



The Ugandan community unites in giving back: Abreast4HER campaign

UWOCASO Engages Wakiso District Leaders in the cancer fight

Uganda joins the rest of the world to commemorate the 2024 World Cancer Day.



■ Editor's Note

As we reflect on the events of the past quarter, it is evident that the Uganda Cancer Society has been exceptionally active and impactful in our collective efforts to combat cancer. With February hosting significant awareness days such as World Cancer Day and International Childhood Cancer Day, our organization rallied members to coordinate efforts for the betterment of cancer patients, survivors, and our broader community.

The activities and initiatives detailed in this newsletter exemplify our unwavering dedication to confronting cancer on multiple fronts. From commemorating key awareness dates to inclusion of marginalized groups in advocating for the adoption of the National Cancer Control Plan, from conducting community dialogues and outreach programs to celebrating the resilience of cancer survivors, each endeavor underscores our commitment to reducing the cancer burden in our country.

Moving forward, we remain steadfast in our resolve to build upon the foundation laid by our past efforts. We are committed to exploring innovative approaches and doubling our efforts to achieve tangible progress in the fight against cancer. We urge all members to reaffirm their dedication to collaboration, compassion, and resilience as we continue this important work.

May the year ahead be characterized by significant strides in cancer control, bringing us closer to our shared vision of a Uganda free from the burden of cancer.



Brenda Nandutu
Programs Officer
Uganda Cancer Society

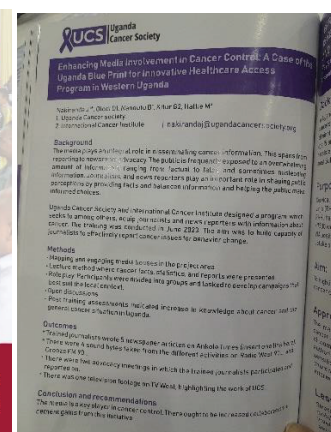
UCS participates in the 2nd Africa Test and Treat Conference (ATTC)

In the ongoing battle against cancer in Uganda and Africa at large, Uganda Cancer Society (UCS) has stepped forward with innovative interventions showcased at the 2nd Africa Test and Treat Conference which took place on 2nd to 4th February 2024 at Imperial Royale Hotel. With a commitment to pioneering approaches and holistic solutions, it presented three abstracts highlighting diverse strategies aimed at reducing the cancer burden in the country.

The conference saw UCS emerging as a significant contributor to the discourse by providing a crucial platform for sharing insights and approaches in cancer prevention, treatment, and care.

One of the abstracts presented titled; Enhancing Media Involvement in Cancer Control: A Case of The Uganda Blueprint for Innovative Healthcare Access Program in Western Uganda. This highlighted the crucial role played by journalists and news reporters in disseminating cancer information, hence the need to equip them with information about cancer to effectively report cancer issues for behavior change. Another abstract focused on Coordinating Civil Society Efforts for a Systematic Contribution Towards Effective Cancer Control: Uganda Cancer Society's Coordination Framework. Since UCS is a coordinating umbrella of civil societies involved in cancer control work, a framework was designed to support systematic coordination of civil society efforts by establishing platforms, processes, and a structure to guide collaboration efforts. In the third abstract, UCS shed light on the crucial role of Recognizing Cancer Survivorship Gaps: Commemorating 2023 National Cancer Survivors Day in Uganda. This contributed to increased awareness, advocacy and involved the general public along with other stakeholders, by recognizing the burden, efforts made to control it and challenges faced in the fight.

Through these presentations, UCS reaffirmed its commitment to driving positive change and improving cancer outcomes in the country, with innovative interventions and steadfast dedication to the cause.



(Top to bottom) Publicity flyer for the ATTC, one of the published abstracts and abstract presentation by Ms. Julian Nakiranda, UCS Programs Assistant.

Uganda joins the rest of the world to commemorate the 2024 World Cancer Day.



(Top to bottom) The Executive Director of Uganda Cancer Society, Mr. Dennis Olodi and Uganda Cancer Institute, Dr. Jackson Orem (right hand, left hand) addressing the media on the 2024 World Cancer Day at Uganda Media Centre.



