

Workshops

Workshop 1 Brief: Access to Essential Medicines for patients with cancer and palliative care needs.

Date: Wednesday September 10, 2025

Venue: Albert Hall

Time: 11:00 – 13:00

Access to essential medicines is a cornerstone of effective cancer treatment and palliative care. However, challenges such as affordability, supply chain inefficiencies, regulatory restrictions, and stock-outs continue to hinder patient outcomes in Uganda. Recognizing this, a dedicated workshop on access to medicines will be held during a breakout session, bringing together key stakeholders to collectively address gaps and opportunities in the supply chain for cancer and palliative care medications.

The workshop will provide a platform to discuss the Anti-Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Act (2023) and its implications for balancing access with regulatory control, while also examining issues of availability, affordability, and safety of anti-cancer medicines. It will convene a diverse group of stakeholders, including officials from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Internal Affairs, National Drug Authority, National Medical Stores, Uganda Cancer Institute, Hospice Africa Uganda, Joint Medical Stores, pharmacists, oncology and palliative care practitioners, beneficiaries of care, and other partners within the medicines supply chain. Each of these actors plays a critical role in ensuring uninterrupted, equitable access to medicines for patients in need.

The workshop is aimed at strengthening the supply chain for essential medicines used in the treatment of cancer and the provision of palliative care in Uganda.

The workshop is expected to identify gaps and bottlenecks hindering timely availability of essential medicines, strengthen multi-sectoral collaboration among key stakeholders, and generate actionable recommendations to improve affordability, safety, and uninterrupted supply of essential medicines.

Workshop 2 Brief: Driving Evidence-Based Education and Translational Research

Date: Wednesday September 10, 2025

Venue: Meera Hall

Time: 11:00 – 13:00

Education and training as well as research are strong pillars in the advancement of cancer treatment and palliative care. Evidence-based education and training ensure that health professionals are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to deliver safe, effective, and compassionate care. At the same time, research and translational science generate the evidence base that informs these practices, turning data into actionable insights that shape clinical care, policy, and health systems.

In Uganda, where the cancer burden is rising and palliative care is a vital part of comprehensive health care, both education and research are indispensable. While research outputs in oncology and palliative care are steadily increasing, gaps remain in translating findings into clinical practice, training programs, and standards formulation. Similarly, while training opportunities exist, they are often not systematically linked to the latest evidence or adapted to local contexts. This disconnect can limit the impact of both research and education, leaving patients, families, and health systems underserved.

Translational research provides the critical bridge between discovery and practice moving innovations “from bench to bedside and into policy.” When coupled with evidence-based education and training, it ensures that scientific innovations, local data, and best practices are contextualized and applied in real-world settings.

This workshop will bring together researchers, educators, practitioners, and policymakers to critically reflect on the current state of cancer and palliative care research and education in Uganda. It will explore current available opportunities are available for education in palliative care and oncology, discuss strategies for integrating evidence into training curricula, professional development, and clinical practice while fostering collaboration across institutions.

This workshop is open to all conference delegates with representations from the institute of Hospice and Palliative Care in Uganda, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda Cancer Institute, Palliative Care Association of Uganda, other Academic Institutions, Health workers/health facility representations.

The workshop is expected to enhance understanding of training opportunities in cancer and palliative care, secure commitments from academic institutions and partners to collaborate on capacity-building for research and curriculum development and produce a draft roadmap for establishing or strengthening collaborative research and education platforms.

Workshop 3 Brief: Healthy Aging: Supporting Aging Populations in Health care.

Date: Wednesday September 10,2025

Venue: Sheena Hall

Time: 11:00 – 13:00

Uganda’s population is steadily aging, with over 1.7 million Ugandans now aged 60 years and above a figure projected to more than double by 2050, according to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2024). While increased life expectancy reflects important gains in public health, it also brings a growing burden of chronic and life-limiting conditions such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, dementia, and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs). These conditions require integrated, long-term, and palliative care approaches to maintain quality of life for older persons. However, Uganda’s health system remains largely oriented toward the needs of younger populations, with insufficient attention to the specific physical, psychosocial, and end-of-life care needs of the elderly. Structural barriers such as late

diagnosis, limited access to cancer and NCD treatment, inadequate workforce training in geriatric care, weak social and financial protection systems, and the poor integration of palliative care leave older adults underserved and exposed to catastrophic health expenditures.

