diagnosis. Amidst gathering feedback from the attendees, many noted that the interactive sessions and case studies were particularly beneficial in translating theoretical knowledge into practical skills. They also reported a high satisfaction rate with a better understanding of cancer care and also a commitment to further create awareness and encourage patients in their different facilities to shift to a healthy lifestyle.

The District Chairperson of Sheema district that also serves as the District Secretary for health Ms. Jemimah Buhanda in a certificate awarding session implored the health workers to further share the acquired knowledge with fellows as well as put to use the available platforms to create more cancer awareness.



Above: Images captured of health workers at Senevin hotel during and after completion of training with a certificate award.



Highlights from the Pink October month

In a global effort to raise awareness about breast cancer, October was designated as the month of pink, a color that focuses on “soothing, comforting and healing” as introduced by Charlotte Hayey a 68-year-old lady who battled breast cancer in the early 1990s. During the month of October, individual and member organisations demonstrated efforts in increasing breast cancer awareness, educating the public about its signs and symptoms, artificial breast campaigns and also encouraged women to get screened.

UCS | Uganda Cancer Society

Make a life-changing impact today!

Help us restore confidence and femininity among brave women in Uganda battling breast cancer.

Breast Cancer is the third most common cancer affecting more than 2600 women annually in Uganda.

You can make a difference!
By donating an artificial breast valued at just

UGX 40,000 each

Join us in this empowering journey to support these women on their path to recovery and renewed self-esteem.

Donate now through:

Website (Mobile money or VISA):
<https://flutterwave.com/pay/ugandacancersocietyxg7/>

Airtel money
Pay: 186340
Momo Pay: 148862

Breaking stigma with 40k: Making a life changing impact!

Breast cancer is the third commonest cancer in Uganda and second commonest among women affecting more than 2600 women annually in the country. Regrettably, a substantial number of patients seek medical attention at an advanced stage, leading to unsatisfactory treatment outcomes. The predominant treatment for breast cancer in the country involves surgical intervention, often entailing the partial or complete removal of a woman's breasts. A noteworthy concern arises from reports indicating that the fear of societal stigma associated with breast removal leads to delayed treatment, consequently diminishing the chances of survival.

Throughout and beyond the October month, Uganda Cancer Society in partnership with Cancer Aid, a member organization embarked on a campaign of restoring confidence and femininity among women in Uganda battling cancer. This effort involved providing free artificial breasts to those in need. The campaign not only gathered support from philanthropists eager to make a positive impact but also served as a communication platform, encouraging individuals in need to reach out to the Uganda Cancer Society Offices for assistance in acquiring these artificial breasts.

Uganda Cancer Society has from then proceeded to make a lasting impact in the lives of these women by making tremendous efforts in ensuring that no one faces this road to recovery alone.

UCS | Uganda Cancer Society

Are you a Breast Cancer Patient / Survivor

Do you know someone who has undergone breast removal?

UCS is giving out a free artificial breast (or 2 for double mastectomy) to those in need.

CONTACT US ON
+256 392 178 067 / info@ugandacancersociety.org
Visit our offices for more information and support.

Artificial Breasts are given freely as per availability of resources from donations made by well wishers.

Above: Some of the artificial breast campaign flyers shared to the public as a call to action.



Lumps Away Foundation brings cancer services closer to the Kitintale community.

In the month of October, Lumps Away Foundation portrayed hard work in enhancing service delivery and broadening their reach with the launch of the inaugural consortium centered outreach program at Kitintale Christian Fellowship Church. This outreach program comprised of a couple of cancer screening activities to mention; Breast examination, cervical cancer screening, HPV vaccination, peer to peer reproductive education and nutrition assessment for children. It also attracted quite a number of individuals within and beyond the Kitintale community.

This ground-breaking initiative was brought together by various organizations including; The Cancer Communique, Cancer Information and Support Society of Uganda, Nama Wellness Community and Uganda Women's Cancer Support Organisation, magnifying the benefit of a collective impact. Notably, this camp was immensely successful, leaving a lasting impression and strengthening Lumps Away Foundation's ties within the community.