(Top to bottom) Eric Cancer Initiative team holding ribbons as a symbol of solidarity and placing breast self-examination stickers on transportation means.

World Cancer Day is globally commemorated on 4th February of every year. A range of individuals and organisations worldwide usually come together to raise awareness and understanding on cancer, show support to those affected, and advocate for proactive measures to prevent, detect and treat this disease. This year, Uganda cancer society in partnership with Uganda Cancer Institute held a press conference at the Uganda Media Center under the theme "Close the Care Gap".

During this press conference, emphasis was placed on the urgent need to expand care and treatment in conjunction with strengthening ongoing interventions by different stakeholders. Outstanding figures present included; the Executive Director of Uganda Cancer Society and the Institute, Mr. Dennis Olodi and Dr. Jackson Orem, Dr. Niyonzima Nixon, the department Head of Laboratory, Research and Training together with Dr. Jatho Alfred, the Head of Community Cancer services. The conference gathered representation from prominent media stations including New Vision, NBS, UBC, Bukedde TV, CBS and Sanyu Fm among others.

Proceedings of this event centered around a press statement that addressed the current cancer status in Uganda. Notably the statement outlined the latest developments

in infrastructure and acquisition of cancer treatment equipment. Furthermore, it underscored the importance of decentralizing of cancer services to regional centers in order to bridge the care gap.

Dr. Jackson Orem in his speech highlighted the government's commitment to the decentralization of cancer services through establishment of regional cancer centers, demonstrated by the recent construction and launch of the Gulu regional cancer center. He went on to say, "The best way to handle this issue is to make sure that our society is made aware that cancer is a disease not witchcraft".

To sum up, the Executive Director of Uganda Cancer Society appreciated the government's role in providing treatment and care. He pledged civil society's unwavering support in regard to joint resource mobilization and an enabling supporting environment.

Similarly, in an effort to raise awareness on breast cancer and promote early detection, Eric Cancer Initiative undertook a proactive approach. Stickers and informative flyers containing essential information on breast self-exam were strategically disseminated across various transportation modes including in taxis, mini buses and bikes. Furthermore, these informative flyers were distributed within the community, aiming to maximize outreach and educate individuals about the importance of early detection methods.

Uganda Cancer Society champions inclusivity: Advancing the National Cancer Control Plan for individuals living with Albinism and children battling cancer.



(Top to bottom) Uganda Cancer Society, people living with Albinism and childhood cancer representatives pose for a group picture and participate in the dialogue advocating for the Uganda National Cancer Control Plan during their break away sessions.

In recognition of the importance of grassroots involvements and the voices of those directly affected by cancer, Uganda Cancer Society in collaboration with Soleterre Onlus and St. Mary's Hospital Lacor, Gulu organized a community dialogue on the 14th of February, 2024. This dialogue specifically targeted undeserved groups including people living with Albinism and children battling cancer. The aim was to generate continuous demand for the adoption of the Uganda National Cancer Control Plan and to increase the involvement of these marginalized groups in decision-making processes. Supported by the Commonwealth Foundation, this dialogue attracted over 30 participants in total including people living with albinism, children with cancer and their care takers. Mr. Hassan Mulondo from the Uganda Albinism Association shared an overview of the Plan and what difference it would make for especially people with albinism and children with cancer once it is adopted. Additionally, discussions were held where the unique challenges faced by the different groups were shared. Actionable advocacy plans were developed, focusing on priorities such as the provision of sunscreen creams and improved access to cancer care services.



This dialogue specifically targeted undeserved groups including people living with Albinism and children battling cancer.

Unveiling challenges: Uganda Cancer Society commemorates the 2024 International Childhood Cancer Day.

During the February month, which is widely recognized as the World Cancer Month, numerous events and campaigns are organized globally by cancer control organisations, healthcare professionals, government entities and communities. Notably, within this month falls the International Childhood Cancer Day February 15th, dedicated to raising awareness about childhood cancer and showing support for children and adolescents, survivors and their families.