The workshop aims to catalyse dialogue and coordinated action to address the healthcare needs of Uganda's aging population, especially in the areas of oncology and palliative care. It seeks to bring together key stakeholders to assess service gaps, explore the relevance of the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Toolkit for Older Persons, share best practices and lived experiences from both community and institutional settings, and identify opportunities for strengthening age-inclusive health services.

The workshop is expected to build a shared understanding of the unique healthcare needs of older persons in Uganda, particularly in cancer and palliative care, and to highlight critical service delivery gaps and barriers to access. It will aim to generate consensus on actionable recommendations for integrating age-appropriate and inclusive care models within Uganda's health system. Additionally, the workshop will document commitments to strengthening workforce capacity, enhancing multi-sectoral collaboration, and advancing policies and programs that promote healthy aging, improved social protection, and equity in healthcare access for older adults.

Workshop 4 Brief: Thriving Beyond Cancer: Supporting children in survivorship

Date: Wednesday September 10, 2025

Venue: Regal Hall

Time: 11:00 – 15:00

Childhood cancers represent a unique and growing challenge in Uganda's health system. Although survival rates are improving globally, many children in Uganda continue to face barriers to early diagnosis, timely treatment, and appropriate palliative care. Families often navigate significant psychosocial and financial challenges, while children endure long-term treatment-related side effects that extend into survivorship.

Childhood cancer survivorship is therefore emerging as a critical area of concern, yet it remains under-recognized and under-resourced within the continuum of cancer care. Survivors may experience late effects such as physical disabilities, cognitive and developmental delays, impaired fertility, and ongoing emotional or psychological distress. At the same time, parents and caregivers often struggle with uncertainty, stigma, financial burdens, and limited access to support systems to help their children thrive after treatment.

The aim of this workshop is to provide a dedicated platform to explore the unique realities of childhood cancer survivorship in Uganda, drawing on the experiences of survivors, families, clinicians, and advocates. It will examine the intersection of medical, psychosocial, and educational needs of survivors, and seek to build a shared understanding of how health systems and communities can better support them beyond treatment.

The workshop is expected to generate awareness of the breadth of survivorship needs, highlight family- and community-based models of care that can be adapted in low-resource settings, and offer practical recommendations for integrating survivorship programs into Uganda's cancer and palliative care framework. Participants will also be encouraged to consider how policy, advocacy, and multi-sectoral collaboration can ensure that every child who survives cancer is supported to live with dignity, resilience, and opportunity.

Workshop 5 Brief: Survivorship, navigating life beyond treatment among adults.

Date: Wednesday September 10,2025

Venue: Victoria Ballroom

Time: 11:00 – 15:00

As advances in cancer detection and treatment continue to improve, the number of people living beyond a cancer diagnosis is steadily increasing in Uganda and globally. This growing population of survivors presents both new opportunities and complex challenges that extend well beyond the completion of active treatment. Survivorship is increasingly recognized as a critical phase of the cancer care continuum, requiring attention to physical, emotional, social, and economic wellbeing. Adult cancer survivors often face a range of long-term and late effects of cancer and its treatment, including fatigue, pain, infertility, financial strain, and mental health challenges. Many struggle with reintegration into family, work, and community life, often confronting stigma and limited support structures. While cancer care has traditionally focused on diagnosis and treatment, there is a growing need to prioritize survivorship care, including psychosocial support, rehabilitation, and the integration of palliative care to enhance quality of life. In Uganda, survivorship remains a relatively underexplored area, with limited systems and policies in place to address the diverse needs of this growing group.

The aim of this workshop is to provide a dedicated platform for survivors, health professionals, caregivers, and advocates to share experiences, exchange knowledge, and co-create practical strategies for supporting adult cancer survivors in navigating life beyond treatment. The workshop will focus on holistic wellbeing, quality of life, and building resilient support systems that allow survivors to thrive.

The workshop is expected to raise awareness of the unique physical, psychosocial, and economic challenges faced by adult survivors, highlight lived experiences as a source of learning, inspiration, and advocacy, explore the role of palliative care in enhancing long-term wellbeing, and generate practical recommendations for strengthening survivorship programs, policies, and community-based support systems in Uganda and the region.

