



February 2023

## Together in the fight against cancer

Dear AAI Partners and Friends,

I was pleased to celebrate the end of 2022 by reaffirming BVGH's commitment to our African partners through the White House [Cancer Moonshot announcement](#). Together with the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority and the Biotechnology Innovation Organization, BVGH convened partners and friends for a side-event during the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit to celebrate public-private partnerships that are improving cancer patient outcomes in Africa.

At the beginning of each new year, many of us make resolutions to improve our health, happiness, and communities. At BVGH, we resolve to do the same – specifically to expand our African Access Initiative (AAI) programs to support African cancer hospitals. Our team is meeting with the leaders of each AAI hospital to refresh on their cancer drug access, training, research, and advocacy priorities and needs. It may only be February, but our annual calendar is already full of programs designed to help our AAI hospitals achieve their cancer goals.

January is also Cervical Cancer Awareness month. Cervical cancer is an insidious disease that affects far too many African women, yet it is curable if diagnosed early. Last year, in partnership with the End Cervical Cancer Nigeria Initiative (ECCNI) and other partners, we held a lecture series on the use of resource stratification in cervical cancer screening programs. This year, we are continuing our support of ECCNI as they initiate hands-on training and launch cervical cancer screening services at healthcare institutions in Nigeria.

Cancer patient caregivers play an important role that often goes unnoticed and unsupported. At the request of AAI hospital partners, BVGH arranged caregiver focus groups that concluded with the creation of educational pamphlets to assist future caregivers. Additionally, BVGH conducted lecture series in advanced oncology nursing techniques in both English and French to further improve clinical outcomes.

BVGH is pleased to welcome new AAI hospital partner ASI Ukpo Comprehensive Cancer Centre located in Calabar, Nigeria. We also offer our congratulations to AC<sup>3</sup>T grantees Dr. Jamilu Faruk, Dr. Benson Nyambega, and Dr. Lilac Wattanga for their recent cancer research achievements.

Please share this newsletter with any of your colleagues who are interested in supporting Africa-led solutions for improving cancer outcomes on the continent. We welcome your ideas and suggestions.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Dent, President & CEO  
BIO Ventures for Global Health

# Partnership Announcement

## ASI Ukpo Comprehensive Cancer Centre



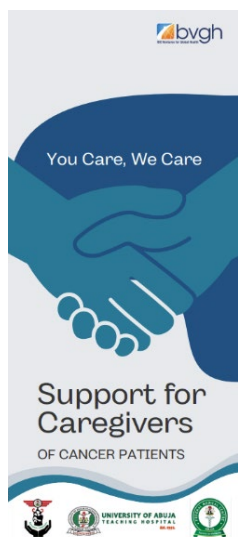
BVGH welcomes new partner [ASI Ukpo Comprehensive Cancer Centre](#) (AUCCC), located in Calabar, Nigeria. Part of ASI Ukpo Hospitals, AUCCC launched its oncology services in 2021 and added radiation therapy in March 2022. In addition to providing world class services like medical imaging, laboratory investigations, surgery, and a blood bank, AUCCC's radiotherapy, brachytherapy, and chemotherapy services are administered by empathetic and caring personnel who are dedicated to cultivating a healing space for patients.

## Building clinical oncology capacity

### Support for Cancer Patient Caregivers

Family and friends can greatly improve cancer patients' treatment outcomes by assisting with their loved one's navigation of the healthcare system and providing at-home care. Yet caregivers often put their own lives on hold and frequently need support for themselves.

To understand caregivers' challenges and needs, BVGH collaborated with the Federal Medical Centre, Abuja (FMCA); National Hospital Abuja (NHA); University of Abuja Teaching Hospital (UATH); and experts from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center to organize focus group sessions with over forty caregivers, cancer patients, and representatives from FMCA, NHA, and UATH. Caregivers and focus group leads discussed the surprises and difficulties they have faced caring for their loved ones, while also sharing the rewarding aspects of their roles. Additionally, they provided context, information, and advice that would be helpful for future caregivers to have prior to entering their role. With their input, BVGH and partners created a caregiver education pamphlet for hospitals to share with cancer patients and their families.



***"It was enlightening to learn more about the caregiver experience. Our hope is that the educational pamphlet will help future caregivers prepare for this critical role, giving them the resources they need as they join us in supporting our patients." – Dr. Felicia Asudo, Anaesthetist, Pain and Palliative Care Services, University of Abuja Teaching Hospital***

## Using Resource Stratification for Cervical Cancer Screening Programs



Pre-Invasive Disease of the Cervix course participants.

Resource stratification is a tool that uses available resources in a logical sequence to achieve the best possible care for patients. Often used in low- and middle-resource settings where the full spectrum of tests and treatments may not be available, resource stratification can help healthcare providers best use the options available to them. To support use of this valuable tool for cervical cancer screening services in Nigeria, BVGH held a three-day lecture series in partnership with the End Cervical Cancer Nigeria Initiative (ECCNI), Nigerian Cancer Society, Sebecly Cancer Care, and Medicaid Cancer Foundation. The digital program, which was attended by more than 380 participants, featured lecturers from Germany, India, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zambia who covered topics ranging from cervical cancer screening basics and counseling patients to the treatment of pre-cancers and the importance of screening program data management.

