

PCAU PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

PCAU's First Virtual Conference!

On September 23rd and 24th, for the third time, the [Palliative Care Association of Uganda](#) (PCAU) and the [Uganda Cancer Institute](#) (UCI) co-hosted the **Uganda Conference on Cancer and Palliative Care** with the theme **"Cancer and Palliative Care During COVID-19 and Other Challenging Situations."**



Due to the pandemic and current lockdown measures, the conference originated from the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation's studio and was broadcast across the country.

Due to the pandemic and current lockdown measures in Uganda, the conference was held virtually and in collaboration with the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC). The conference proceedings were televised throughout Uganda, and the production quality was impressive. Even more impressive was the outstanding content from presenters from Uganda and across the globe! The program included 13 plenary presentations, 2 panel discussions, 33 abstract presentations, 2 workshops and 21 poster presentations.

The conference participants were welcomed by a message from Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO). In his keynote address, he noted the disruption that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused in cancer control around the world – fewer people with cancer are seeking and receiving care. He further noted the pandemic has demonstrated why universal health coverage must remain a top priority built on resilient health systems that can continue to deliver essential health services such as cancer and palliative care, even in the most severe crisis.



Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General
World Health Organization

Dr. Tedros applauded Uganda for finalizing its cancer plan and their innovative approach used to maintain essential services during the pandemic. He also acknowledged the country's leading role in palliative care, especially in capacity strengthening and access to essential medicines.

The program was rich and varied with topics such as: health systems strengthening and financing for cancer and palliative care, implications of the COVID-19 epidemic on universal access to palliative care service and innovation and creativity in providing care to vulnerable populations. Cyndy Searfoss, director of partnerships for Global Partners in Care, gave a presentation on strengthening access to cancer and palliative care through international collaboration. Annette Deguch, Center for Hospice Care (CHC) bereavement counselor, gave a presentation on yoga and mindfulness during a session on caregiver resilience and sustainability of cancer and palliative care services. Panels highlighted the experiences of health care providers and their observations, lessons learned and recommendations for mitigation of possible future emergencies.



Building on the partnership's collaborative mHealth project, a workshop was held on improving national data collection in palliative and cancer care. The session was co-chaired by Lacey Ahern, Hospice Foundation manager of international programs and Dr. Miriam Ajambo, senior medical officer and palliative care focal person for the Uganda Ministry of Health.



Several individual and organizational awards were given, recognizing champions in cancer and palliative care. Joy Hospice of Mbale was recognized for their outstanding response to dealing with the first COVID-19 case in Uganda, a situation that spotlighted the importance of hospices during the pandemic. Dr. Barnabas Atwine of Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) was awarded best oral abstract for his research, "Money was the Problem: Caregivers' self-reported reasons for abandoning their children's cancer treatment in Southwest Uganda."



The collaboration with UBC was a great opportunity to extend information about cancer and palliative care across the country (and beyond) to a broad audience. There is no way to know for sure how many watched the conference on TV, but online attendance was over 350. Among those were 14 satellite viewing hubs at regional referral hospitals across Uganda. CHC was honored to participate in this excellent conference and pleased to be a conference co-sponsor for the fifth time.



Many thanks to the entire conference organizing committee, other sponsors, UBC and the volunteers who made this conference possible.

Road to Hope Program Update

As shared in last month's issue, most schools remain closed as the government seeks to ensure more teachers and school support staff are vaccinated. Uganda reports that nearly half of all teachers have received at least their first vaccine dose. Some progress is being made to bring more vaccines into the country. In September, the United States donated more than 1.6 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine, and Uganda purchased 9 million Johnson & Johnson vaccine doses which will be delivered in a phased manner.

Tertiary institutions – including universities and vocational schools – will reopen on November 1. Primary and secondary schools will not resume in-person classroom learning until January 2022. The majority of our children will remain at home until next year and PCAU continues to assist them with homeschooling support.

Seven RTH children are able to return to school in November:

- Tony will resume his studies in development at Makerere University. He has recently been engaged with online classes and is excited for face-to-face interaction.
- Aggrey and Ronald will resume their vocational studies at Joseph Kisubi Technical Institute in electrical installation and plumbing, respectively. They return to the classroom for a few months and will then be placed in field-based internships.
- Joseph spent time working and learning in a workshop in his home district in northern Uganda during lockdown. This allowed him to practice and use his welding and metal fabrication skills. He is tempted to stay in the workplace and continue earning an income, but PCAU is encouraging him to complete the course. PCAU will be in Northern Uganda for a children's retreat at the end of October where they will help Joseph return to school.
- Mwesigwa and Juliet passed their senior four (S.4) national exams which allows them to progress to vocational school. Mwesigwa wants to start a course in mechanical engineering and sign language so he can become an interpreter. Juliet would like to be a nurse. PCAU is working to establish appropriate schools for both of them.
- And lastly for Emmanuella, after completing primary 7 she has opted to pursue a fashion and design course in a trade school.



Ronald doing practical work in his plumbing internship

If you would like to write a note of encouragement to a child on the RTH program, please contact Denis Kidde at kidde@cfdc.org. They love to receive notes from their friends and supporters in the US!

PCAU Staff Highlights: Ronald Kanyike

Ronald Kanyike has worked as an *on-call* driver at PCAU since 2014. He is responsible for supporting the transportation team, fills in for the head driver as needed, does routine checks on the organization vehicles and maintains the travel logbook.

Ronald also fills in wherever help is needed. He supports field officers in setting up for trainings, taking photographs during activities and helps sell PCAU merchandise during fundraising and awareness activities. His big smile is always welcoming and is very friendly – a trait that is valued greatly by his colleagues, and he is always willing to help whenever his services are needed.



Ronald Kanyike

Ronald likes working with PCAU because it supports people with chronic illnesses to get the care they need – regardless of where they live. He leads the Road to Hope program as it brings joy and happiness to sick parents/guardians knowing that after they die, their children will have an opportunity to get an education. Also, his engagement with PCAU enables him earn a living to support his family.

Help PCAU Stay Safe During the Pandemic

Your gift to our COVID-19 Safety Appeal will help PCAU stay safe as they continue to support the delivery of palliative care in Uganda by helping them purchase PPE, testing and other crucial supplies.

[Donate to the COVID-19 Safety Appeal](#)



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