



August 2023

## Together in the fight against cancer

Dear AAI Partners and Friends,

I recently attended the 2023 [BIO International Convention](#) in Boston, MA where I had the pleasure of reconnecting with some of BVGH's partners and supporters. We held critical discussions about bringing the [White House Cancer Moonshot](#) to Africa, increasing diversity and equity in cancer clinical trials, and the role of public-private partnerships in supporting cancer care on the African continent. Following these conversations, I look forward to continued discussion and collaboration as we work to improve cancer patient outcomes in Africa.

Achieving meaningful progress against Africa's cancer crisis requires the direction and guidance of the continent's cancer leaders. In partnership with the Medicaid Cancer Foundation, BVGH led a two-part digital training program tailored to the nursing needs of Kebbi State. In response to the need for diagnostic pathology infrastructure, BVGH partnered with the American Society for Clinical Pathology, PhenoPath (Quest Diagnostics), and GardaWorld to deliver light microscopes to eight AAI hospitals in Nigeria.

I would like to congratulate Dr. N'da Marcelin Homian, CHU Treichville, Côte d'Ivoire, and Dr. Darya Kizub, MD Anderson Cancer Center, USA, on their recent [ecancer](#) publication: [Circulating natural killer cells and their association with breast cancer and its clinico-pathological characteristics](#).

As always, we invite you to share this newsletter with any of your colleagues who are interested in improving cancer patient outcomes in Africa or supporting AAI.

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



2023 BIO Convention AAI panelists from left to right: Jennifer Dent (BVGH), Dr. Tolulope Adewole (NHDIC), Dr. Katy Graef (BVGH), Dr. Julie Gralow (ASCO), and Dr. Chris Reddick (Takeda).

# Building clinical oncology capacity

## Digital Course Offers Focused Training for Nurses in Kebbi State, Nigeria



Participants attending a live streaming of the 2023 Oncology Nursing program in Kebbi State, Nigeria.

Cancer patients encounter many different types of healthcare providers along their diagnosis and treatment journey, but oncology nurses are consistent members of the patient care team. Along with administering treatment at every stage of disease, oncology nurses facilitate communication across all patient care providers. Recognizing oncology nurses' key roles, Her Excellency Dr. Zainab Shinkafi-Bagudu, Founder and CEO of the Medicaid Cancer Foundation, partnered with BVGH to help cultivate local nursing capacity and expertise through a two-part digital training program. The [2023 Oncology Nursing](#) program covered screening and early detection of cancer, patient management and communication, standard operating procedures, and radiotherapy for nurses, with the goal of improving cancer patients' experiences and outcomes in Kebbi State, Nigeria. MCF convened more than 40 nurses in Kebbi State to watch the lectures live. An additional 350 participants from across many other Nigerian states and beyond also joined the digital training program.

***I am committed to improving the outcomes of cancer patients in Nigeria, especially women. This program is dedicated to providing comprehensive training for oncology nurses, who play a crucial role in delivering cancer care. They are the backbone of oncology care. Our nurses gained valuable knowledge that will benefit cancer patients in Kebbi State. – Her Excellency Dr. Zainab Shinkafi-Bagudu***

## Microscopes Delivered to Eight Nigerian Hospitals



Hospitals receiving their microscopes.

Microscopes are critical pathology tools that aid in the timely and accurate diagnosis of cancer. The American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) and BVGH coordinated the placement of gently-used Olympus light microscopes – donated by PhenoPath (Quest Diagnostics) – to the pathology departments of eight AAI hospitals across Nigeria.

BVGH partner, GardaWorld, coordinated the in-country delivery of each microscope, thus ensuring that the microscopes arrived safely at their final destinations. These microscopes, coupled with a donation of pathology textbooks by PhenoPath, will further strengthen the hospitals' existing diagnostic infrastructure.

