Together in the fight against cancer

Dear AAI Partners and Friends,

As we approach the end of a year defined by the COVID-19 pandemic and a new normal, we reflect on the progress we have made to improve and advance global oncology. Through these trying times, BVGH has remained committed to supporting our partners in Africa through a series of online distance-learning courses, the successful delivery of life-saving cancer medicines to those in need, and newly-established research collaborations and partnerships around the world.

One such distance-learning program, held in partnership with the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), convened more than 60 pathologists from across 38 hospitals in Nigeria to train virtually on the fundamentals of histology and immunohistochemistry for the diagnosis of Nigeria’s most deadly cancers. The program was a testament to the African Access Initiative (AAI) model – adaptable, scalable, responsive, and resilient to meet the shifting needs and priorities of our partners on the African continent.

If you or your colleagues are interested in supporting AAI, please share this newsletter and reach out to us with any suggestions or ideas for how we can work together to accelerate cancer research, build clinical oncology capacity, and improve access to quality cancer treatment in Africa.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Dent, President & CEO
BIO Ventures for Global Health
BVGH and GardaWorld have partnered to support Rwandan women’s access to cervical cancer prevention and treatment services at their local health facilities. Alongside GardaWorld, Johnson & Johnson, and Faber Law, BVGH and the Rwanda Biomedical Center will educate, screen, and treat 5,000 women and train 700 healthcare personnel to provide cervical cancer services to women in Bugesera District, Rwanda.

GardaWorld is a world-class security and risk-management solutions company with 18 offices across 15 African countries and 40,000 personnel continent-wide. The company is a leading global provider of integrated security and manpower solutions, including physical security, asset tracking, end-to-end journey management, and crisis management and response.

“GardaWorld deploys our employees, assets, and expertise around the world to address challenging situations and affect solutions, including public health challenges. We are excited to join forces with BVGH to support this innovative, multi-sector program that provides access to essential cancer services for the women of Rwanda.”

– Oliver Westmacott, President and COO, Security Services – Middle East and Africa

1,000 Breast and Cervical Patients Receive Medicine in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

BVGH coordinates strategic pricing agreements between pharmaceutical companies and African hospitals, which now include the Biamba Marie Mutombo Hospital in Kinshasa, the capital city of the DRC. More than 1,000 patients at the hospital will now have access to affordable, high-quality, life-saving medicines to treat breast and cervical cancer. The arrangement is the latest in a series of health system strengthening programs in the DRC co-led by the Dikembe Mutombo Foundation and the friends of Africa, Inc. (CEO – Dr. Groesbeck Parham).
AAI Virtual Training Program Series

BVGH is hosting a series of distance-learning courses to address AAI sites’ most pressing cancer patient management needs. Each course includes interactive and didactic learning modules led by international cancer experts, homework assignments, and post-module virtual mentorship. BVGH has engaged in-country accreditation bodies to provide eligible participants with continuing medical education credits.

2020 courses include:
- **Francophone Oncology Nursing**: 8-week course to update and implement oncology nursing practices in line with global standards.
- **Gynecologic Oncology Management**: 7-week course to improve management of gynecologic cancers at all levels of the health system.
- **Francophone Prostate Cancer Surgery**: Urology residents and surgeons from 9 countries in West Africa to train on prostate cancer screening and diagnosis, surgery planning and techniques.
- **Francophone Pathology for Common Cancers**: More than 400 pathologists, residents, and medical students from 21 countries to train on pathological diagnosis of common cancers.
- **Intensity-Modulated Radiation Therapy**: 14-week course for institutions to transition from 3D radiation therapy to a more effective and less toxic intensity-modulated radiation therapy.
- **Pathology for Women’s Cancers**: 8-week course to improve diagnosis of breast and cervical cancers.

