



## It's time.

*"We are at an inflection point in the understanding and treatment of cancer and are starting to break down barriers and change the culture in ways that are needed to deliver what patients deserve – a cancer research and care system that puts saving lives above all else."*

*- Vice President Joe Biden*

In September, BVGH was among a select group of organizations invited to speak at the [Biden Cancer Summit](#) hosted by Vice President Joe Biden and Dr. Jill Biden. The Biden Cancer Initiative called on public and private sector organizations to develop innovative new programs and partnerships with the goals to double the rate of progress against cancer and improve the cancer patient experience.

Inspired by the [Biden Cancer Initiative's](#) ambitious goal, BVGH has committed – through our [African Access Initiative \(AAI\)](#) – to **quadruple progress in Africa**. With the dedication and passion of our partner Ministers of Health, and with Pfizer and Takeda's support, I am confident we can exceed our commitment to patients in Africa.

In Nigeria, BVGH is already making this commitment a reality. The Nigerian Federal Ministry of Health and BVGH have launched an [access program](#) focused on 24 cancer drugs. These drugs target Nigeria's priority cancers – breast, cervical, colorectal, liver, and prostate – which cause over 36,000 deaths every year in the country.

Beyond accelerating access to affordable cancer medicines, BVGH is building cancer treatment capacity in AAI hospitals, including diagnostic pathology in Nigeria and Rwanda, clinical trial management in Kenya, and breast cancer treatment in Cameroon. BVGH has also identified and placed needed pathology instruments in Nigeria. In partnership with the Rwandan Ministry of Health, we are coordinating a multi-stakeholder cervical cancer education, screening, and treatment event, which will be implemented in early 2019.

By increasing access to cancer therapeutics and empowering local oncology professionals with the cancer care resources and capabilities available in the United States, we are bringing the critical resources needed to fight the cancer crisis facing the African continent.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Dent  
President, BVGH

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## Drug access agreements underway

Following a “[Stakeholder Meeting on Cancer Drug Access and Harmonized Treatment Guidelines](#),” Nigeria’s Minister of Health, Professor Isaac Adewole, invited CEOs of leading pharmaceutical companies to submit proposals to make critical cancer drugs available in Nigeria. Twenty-four drugs targeting five prioritized cancers – breast, cervical, colorectal, liver, and prostate – were the focus of the request. With BVGH’s support, the Minister plans to execute agreements and treat the first patients in early 2019.



Nigerian Minister of Health, First Lady of Kebbi State, and BVGH President discuss drug access agreements at the stakeholder meeting.

[Click here to read more about the stakeholder meeting and access program.](#)

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## Biden Cancer Summit

Cancer leaders and advocates assembled in Washington, D.C. at the Biden Cancer Summit to shine a light on cancer and identify solutions. Over 450 concurrent community events carried the messages and excitement to the rest of the country. Jennifer Dent had the opportunity to highlight Africa’s long under-recognized [cancer epidemic](#) and [present](#) BVGH’s work, through the African Access Initiative (AAI), to address the crisis in Africa.

A [community summit](#) coordinated by BVGH and hosted by Nigeria’s First Lady of Ondo State, Mrs. Betty Anyanwu-Akeredolu, was one of the Summit’s few international events.



Vice President Joe Biden and Dr. Jill Biden hosted the Biden Cancer Summit in Washington, D.C., on Friday, September 21, 2018.

[Click here to read more about the Biden Cancer Summit and BVGH's presentation.](#)

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## AAI communications corner

Patients of African descent are being denied the benefits of cancer breakthroughs. We’re changing that.

[Read about this and more in BVGH's recent STAT op-ed.](#)

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## Partnering around pathology

Pathology is a crucial component of cancer diagnosis and therapy. Responding to training gaps identified by BVGH's AAI Hospital Needs Assessment, BVGH partnered with the [American Society for Clinical Pathology\(ASCP\)](#) to coordinate a three-day pathology training workshop in Lagos, Nigeria. Three ASCP experts presented pathology best practices and concepts in the pathologic diagnosis of specific cancers. Pathologists and radiologists from across Nigeria presented their case studies and held case discussions with the ASCP experts and workshop attendees.