## Cancer Care Hands-On Assessment and Training in Lesotho



Dr. Angela Appiah (left photo: back right; right photo: center) with nurses from the Senkatana Oncology Center in Lesotho.



As the only cancer care center in Lesotho, the Senkatana Oncology Center is integral to patient care in the country, especially for the citizens residing in more rural regions. Given the essential role that nurses play on the cancer patient care team and the shortage of trained oncology nurses in the country, the Senkatana leadership team and BVGH devised a plan to ensure the cohesive oncology nursing team that Lesotho's patients deserve.

With support from the US Embassy in Maseru, Lesotho, BVGH facilitated a four-week visit by Fulbright Visiting Specialist, Dr. Angela Appiah of Pace University, to the Senkatana Oncology Center. Using her extensive experience serving as a consultant for varying clinical programs in low- and middle-income countries, Dr. Appiah conducted an assessment on Senkatana's cancer patient care and delivered in-depth, customized training to the Senkatana oncology nursing team. Dr. Appiah trained over twenty nurses during her time in Lesotho, measurably increasing their clinical competency, and equipped two of the Senkatana nurses with the tools to train others using their newly acquired skills.

## Addressing the cancer data gap in Africa through clinical trials

### ecancer Publication: Côte d'Ivoire Study Analyzing NK Cell Concentration in Breast Cancer Patients

The high burden of breast cancer in Côte d'Ivoire merits new strategies for understanding and combating the disease. Dr. N'da Marcelin Homian, a medical oncologist at AAI partner hospital University Hospital Center (CHU) Treichville, explored the relationship between natural killer (NK) cell concentration and breast cancer characteristics. Through blood draws taken within six months of diagnosis, Dr. Homian compared the NK cell peripheral blood concentration in Ivorian women with breast cancer versus healthy controls. Though no associations between NK cell activity and breast cancer were found, Dr. Homian concluded that further study with a larger sample size and evaluation of NK cell concentration and activity with a differently timed blood draw and within tumors is merited.

This case-controlled study was supported by a BVGH-facilitated collaboration between Dr. Homian and Dr. Darya Kizub, an oncologist at the MD Anderson Cancer Center. In addition to being a coauthor on this study, Dr. Kizub has shared advice and guidance with Dr. Homian since BVGH introduced them in early 2020. Through their ongoing collaboration, Dr. Homian and Dr. Kizub have previously [presented their work together](#) at international conferences as well as received a CIRGO grant to improve breast pathology capacity and decrease time to diagnosis for patients with breast cancer in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire.

Read more about their most recent study's results: [Circulating natural killer cells and their association with breast cancer and its clinico-pathological characteristics](#).

## Announcements

### 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; BVGH has had the pleasure of joining CCF on AIT to discuss cancer care in Nigeria, most recently during the [2022 World Cancer Congress](#). CCF has also launched a partnership with [Plus TV](#), which has over 12 million viewers across Africa, to expand its cancer advocacy work through weekly appearances on the TV station. View CCF's library of shows [here](#).

## 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, please complete this brief form: <https://forms.gle/jvRhqGKS25QmHgTt9>

- Brachytherapy for Prostate and Cervical Cancer – Began July 18<sup>th</sup> – Register here: [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_1DiCIJdiQfaYPR3ICAYbqQ](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1DiCIJdiQfaYPR3ICAYbqQ)
- Palliative Care (English) – Begins August 22<sup>nd</sup> – Register here: [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_Sore4JTSTmuaiYaj2kFGgq](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Sore4JTSTmuaiYaj2kFGgq)
- Palliative Care (French) – Begins September 26<sup>th</sup> – Register here: [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_Wzn29IPRRQ-b9H-OwQ1B0g](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Wzn29IPRRQ-b9H-OwQ1B0g)
- Introduction to Diagnostic Imaging Seminar Series 2
- Advanced Cancer Pathology
- Biopsies and Cancer Surgeries
- Treatment of Pediatric Cancer Patients
- Introduction to Grant Writing

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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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