On this day, Uganda Cancer Society in collaboration with her member organisations including, Soletterre Onlus, Uganda Child Cancer Foundation, Hazel and Amara, Ahavah Child Cancer Care, Afron Oncology for Africa, Faces of Courage and St. Mary's Hospital Lacor observed the 2024 International Childhood Cancer Day. Aligned with global standards this commemoration centered around the theme, "Unveiling challenges." This theme emphasized the importance of community participation and support in addressing the various challenges associated with childhood cancer.

The commemoration involved several activities namely; marching with a band around Gulu city holding educative placards to shed light on the childhood cancer related challenges and dispel myths. Additionally, a press conference was held. To honor the little champions battling cancer and survivors, a children's party was also held at St. Mary's Hospital Nursing Grounds providing them with a joyful break from their usual hospital routines.



Uganda Cancer Society and her members, representatives from Uganda Cancer Institute and St. Mary's Hospital Lacor take part in the International Childhood Cancer Day march and press conference.

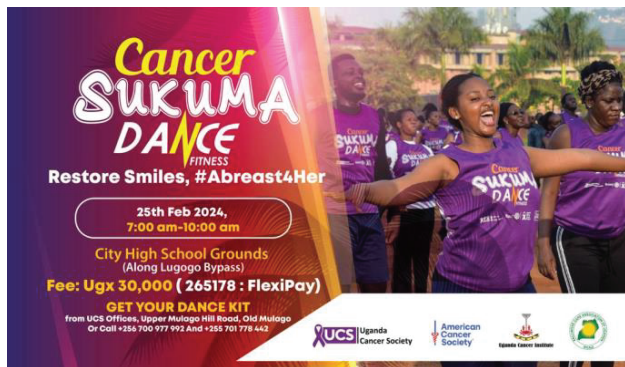
The Ugandan community unites in giving back: Abreast4HER campaign

Breast cancer ranks third in Uganda with a recording of 2,999 new cases according to Globocan statistics 2022. Whilst the cancer burden is growing, more than one third of this burden could be reduced by modifying key lifestyle risk factors such as tobacco use, obesity, unhealthy diet and inadequate physical activity among others. Physical inactivity in particular is one of the leading risk factors known to cause cancer of the breast.

Aligned with the global observance of February as World Cancer Month, the Uganda Cancer Society organized the third edition of Cancer Sukuma Dance Fitness on February 25th. This drive looked at engaging the public to proactively prevent cancer through improved lifestyles whilst raising resources to support the production and availing of artificial breasts to cancer patients that have undergone breast surgery.

Under the tagline, “Abreast4HER”, this drive attracted numerous member organisations, partners, stakeholders, companies and individuals onboard into a social media campaign mobilizing more members of the public to participate in this dance by either purchasing a dance kit at only 30,000 Ugandan shillings or donating to this cause.

A pictorial from the Pre and during the cancer Sukuma Fitness Dance



Kawempe Home Care participates in the review of the Children's Palliative Care Outcome Version

According to reports from the WHO European Region, approximately 170,000 children requiring palliative care pass away annually. The same data indicates that palliative care services are accessible in 20 countries within the region, primarily concentrated in high income European countries. On the other hand, palliative care services are less developed in low to middle income countries where Uganda falls. It is defined that children's palliative care surrounds comprehensive care for their physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing along with providing support to their families.

On the 22rd and 23rd of February, 2023, Kawempe Home Care participated in the final review of the Children's Palliative Care Outcome (C-POS) version and plan for the integration of its measure into routine care workshop organized by African Palliative Care Association. This revision exercise is anticipated to provide the team with the best practice in clinical and psychosocial care for children with cancer and their families.



Images captured during and after the C-POS Workshop in Makindye.

The benefits to nurturing patients' minds and well-being

Considering patients rely more heavily on emergency services or hospital-based care for crisis intervention which may not always be conducive to long term healing and wellbeing, Hospice Africa Uganda launched a monthly outpatient day care program. This program aims at enhancing the wellbeing of the patient and their caretaker. It offers psychological sessions tailored to address anxiety, depression and life transitions as well as spiritual support to provide hope and meaning during times of distress keeping in mind their individual beliefs.