The virtual training programs are made possible with support from Merck & Co., Inc.; Adtalem Global Education Foundation; and Elekta (Rayos Contra Cancer), and the expertise of professionals from the American Society for Clinical Pathology, Rayos Contra Cancer, the University of Rwanda, the West African College of Surgeons, the American University of the Caribbean, the Ivorian Society of Pathology (SIPath), and many more.

Planned training courses to be held in 2021 include:
- Oncology nursing (English)
- Slide preparation techniques for histo-technologists (English)
- Fundamentals of cancer clinical trials (English)

If you are interested in attending one or more of these courses, please contact Katy Graef at kgraef@bvgh.org.
Through the African Consortium for Cancer Clinical Trials (AC³T) BVGH and Takeda launched a knowledge exchange program focused on building clinical trial capacity in Rwanda. Takeda research and development (R&D) employees are partnering with Rwandan clinicians and researchers through customized virtual and on-site sessions to: improve basic research capabilities, including writing of clinical trial protocols, data collection and statistical analysis, and review of epidemiology data for Rwanda’s national cancer registry.

The knowledge exchange project complements Takeda’s ongoing R&D capacity building programs at AMPATH and the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret, Kenya and the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center Cancer Care Center in Moshi, Tanzania. Takeda’s knowledge sharing partnerships aim to strengthen scientific, clinical, and technical capabilities needed for cancer research and care delivery in Africa.

Interested in receiving the AC³T newsletter? Sign-up here.

Cross-sector research collaborations to improve cancer patient outcomes

Each year, the BIO Africa Convention convenes global biotechnology industry leaders and academics to tackle Africa’s most pressing issues. This year, BVGH organized a panel featuring representatives from the governments of Nigeria and Rwanda, Takeda Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd., and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center to discuss how new cross-sector research collaborations are shaping the global oncology landscape.

“In the space of a few months, we’ve gone from the ideation of medical robotics to now, a situation where we are beginning to ship the systems out, begin testing, and go through ethical, clinical approval
processes. This shows the true value of collaboration and the co-creation of solutions – working in partnership with scientists, technologists, and innovators.”

- Professor Wole Soboyejo, Provost, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

On the blog

BVGH, the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), and the Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital (ABUTH) united to improve the capacity of Nigerian pathologists to accurately diagnose cancer patients. More than 60 pathologists from across 38 hospitals were trained in the fundamentals of histology and immunohistochemistry for the diagnosis of Nigeria’s most deadly cancers through an innovative, virtual webinar series.

Read about the course here.

Course attendees at the virtual graduation ceremony presided over by Nigeria’s Honorable Minister of Health.

To view course recordings, please use the following links.

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Published Manuscript: "Operational Strategies for Clinical Trials in Africa"

BVGH’s latest manuscript, “Operational Strategies for Clinical Trials in Africa,” has been published in the *JCO Global Oncology Journal*. The manuscript details example programs that leverage multilateral, African-driven approaches to building Africa’s clinical trial capacity, increasing visibility of Africa’s current clinical trial capabilities and priorities, improving regulatory infrastructure and enforcement on the continent, and optimizing patient and clinician engagement strategies.

To read the manuscript, click [here](#).

**PEACE: Partnership of Emory and Africa for Cancer and Education**

Emory University is launching a virtual pathology webinar series open to all hospitals in Africa. Interested participants may register using the following link.

**Funding Opportunity**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has issued funding announcements and is hosting a virtual symposium to support data science and innovation in Africa.

To learn more, click [here](#).

**Event: “Global Prostate Cancer Disparities in Black Men Conference”**

We are excited to announce the *6th Biennial Science of Global Prostate Cancer Disparities in Black Men Conference*. The conference brings together prostate cancer scientists, clinicians, advocates, and survivors all over the world to address the global burden of prostate cancer among Black men. The conference will take place virtually this year and registration is FREE. Deadline to register is November 27, 2020.

To register, click [here](#).

**Join the Fight**

To learn more about AAI and to get involved, please contact Katy Graef.

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**Thank you to our AAI Partners**