Together in the fight against cancer

Dear AAI Partners and Friends,

Our team has had the pleasure of bringing together many of our AAI stakeholders for in-person events and meetings these past couple of months. We value these opportunities to further connect with our partners and build a stronger understanding of their local needs and priorities as we continue to support improvements in cancer patient care in Africa.

BVGH partner and builder of state-of-the-art cancer and diagnostic centers, the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA), hosted the NSIA Oncology Summit in August. BVGH participated in the Summit in Lagos and took advantage of the opportunity to collaborate with oncology professionals and patients to discuss barriers to cancer care in Nigeria and solutions. Discussions like these are critical to informing our AAI strategy and programs. In July, BVGH joined the Civilian Research and Development Foundation (CRDF) and stakeholders to map new collaborations with the aim of increasing access to radiation oncology in West Africa and advancing the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

AAI oncology pharmacy training workshops were conducted in Côte d’Ivoire, Cameroon, and Nigeria. The workshops were led by international experts and supported by Bristol Myers Squibb. More than 140 pharmacists and national oncology professionals attended the courses. I would like to extend our gratitude to the trainers for their guidance, time, and leadership of these in-person workshops. Their teachings will prove invaluable to the attendees and their patients.

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
Pharmacists in Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Cameroon Trained on Oncology Best Practices

Oncology pharmacists specialize in safely preparing, administering, and monitoring therapeutics given to cancer patients. As medication experts, they support patients and care teams alike in navigating a rapidly evolving treatment landscape. BVGH developed and conducted customized in-person oncology pharmacy training programs for three AAI partner countries with support from Bristol Myers Squibb. The curriculum for these training programs was developed in collaboration with each participating AAI hospital and with their individual oncology priorities in mind. These programs built upon BVGH’s digital oncology pharmacy training programs that were taught in English and French earlier this year.

University Hospital Center Cocody in Côte d’Ivoire

Pharmacists from AAI partner hospitals University Hospital Center (CHU) Cocody, CHU Yopougon, CHU Treichville, and Alassane Ouattara National Centre of Oncology and Radiotherapy (CNRAO) participated in a 6-day training program at CHU Cocody. The program was led by Mr. Charles Collin, Hematology-Oncology Pharmacist and Associate Clinician at McGill University Health Center and Dr. Diana Tamer, Clinical Assistant Professor and Hematology-Oncology Pharmacy Specialist at University of Missouri-Kansas City. Twenty-three Ivorian pharmacists participated in the on-site training and are now equipped to implement up-to-date guidelines for administering treatment regimens, expand the pharmacist’s clinical role in patient education and patient follow-up, and advocate for needed equipment to ensure safe handling of cancer medications. In follow-up to the on-site training, BVGH is developing a report of expert oncology pharmacists’ findings and recommendations to guide the Côte d’Ivoire National Cancer Control Program towards incorporating pharmacy staff into more patient-facing roles.

Attendees view training slides.
University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital in Nigeria

Trainers Dr. Alexandre Chan (left) and Dr. Nancy Guo (middle left) lead a round table discussion.

Pharmacists, physicians, nurses, and surgeons attended a 4-day on-site training facilitated by BVGH at the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital (UITH) in Ilorin, Nigeria. The first half of the training program, a multidisciplinary portion, covered topics relevant to a variety of healthcare personnel, such as the pharmacists’ role on the cancer care team, chemotherapy ordering and administration, and supportive care. A second, pharmacy-focused portion of the training followed the multidisciplinary component accompanied with hands-on demonstrations of chemotherapy preparation and the use of personal protective equipment. All lectures and demonstrations were led by international pharmacists Dr. Alexandre Chan, Professor of Clinical Pharmacy at the University of California, Irvine, and Dr. Nancy Guo, Senior Pharmacist at the Ontario Ministry of Health and Clinical Lead of Quality and Safety at Kingston Health Sciences Centre.

Cameroon Oncology Center in Cameroon

BVGH conducted a 5-day on-site training program that attracted attendees from 20+ hospitals and organizations across Cameroon, many of whom traveled long distances. More than 50 healthcare professionals earned training certificates, participating in interactive learning sessions and attending presentations. The educational programs were led by international oncology pharmacy experts Dr. Raliat Onatade and Ms. Naheed Phul, both from England’s National Health Service. The program curriculum included workflow- and process-strengthening tools such as standard operation procedure development, process mapping, and incident reporting, as well as crucial oncology pharmacy concepts such as safe-handling and disposal of cytotoxic medicines.

“BVGH’s oncology pharmacy training has been a high-quality initiative to improve the knowledge and skills of pharmacists, practitioners, technicians, and nurses in cancer centers. I better understand the importance of mastering pharmaceutical care for cancer patients, particularly related to therapeutic education and management of adverse drug-related effects.”
- Dr. Eunice Adouko, Head of Pharmacy at CNRAO
Visits to Hospitals Leads to AAI Partnership Expansion

BVGH visited Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria, and Cameroon this summer to meet with AAI stakeholders and hospitals, conduct educational programs, and gain valuable insights to inform our activities and programs.

An AAI-Côte d’Ivoire Cancer Stakeholder Meeting was organized to bring together Ivorian cancer leaders and the National Cancer Control Program (NCCP). As a result of this meeting, BVGH is collaborating with the NCCP to launch a multilingual cancer public awareness campaign to reach rural populations. Additionally, BVGH is actively managing discussions between leading cancer drug manufacturers, Ivorian government organizations, and public cancer hospitals to deliver life-saving drugs to Ivorian patients in need.