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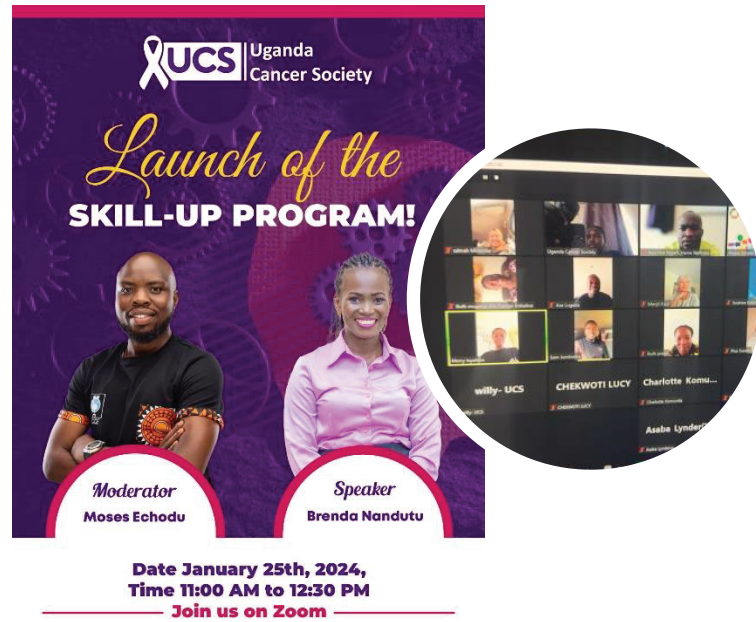
Patients and their caretakers enjoying the monthly day care sessions at Little Hospice Hoima (left hand) and Makindye (right hand)

Uganda Cancer Society Launches the Skill-Up Initiative

The Uganda Cancer Society (UCS) has embarked on a transformative journey aimed at strengthening the capabilities and efficiency of its member organizations. On the 25th of January, UCS launched the Skill-up Initiative, marking the start of a much-desired learning and connecting initiative. With 21 participants in attendance, the launch was met with resounding excitement and active engagement. Participants actively posed questions, fostering an environment conducive to collaborative learning and growth.

One of the objectives of the Skill-Up Initiative is to strengthen communication channels among member organizations. Through regular updates on initiatives, forthcoming opportunities, and collaborative projects. By facilitating seamless communication, UCS endeavors to foster a sense of unity and collective purpose among its members.

Additionally, the Skill-Up Initiative is designed to empower members with continuous learning opportunities. In the relentless battle against cancer, adaptability and advancement are paramount. Through monthly scheduled sessions and workshops, UCS is committed to equipping its members with the knowledge and skills necessary to better fulfilling their mission, ultimately leading to a reduction in the cancer burden in Uganda.



Picture moment of member organisations during the Skill Up initiative online launch.

Hospice Africa Uganda bridges health care gaps with outreaches in slum clinics

With this year's World Cancer Day theme, "Close the Care Gap", Hospice Africa Uganda has gone an extra mile in making this theme come to life with its special outreach program in slum areas around the central region. This outreach program is so far being implemented at Access Health Services and the Catholic Parish Church in Namuwongo- Kisugu and Katanga between Makerere and Mulago parish respectively. This involves holistic assessment and management of patients living with Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and communicable diseases, health education and sensitizations on prevention of these diseases and self-care, education to the caretakers with basic knowledge and skill of taking care of their beloved ones as well as caring for themselves in an affordable way to prevent carer fatigue and burnout.



The Hospice Africa Uganda team during their slum clinic outreaches.

The Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care in Africa (IHPCA) celebrates its Inaugural Masters Graduation

As populations age and chronic illness becomes more prevalent in Uganda and Africa at large, there is pressing demand for palliative care professionals to address this growing need. Keeping this in mind, as of 29th January 2024, the Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care in Africa (IHPCA) in affiliation to Makerere University graduated 15 students with a MSc in Palliative Care, the first of its kind in Africa, 16 with a Bachelors' Degree in Palliative care, 1 with a Diploma and 1 with Postgraduate summing up to thirty-three (33).