*“The ASCP-BVGH pathology workshop was a very interactive and impactful event. Engagement between ASCP faculty and Nigerian participants was high, with focused group discussions and patient presentations. The knowledge gained from the workshop will positively impact our practice and subsequently the well-being of Nigerian patients.”*

*– Prof. John Obafunwa  
Lagos State University College of Medicine, Nigeria*

## Filling gaps through fellowships

BVGH works with hospital administrators, oncologists, and pathologists to conduct detailed assessments of each hospital's current cancer treatments and research capabilities. Data from these assessments, as well as the cancer priorities of the Ministry of Health, inform BVGH's customized AAI capacity building programs.

Through the [MSD Fellowship for Global Health](#), six MSD experts partnered with BVGH to fill the training needs of two AAI hospitals: the University Teaching Hospital of Kigali (CHUK) in Rwanda and Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (MTRH) in Kenya.

### Rwanda fellowship activities:

The MSD Fellows worked on-site with CHUK staff to improve the management and quality of the hospital's diagnostic pathology lab. While in Rwanda, the Fellows redesigned the lab's workflow and updated its standard operating procedures (SOPs), hosted a grant-writing seminar, proposed a path towards laboratory accreditation, and created a histopathology laboratory assessment tool for BVGH.



The Honorable Minister of Health of Rwanda, Dr. Diane Gashumba (center), meeting with BVGH and the MSD Fellows to discuss laboratory capacity building and a comprehensive cancer control approach in Rwanda.

## Kenya fellowship activities:

At MTRH, the Fellows provided clinical trial operations and processes guidance through seminars – with topics ranging from data management practices and trial implementation – and SOP reviews. The fellows also developed a detailed roadmap outlining the steps MTRH should take to advance its clinical trials capacity and attract pharmaceutical companies' cancer clinical trials to Kenya.



Dr. Anne Ng'ang'a (right), who leads Kenya's National Cancer Control Program, met with the MSD Fellows in Nairobi.

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## Laboratory equipment making a difference

The Federal Medical Centre (FMC) in Ondo State, Nigeria diagnoses over 550 cancer patients per year – 41% of those being breast and cervical cancer patients. Through the completion of the AAI Hospital Needs Assessment, FMC clinicians highlighted the need for key instruments to improve the hospital's pathology lab efficiency and workflow. BVGH obtained donated laboratory instruments from Pfizer to fill this gap. FMC's diagnostic and research laboratories are now home to a mass spectrometer, centrifuge, and incubator. The Governor, First Lady, and Commissioner of Health will preside over a ceremony to acknowledge the new instruments and the state's increasing capacity to improve cancer patient management.



*“The Federal Medical Centre is very grateful for BVGH’s efforts to reduce the burden of cancer among our people. Through the placement of Pfizer’s laboratory equipment, we are better equipped to tackle the rising number of cancer cases and improve patient survival in Nigeria.”*

*– Dr. Liasu Ahmed  
Federal Medical Centre, Nigeria*

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## AC<sup>3</sup>T Study Pool

Under the purview of AAI, BVGH launched the African Consortium for Cancer Clinical Trials (AC<sup>3</sup>T) to foster and implement cancer clinical trials led by investigators in Africa. AC<sup>3</sup>T is designed to build clinical trial capacity and [address the cancer data gap](#) in Africa while increasing access to prioritized cancer diagnostics, medicines, and quality treatment for African patients.

BVGH asked hospitals and research institutes across Africa what cancer clinical trials they want to conduct, and what support and expertise they would need to undertake their study of choice. As expected, respondents overwhelmingly wanted to conduct clinical trials on breast, cervical, and liver cancers – three of Africa's most burdensome malignancies. BVGH will use these data and the results of our AAI Hospital Needs Assessments to solicit financial support for an AC<sup>3</sup>T Study Pool, which will fund investigator-initiated, cancer-feasibility studies conducted by African clinicians and researchers.

Want to conduct a cancer clinical trial? **BVGH is still accepting RFI submissions via the following URL:** <https://goo.gl/forms/IXhHBdXATEuWt9bC3>

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## Get involved with AAI

To learn more about AAI and to get involved, please contact [Katy Graef](#).



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### Thank you to our AAI Sponsor Companies



*Don't miss these upcoming oncology events!*

**European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Summit Africa 2019**

February 15-17, 2019 | *Cape Town, South Africa*

**2019 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting**

May 31- June 4, 2019 | *Chicago, USA*

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