Workshop 6 Brief: The Diagnostic Chameleons of Cancer and their role in Delayed Detection

Date: Wednesday September 10,2025

Venue: Albert Hall

Time: 14:00 – 15:00

Cancer is often assumed to be easy to diagnose given its feared and debilitating nature. In practice, however, many patients do not present with typical signs until the disease has reached an advanced stage. Like a chameleon, cancer can camouflage, masking itself behind vague or misleading symptoms that resemble benign conditions. This makes it one of the most challenging diseases to detect early.

Examples abound in clinical practice. A patient with lung cancer may be treated for tuberculosis for months before the true diagnosis is uncovered. Pancreatic cancer is often confused with gallstones, irritable bowel syndrome, or pancreatitis due to non-specific symptoms such as abdominal pain and weight loss. Ovarian cancer may present with bloating, fatigue, or weight changes that mimic common gynecological conditions. Changes in bowel habits may be dismissed until colorectal cancer is advanced, while inflammatory breast cancer can be mistaken for mastitis, delaying urgent treatment. Even more complex are cancers with unknown primaries or leukemias that alter their molecular profile to evade therapy.

This workshop will examine the diagnostic “chameleons” of cancer and their role in delayed detection. Participants will discuss the consequences of missed or late diagnosis, including unnecessary procedures, delayed initiation of treatment, and poorer outcomes for patients. The session will also highlight the growing opportunities for earlier and more accurate detection, from heightened clinical suspicion and improved frontline training to advanced imaging techniques, histopathology, molecular characterization, multi-cancer early detection tests such as liquid biopsies, and the use of artificial intelligence in risk stratification and diagnostic interpretation.

The workshop is expected to provide a platform for oncologists, general practitioners, radiologists, pathologists, palliative care providers, and researchers to reflect on real-world cases of diagnostic delays, share experiences, and generate practical recommendations to strengthen early cancer detection in Uganda. It is expected to raise awareness of the diagnostic challenges posed by cancers with atypical presentations, build consensus on strategies to minimize misdiagnosis, and identify opportunities for integrating advanced diagnostic tools into the health system.

Workshop 7 Brief: Humanitarian Approaches, Environmental Emergencies and Disasters

Detection

Date: Wednesday September 10, 2025

Venue: Sheena Hall

Time: 14:00 – 15:00

Uganda and the wider region are increasingly experiencing emergencies including floods, droughts, epidemics, refugee influxes, and other environmental disasters. In these contexts, people living with cancer and those requiring palliative care are among the most vulnerable, often facing interrupted treatment, medicine shortages, and limited access to supportive services.

Integrating humanitarian approaches into cancer and palliative care systems is therefore essential to ensure continuity of care, uphold patient dignity, and meet critical needs even during crises. At the core of humanitarian cancer care is the embedding of cancer and palliative care into emergency response plans, guaranteeing access to essential services and addressing the financial and social burdens patients encounter during disasters.

This interactive workshop will provide a platform for stakeholders to explore practical strategies for merging humanitarian principles with disaster preparedness in cancer and palliative care delivery. Through case studies from Uganda and other contexts, participants will examine frameworks for continuity of care, identify lessons for building resilient health systems, and develop strategies to protect vulnerable patients in times of crisis. The workshop will also foster experience sharing, innovation, and collaboration to strengthen cancer and palliative care services in environments affected by conflict, disasters, and emergencies.

This workshop aims to strengthen the integration of humanitarian principles and disaster preparedness into cancer and palliative care systems, ensuring that vulnerable populations continue to receive essential services during crises, conflicts, and environmental emergencies.

The workshop is expected to enable participants to identify practical strategies and frameworks, develop actionable recommendations for continuity of care and access to essential medicines, and establish collaborative commitments to build resilient, crisis-ready cancer and palliative care systems in humanitarian settings.

Workshop 8 Brief: Building Compassionate Communities and Public Health Approaches to Cancer and Palliative Care Services

Date: Friday September 10, 2025

Venue: Albert Hall

Time: 11:45 – 13:00

Meaning of compassionate communities

The Compassionate Communities movement is expanding through the Public Health approach to bolster health systems. It views illness, care, dying, death, and loss as everyone's responsibility, with neighbours actively supporting during illness or grief. Compassionate communities improve support in physical, emotional, social, and practical aspects and can be based on location, social group, shared purpose, or online, aided by technology. In Uganda, the Palliative Care Association launched the Compassionate Community Initiative in 2023, now active in four areas with partners like Lweza Community Health Program, Hospice Africa Uganda, and Ishaka Adventist Hospital.