Dr. Anne Merriman, the founder of Hospice Africa Uganda with the graduates

Building a generation free of cancer; Eric Cancer Initiative outscores community cancer outreaches.

The high prevalence of cancer cases and myths in Uganda, signify the need for increase in awareness levels in the local communities. This is believed to help in addressing primary preventions and promote early detection. Cancer community outreaches in Uganda have become a norm, providing individuals in their respective groupings who may not otherwise have access to these services.

Throughout the first quarter of the year 2024, Eric Cancer Initiative an NGO that specializes in preventing and responding to breast cancer in Uganda, embarked on a road to enhance and eradicate breast cancer ignorance in Kampala, the capital of Uganda and neighboring areas. This included conducting engagements in Masuulita refugee camp, ABSA Bank, her working women workshop and outreaches in schools and markets. These outreaches were targeted towards women, girls, boys and men of reproductive age.

This ongoing activity has so far equipped 5,984 women, girls, boys and men with breast cancer awareness information and breast self-exam techniques as a screening tool for early recognition of breast cancer.



Eric Cancer Initiative team conducting community outreaches in different areas of Kampala.

UWOCASO Engages Wakiso District Leaders in the cancer fight



The Executive Director of Uganda Women's Cancer Support Organisation, Ms. Gertrude Nakigudde presenting project updates before Wakisio district leaders.

On February 23rd, 2024, Uganda Women's Cancer Support Organisation (UWOCASO) summoned an advocacy meeting with Wakiso District leaders to discuss strategies for combating cancer among women. The meeting emphasized the importance of prevention through widespread dissemination of cancer information and timely referrals. District leaders pledged joint fundraising efforts, awareness campaigns, and integrating cancer services into the district health programs for the fiscal year 2024/2025. This collaborative effort underscores Wakiso District's commitment to fighting cancer, aligning with this year's Women's Day theme, "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress". The engagement fosters a strong partnership between UWOCASO, local government leaders, and NGOs, furthering efforts to combat cancer and improve women's health outcomes.

UWOCASO partners with community-based organization to improve care for women with cancer in Mende Sub County, Wakiso District.

Amidst rising cancer rates, particularly among women in Mende Sub County, Uganda Women's Cancer Support Organisation continues its vital work in providing support and empowerment to cancer survivors and patients. Through home visits, survivors offer counseling and guidance to patients, caregivers, and families, addressing the pressing need for psychosocial support in the community.

Community case finding efforts have revealed a prevalence of cervical and breast cancer among women, along with other common cancers such as Kaposi's sarcoma and skin cancer. However, access to healthcare, testing, treatment, and psychosocial support remains limited, worsening stigma and discrimination surrounding cancer. To combat these challenges, UWOCASO conducts community meetings and peer support sessions, facilitating knowledge-sharing, emotional support, and access to expert information and resources. Additionally, initiatives such as income-generating skills training in poultry management and vegetable farming are empowering women with cancer to improve their quality of life.



Patients and survivors during a physical exercise activity amidst peer counselling sessions.

Fostering Hope: Uganda Cancer Support Women's Organization's Mentally Cancer Free and Thriving Project



The UWOCASO team during their home visits.
Other Awareness Activities

The “Mentally Cancer Free and Thriving” project, spearheaded by UWOCASO, addresses the intersection of cancer and mental health, particularly in the context of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Home visits and counseling sessions provide critical support to survivors, combating feelings of isolation and building resilience in the face of adversity.

Through survivor-led initiatives and personal testimonies, UWOCASO is fostering hope and resilience within the community, empowering cancer patients to navigate their journey with strength and confidence. These efforts represent a vital step towards improving the physical, emotional, and social well-being of individuals affected by cancer in Mende Sub County and beyond.

Other Awareness Activities



The Ahavah Child Cancer Care team educating students of Bishop Cipriano Secondary School about childhood cancer.





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