Above: Moments captured from the cancer screening camp at Kitintale Christian Fellowship church on the 21st of October.

Rays of Hope Hospice Jinja fronts cervical and breast cancer elimination.

Rays of Hospice Jinja fronted the elimination of breast and cervical cancer in the East region of Uganda throughout the 3rd quarter with screening of 384 women and presenting 8 VIA positive who received thermocoagulation, 6 suspicious who were referred for further investigations and treatment.



Above: Rays of Hope Hospice, Jinja health workers team examining swabs after the cervical cancer screening.

Rays of Hope Hospice Jinja fronts cervical and breast cancer elimination.



Pink October Road map.



#Dance Workout

Uganda Women's Cancer Support Organisation organized a fun filled dance work out on the 13th of October at the MTN Sports Arena Lugogo to support cancer patients who lack accommodation and food while on treatment at Uganda Cancer Institute. This workout commenced with cancer screening and later on a Zumba dance with breast cancer survivors at the frontline.



#PinkFriday

While approaching the end of the pink October, different member organisations under the umbrella of Uganda Cancer Society collectively took on the mandate with Cancer Communique as the lead to call upon the public to dress in pink and take a snap shot. These captured images were shared in poster form on different social media platforms as a way of creating more awareness about breast cancer.



#MoviesforCancer

In a heartwarming collaboration, breast cancer fighting organisations namely; The Cancer communique, Nama Wellness Community, Lumps Away Foundation, Uganda Women's Cancer Support Organisation, Cancer Information and Support Society of Uganda in partnership with Reach a Hand Uganda and Century Cinemax Naalya organized a movie fundraiser which funds collected were donated to Uganda Cancer Society's artificial breast campaign. Prior to the start of the movie, attendees witnessed a brief breast cancer awareness rising session and call to action as presented by the above listed organizations which was the following day aired on different tv stations.





Lumps Away Foundation closes off pink October with Luncheon

On the 28th of October, Lumps Away Foundation hosted the Annual Survivors Luncheon, co-hosted by Golden Tulip Canaan Kampala. This heart-warming event was dedicated to celebrating the resilience of cancer survivors. The collaboration underscored the commitment to honoring these incredible individuals and provided a platform to share their stories of triumph and courage.

These partnerships and initiatives exemplify the Lumps Away Foundation's dedication to making a tangible difference in the lives of those they serve. They are hopeful for the future and shall remain steadfast in their mission to create meaningful change and positively impact communities through collaborative efforts and unwavering determination.



Above: Cake cutting during the inaugural survivors' lunch held at Golden Tulip hotel – October 2023.



THE CANCER SUKUMA FITNESS DANCE IS BACK!!!!

Cancer SUKUMA DANCE FITNESS
—2024—

SAVE THE DATE
25TH FEBRUARY

UCS Uganda Cancer Society **American Cancer Society**

Physical inactivity stands as a significant risk factor contributing to the onset of various cancers. Ugandans, particularly those residing in urban areas, have seen a surge in physical inactivity, highlighting a concerning trend that correlates with an increased risk of cancers such as Breast, Oesophagus, Endometrium, and Colon.

Addressing this alarming issue, the Uganda Cancer Society (UCS) took a proactive step by launching the Cancer Sukuma Dance Fitness event in 2019. This innovative initiative aimed to engage the public in preventing cancer through improved lifestyles.



Aligned with the National Day of Physical Activity, a campaign aimed at raising awareness about the escalating burden of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in Uganda, the Cancer Sukuma Dance Fitness event became a platform not only for promoting healthier lifestyles but also for raising cancer awareness, advocating for change, and mobilizing resources to support the fight against cancer.

The inaugural event in 2019 drew an impressive attendance of 700 participants, comprising individuals from corporate entities and the cancer control fraternity. Notably, the event emphasized inclusivity by involving both adults and children, making it a family-centered activity. This emphasis on inclusivity underscores the holistic approach toward promoting healthier habits among diverse age groups.