Brief about the workshop, time, and target audience

This workshop aims to introduce delegates to the concept of compassionate communities as a key pillar of the public health approach to palliative care. The delegates attending this workshop will interact with the pioneers of the compassionate community initiative in Uganda.

The workshop also features a presentation and discussion on the public approach to cancer control in Uganda. The workshop is aimed at program officers, managers, community practitioners, and policy makers.

As outcomes of the workshop, participants will be oriented on concepts related to public health palliative care, receive information on community mobilization and engagement practices from the Uganda Cancer Institute, and share knowledge on bereavement practices and the roles of community members. Participants are expected to sign a resolution to support a compassionate community initiative in Uganda.

The workshop also offers an opportunity to launch a compassionate community song composed by the palliative care club at Ishaka Adventist College.

Workshop 8 Brief: Digital Health and Artificial Intelligence

Date: Friday September 10, 2025

Venue: Meera Hall

Time: 11:45 – 13:00

Digital health and artificial intelligence (AI) are transforming healthcare by improving access, efficiency, and quality of care. In Uganda, where cancer and palliative care face challenges such as late diagnoses, fragmented data, and limited specialist access, digital solutions offer innovative pathways to enhance service delivery. From AI-driven diagnostics and mobile health (mHealth) solutions to integrated data systems, technology is reshaping how care is delivered, monitored, and optimized.

This workshop will aim to introduce delegates to the practical applications of digital health and AI in cancer and palliative care. Participants will interact with health professionals, technologists, and policymakers implementing digital solutions in Uganda and beyond. The workshop features presentations, technology demonstrations, and interactive discussions. The workshop targets health workers, program managers, innovators, researchers, and policymakers interested in leveraging technology to improve care.

The workshop is expected to enable participants gain insights into Uganda-specific and global digital health trends, reflect on practical experiences from both health and tech perspectives, and provide feedback to directly shape ongoing tools such as the PCAU Cares App. Delegates are expected to contribute to defining actionable follow-up steps, including connecting with digital innovators and supporting continued digital health engagement in cancer and palliative care.

Invite only Side Event: Driving Healthcare Impact through Business Leadership: A Side Event for CEOs and Board Leaders

Date: Thursday September 11, 2025

Venue: Albert Hall

Time: 14:00 – 17:30

Building on the success of the inaugural Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and Board Member side event during the 4th conference which attracted 44 participants from 27 organizations and development partners, this year's side event expands engagement to explore the critical role of business leadership in shaping healthcare outcomes.

Titled **“Driving Healthcare Impact through Business Leadership,”** the event is designed as an invite-only workshop for CEOs and board leaders from healthcare institutions, corporate organizations, government agencies, civil society organizations, insurance companies, telecommunication firms, banks, professional associations, academia, and international development partners. It aims to strengthen collaborations between healthcare institutions and the corporate sector while providing insights into innovation, governance, leadership, and sustainable health financing.

The session will include expert presentations, panel discussions, and interactive Q&A sessions moderated by Dr. James Onyoin, Partner at HLB Roberts, and Pheona Nabasa Wall, Executive Director of Fidelis Leadership Institute-Kampala. Key topics include building and sustaining strong organizational brands, contemporary leadership skills, innovation and ICT for corporate leaders, and risk management and sustainability practices for NGOs. Discussants such as Dr. Maggie Kigozi (UNIDO) and Mike Wargo (Center for Hospice Care, USA) will share international perspectives and practical lessons for driving healthcare impact through strategic leadership.

The workshop provides a unique platform for participants to share ideas on innovative approaches to healthcare delivery, explore alternative models of health financing, and foster partnerships that enhance patient care and organizational effectiveness. Through these engagements, leaders will gain actionable strategies to improve governance, efficiency, accountability, and sustainability in health institutions.

The expected outcomes for the side event include increased public and corporate awareness of cancer and palliative care challenges, strengthened collaborations between healthcare and corporate organizations, and the launch of the CEO Forum a platform for continued engagement, partnerships, and strategic advocacy. Participants will leave equipped with practical insights, peer connections, and a shared commitment to driving healthcare impact through business leadership.