

## PCAU PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

### Scaling up Availability, Accessibility, Quality, and Equity for Cancer and Palliative Care Services in Uganda

This 4th Uganda Conference on Cancer and Palliative Care was co-hosted by the Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU) and the Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI). The conference took place at the Speke Resort Hotel in Munyonyo on September 14th and 15th. It was a successful collaboration between the cancer and palliative care communities in Uganda and a testament to the unwavering dedication of those working in these areas.

The conference was an international gathering with over 400 attendees. Many were from Uganda but delegates also came from Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea. In addition, there were participants from the UK, Norway, Netherlands, Ireland, Japan, India and the US. The team from Center for Hospice Care/Hospice Foundation included Karl Holderman, vice president and chief financial officer, Lacey Ahern, Global Partners in Care program director, and Denis Kidde, international programs coordinator. Although Karl has supported this partnership since it began in 2008, this was his first visit to Uganda.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director general of the World Health Organization (WHO), delivered a compelling virtual address. He emphasized the critical need for scaling up palliative care services globally, highlighting that while 57 million people worldwide require palliative care, only 14 percent can access it. Dr. Tedros also shed light on the impending doubling of the cancer burden in Africa over the next two decades.

Rose Kiwanuka, the founding PCAU country director and Uganda's first palliative care nurse, took attendees on a journey through three decades of palliative care in Uganda during her keynote address. She noted the significant progress made with the number of districts offering palliative care increasing from 32 in 2009 to 107 in 2022. Her impassioned call for the involvement of young people in palliative care training resonated deeply with the audience.

Dr. Nixon Niyonzima, the head of the research and training department at UCI and conference co-chair, shared ambitious goals for Uganda's cancer care. With approximately 34,000 Ugandans diagnosed with cancer annually, Dr. Niyonzima stressed the importance of cancer detection and providing care for more patients. The goal is to elevate access to cancer care from the current 20% to 85% by 2026.



Attendees engaged in workshops and discussions, including "Enhancing National Palliative Care Data Reporting and Utilization," co-chaired by Lacey, and the "Track on Innovation and New Technologies," co-chaired by Denis. These sessions facilitated dialogue and knowledge exchange among participants.

PCAU received well-deserved recognition for its leadership in advancing palliative care in Uganda. Several participants were honored with awards for their outstanding contributions and presentations. Global Partners in Care also presented its 2022 [Global Partnership Award](#) to Hospice Africa Uganda for their strong partnership with Hinds Hospice in California.



In a heartwarming moment, conference attendees also celebrated Rose's 63rd birthday.

The conference concluded with a call to the Uganda government to increase access to palliative care and strengthen disease prevention efforts. Dr. Rony Bahatungire, Ag, commissioner health services in charge of clinical services at the Ministry of Health, reaffirmed the government's commitment to implementing Universal Health Coverage, including national health insurance.

CHC/HF are always proud to engage in and support this conference. The success of the 4th Uganda Conference on Cancer and Palliative Care demonstrated the dedication and hard work of the PCAU and the UCI staff who organized the conference. Together, they are scaling up hope and making strides toward accessible, high-quality cancer and palliative care services in Uganda.

### Growth and Compassion in Uganda Reflections from my Internship with PCAU

By Ethan Harned

This summer, I completed a field internship through Global Partners in Care (GPIC) with the Hospice Foundation and the Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU). I worked closely with PCAU to complete a project on how best to advocate and improve access to palliative care services for three vulnerable populations: children, older persons and persons living with disabilities. As a Hesburgh-Yusko Scholar and pre-medical student at the University of Notre Dame, my academic career focuses on working in the healthcare industry from a social justice perspective. This project gave me a chance to put this into practice.



Throughout the summer, I had amazing opportunities such as meeting with officials from the Ministry of Health and attending PCAU's annual general meeting for their members. I spent time with several organizations with whom PCAU is working to ensure access to palliative care for all in Uganda. I also spent two weeks completing clinical observations in children's palliative care at a government hospital in western Uganda. I worked with a hostel for pediatric cancer patients in Mbarara that works closely with the cancer center there. I met with multiple civil society organizations such as Light for the World, the Geriatric Respite Care Foundation of Uganda and the Uganda National Association of the Deaf to learn about their work to support persons living with disabilities and older persons. All these experiences gave me incredible insight into the work of PCAU and its collaborators.

[Read more about Ethan's internship](#)

### Road to Hope

Our next newsletter will explore the Road to Hope (RTH) program in more depth. We will share stories of our recent visits to RTH children, updates on some recent graduates and opportunities for you to engage in supporting these special children. If you would like to learn more about the program, visit <https://roadtohopefund.org/>.



Do you know someone who might enjoy reading about this partnership and palliative care in Uganda?

Help us spread the word and forward this email to your friends and colleagues. Thank you!



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