Following the course, BVGH continued to support ECCNI as they move forward with their [Resource Stratified Prevention/Elimination of Cervical cancer and Treatment \(RESPECT\)](#) program. Next, ECCNI plans to organize on-site trainings to assist with the launch of cervical cancer screening services at several Nigerian healthcare institutions.

## Advanced Training for Oncology Nurses Offered in French and English



Advanced Oncology Nursing Anglophone participants.

Advanced Oncology Nursing Francophone participants.

Nurses play a crucial role in the physical and emotional wellbeing of their patients. In response to AAI partner hospitals' desires for their staff to learn skills and further improve their patient care and clinical outcomes, BVGH organized two advanced oncology nursing lecture series. Developed in partnership with the dedicated oncology nursing team at National Hospital Abuja's Post-basic Oncology Nursing Program, BVGH's [English lecture series](#) featured seven weekly digital sessions covering patient communication, psycho-oncology, palliative care, and more. A companion [course taught in French](#) was organized for Francophone healthcare providers. Together, the courses attracted 829 participants from 38 countries.

# Addressing the cancer data gap in Africa through clinical trials



Dr. Jamilu Faruk

## AC<sup>3</sup>T Study Pool Mini-Grantee Dr. Jamilu Faruk Presents His Research Findings

Dr. Jamilu Faruk, pediatrician at the Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital (ABUTH) and [AC<sup>3</sup>T Study Pool Mini-Grantee](#), gave an oral presentation at the [54<sup>th</sup> Annual Pediatric Association of Nigeria Conference](#) on his Mini-Grant research project titled *Quality of Life as Predictor of Childhood Cancer Treatment Abandonment*.

Dr. Faruk also showcased his research via a poster presentation titled *Uptake and Outcomes of Childhood Cancer Treatment in Northwest Nigeria* at the conference.

## Cutting-Edge Cancer Research in Kenya

Congratulations to Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching & Referral Hospital (JOTRH) for the [launch of its Western Kenya Cancer Care and Research Center](#). Specializing in diagnostic support, cancer patient care, practitioner education, and demand-driven research, the center's creation was supported in part by an [AC<sup>3</sup>T Study Pool Grant](#) awarded to Dr. Benson Nyambega, Maseno University, and Dr. Lilac Wattanga, JOTRH. Goals for the center include fostering innovative, globally recognized cancer research to benefit Kenyan patients.

## Announcements

## Reaffirming Our Commitment to Fighting Cancer in Africa



Jennifer Dent at First Lady Dr. Jill Biden's spousal program of the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit.

BVGH is honored to have our AAI goals recognized by and included in the Cancer Moonshot. At First Lady Dr. Jill Biden's spousal program of the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, BVGH committed to establishing public-private partnerships that focus on Africa's cancer priorities. Through collaboration with our partners, we will launch African-led research projects, train an additional 5,000 African healthcare professionals in cancer patient care, deliver access to US FDA-approved cancer drugs to treat an additional 10,000 cancer patients, develop culturally appropriate patient education materials to expand cancer awareness, and more. Read about the Cancer Moonshot and BVGH's commitments [here](#).

BVGH also partnered with the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority and the Biotechnology Innovation Organization to host a U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit side-event. Leaders from the private sector, academic and non-profit organizations, U.S. and African governments, and the African diaspora celebrated public-private partnerships that focus on curing cancer in Africa.

## Cormode Cancer Foundation on AIT and Plus TV

Cormode Cancer Foundation (CCF) partners with [African Independent Television \(AIT\)](#) for a twice-monthly program that offers support for cancer patients and general cancer education. The program airs every second and fourth Wednesday at 8:15am WAT. CCF has also newly partnered with [Plus TV](#) and will build to weekly appearances on Saturdays. View CCF's library of shows [here](#). Upcoming programs:

### AIT

**February 3:** The Hope of a Cancer Survivor in Nigeria

**February 8:** Survivors Platform – 1 – Cervical

**February 22:** Carers – The Physiotherapist

**March 15:** Brain Tumors

**March 22:** Ovarian

### Plus TV

**February 18:** Survivors Platform – Learned Lessons – Prostate

**March 8:** The Survivors Experience

**March 18:** Colorectal

## Upcoming AAI Digital Trainings

Stay tuned for more information about BVGH's upcoming digital training programs. If you would like to receive invitations to our courses, contact [hdavidson@bvgh.org](mailto:h davidson@bvgh.org).

- BVGH & Project PINK BLUE Present Upgrade Oncology: Training for Nurses and Clinical Oncologists – Began February 1 – Register here: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_SwM5vVLZQfaCxcW1VCJrsw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_SwM5vVLZQfaCxcW1VCJrsw)
- Diagnostic Imaging in partnership with Nanox – Begins February 3 – Register here: [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_YVJ7zqP0QbOJBzvrnpl8iA](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YVJ7zqP0QbOJBzvrnpl8iA)

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## Join the Fight

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

## Thank you to our AAI Partners



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