One of the primary objectives of the Cancer Sukuma Dance Fitness event is to generate resources in support of UCS initiatives. These initiatives encompass a wide range of programs, including advocacy for policy change, awareness campaigns, and various patient support programs. The patient support programs offered by UCS encompass crucial services such as counseling for patients and caregivers, patient support groups, and the provision of essential artificial parts like breast prosthesis and artificial limbs. Furthermore, UCS aims to facilitate patient hostel services and disseminate valuable cancer education materials to both patients and caregivers.



Nama Wellness Community boosts cervical cancer prevention in Uganda.

Nama Wellness Community Center contributes to reduction of cervical cancer in Uganda by combining static clinic and clinical outreach activities reaching a broader population, including those in remote and underserved areas contributing to the overall goal of reducing cervical cancer related mortalities.

The clinical outreaches provided access to HPV vaccination of 10-year-old girls in nearby schools and cervical cancer screening as well treatment of precancerous lesions. Additionally, Nama Wellness leveraged Village Health Teams (VHT) to mobilize communities for cervical cancer screening as well as educating parents / caretakers on the importance of HPV vaccination.

The above engagements birthed; 441 girls vaccinated against HPV at Nama Wellness HC III and 186 women screened for cervical cancer.



Above: Moments captured with Nurse Namuyanja conducting a health education session on HPV at Katongo HCIII and on the other hand a young girl being administered with the HPV vaccine in one of Nama Wellness' partner schools.

The clinical outreaches provided access to HPV vaccination of 10-year-old girls in nearby schools and cervical cancer screening as well treatment of precancerous lesions.



Rays of Hope Hospice Jinja hosted the 5th Ride -Walk – Run in fight of women’s cancer.

On the 28th of October 2023, Rays of Hope Hospice, Jinja hosted the Ride – Walk – Run at the Jinja Golf Club. This walk provided a platform to increase breast and cervical cancer awareness and also raise funds to prevent and screen cervical cancer among girls and women of Busoga region. This event attracted approximately 500 attendees from different sectors of the region.



; Above: Moments captured from the Rays of Hope 5th Ride – Walk – Run at Jinja Golf club.

Ananda Centre for Cancer Research attends the AORTIC Conference (The African Organisation for Research & Training in Cancer)

From the 2nd to 6th of November 2023, Ananda Cancer Centre for Cancer attended the 14th AORTIC International Conference on Cancer in Africa that took place in Dakar bringing together multidisciplinary specialists from the global cancer community to reduce the impact of cancer in Africa. The objectives of the conference were to support, integrate, and facilitate evidence-based interventions and innovative programs towards the prevention and control of cancer in Africa.



Above: The Ananda Centre for Cancer Research at the 14th AORTIC International Conference on Cancer.



UCS Unveils Skill-Up Capacity Strengthening Program



Cancer continues to pose a significant public health challenge in Uganda, necessitating collective efforts from civil society organizations and the government. UCS being the national coordination body of cancer control organizations, recognizing the pivotal role of capacity building, conducted a Learning Needs Assessment exercise from August 1st to August 15th, 2023. The assessment engaged 37 out of 45 member organizations, uncovering crucial insights into their learning needs and priorities.

Built on the assessment findings, UCS is introducing the "Skill-Up" Capacity Strengthening Program come 2024. This comprehensive initiative aims to empower member organizations through knowledge exchange, skills development, and collaboration, conducted through a blend of virtual and in-person learning sessions.

Some of the Program Highlights include monthly training sessions, addressing a spectrum of topics including fundraising, financial management, and governance. These sessions, conducted primarily in a virtual format and supplemented by in-person sessions where feasible, serve as a pivotal knowledge-sharing platform. Furthermore, the program will incorporate Case Study Presentations, where participating organizations will articulate their project experiences during the sessions, fostering a culture of peer learning and collaboration. The Skill-Up initiative will also emphasize Collaboration and Networking, providing a structured platform for organizations to establish partnerships, share resources, and collectively address shared challenges in the realm of cancer control. A significant emphasis will be placed on Monitoring and Evaluation, constituting a robust component that not only encourages continuous improvement but also facilitates the collective celebration of shared successes within the UCS community. UCS envisions this program as a catalyst for a culture of continuous improvement in the fight against cancer in Uganda.



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soleterre

Uganda Cancer Trust UK
Improving lives for people with cancer