While visiting AAI hospitals in Nigeria, BVGH staff met with the recently appointed Chairman, Medical Advisory Committee (CMAC) of UITH, Professor Sikiru Billiaminu, along with other members of hospital leadership. Prof. Billiaminu expressed appreciation and support for AAI’s capacity building programs, providing a strong foundation for future collaborations between BVGH and UITH. Since departing Nigeria, discussions on how to best address UITH’s oncology priorities have been ongoing between BVGH, UITH leadership, and numerous oncology stakeholders across UITH departments.

BVGH met with the Permanent Secretary of Cameroon’s National Committee for the Fight Against Cancer, Professor Blaise Nkégoum, and other members of Cameroon’s Ministry of Public Health, to discuss Cameroons’ renewed commitment to improving access to cancer treatment and patient outcomes. Meetings were held to discuss oncology priorities and AAI programs with hospital leaders and oncology stakeholders in Yaoundé and Douala, allowing BVGH to learn more about several organizations and see their teams in action. The visit sparked many new ideas around exploring increased access to quality cancer medicines, the potential for a country-wide cancer awareness program and expanded educational opportunities for Cameroon’s cancer professionals.
Hematology Digital Mentorship Gives Oncologist New Tools

Many of our AAI hospital partners face difficulties in managing hematologic malignancies, in part due to a lack of clinical capacity. In response to a request by Dr. Sampson Owhin, a hematology oncologist at Federal Medical Center (FMC) Owo, Nigeria for more training in this crucial area, BVGH coordinated a mentorship between Dr. Owhin and Dr. Emily Glynn, a pathologist at the University of Washington Medical Center. Through this digital mentorship Dr. Owhin is building his capacity in diagnostic pathology for the most commonly diagnosed hematologic malignancies seen at FMC Owo such as lymphoma, leukemia, and multiple myeloma.

Addressing the cancer data gap in Africa through clinical trials

AC³T Mini-Grantees Presenting at AORTIC Biennial Meeting

Congratulations to our AC³T Mini-Grantees on completing their research projects and submitting abstracts to the upcoming African Organization for Research and Training in Cancer (AORTIC) Biennial Meeting! If you are attending the 2023 AORTIC conference, please stop by the AC³T Mini-Grantees’ posters and presentations.

Dr. Adu Appiah-Kubi, Gynecologic Oncologist, at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Ghana
Assessment of Frequently Reported Side Effects by Gynecological Patients Undergoing Chemotherapy: A Cross Sectional Study at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital. Accepted into the AORTIC Conference (poster).

Dr. Faraja Chiwanga, Endocrinologist and Head of Research, Training, and Consultancy at Muhimbili National Hospital, Tanzania
Clinical Characteristics and Correlation between Fine Needle Aspiration Cytology (FNAC) and Post-Operative Histology of Thyroid Cancer. Accepted into the AORTIC Conference (poster).

Dr. Annet Nakaganda, Cancer Epidemiologist, at Uganda Cancer Institute, Uganda
Vaginal Stenosis in Patients Treated with Radiotherapy for Cervical Cancer in Uganda. Accepted into the AORTIC Conference (podium).
Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority Hosts Summit to Identify and Tackle Cancer Care Barriers

More than 200 medical professionals from across Nigeria gathered in Lagos this summer during a 2-day event convened by the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) to consider the future of oncology training in the country. BVGH identified external oncology experts that shared their perspectives with attendees during the summit. Healthcare providers from local teaching hospitals and other stakeholders discussed barriers to cancer care in Nigeria, as well as opportunities to improve patient outcomes – including upskilling key hospital staff. The summit culminated in the unveiling of a new training rotation at the NSIA-LUTH Cancer Center (NSIA’s flagship cancer institute), available to care providers from around the country.

Additional references: NSIA press release

Radiation Medicine Workshop Addresses Equitable Access in Ghana

Radiation medicine plays a vital role in the diagnosis, management, and treatment of cancer, and equitable access to this resource will play a role in achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. BVGH joined radiotherapy experts, the Civilian Research and
Development Foundation (CRDF) Global, and the Ministry of Health of Ghana at a two-day workshop focused on the opportunities and current challenges related to healthcare and nuclear technology in West Africa.

Announcements

**NSSF Video Contest**

Building on BVGH’s cancer advocacy and awareness activities in Nigeria, we are pleased to share that our AAI partner The Nigeria Solidarity Support Fund (NSFF), in collaboration with Global Citizen, is launching a national video contest tagged “WeNaija Awareness to Action” on October 11th as part of its efforts to support the national roll out of the HPV vaccine for girls aged 9-14 years in Nigeria. The content creation contest is aimed at providing an opportunity to meaningfully engage the youth 18-35 years to be part of a transformational advocacy initiative in raising awareness and promoting the uptake of HPV vaccines. [Click this link for more details](#).

**Free Online Global Oncology Implementing Science Course**

BVGH and AAI partners will be speaking at the upcoming Global Oncology Implementing Science course hosted by Global Oncology University, which addresses making cancer care more accessible and affordable. This 6-month course offers certification, online panel discussions, and 90 lectures beginning on October 25th. Free registration opens Friday, October 6th [here](#).

**Medicaid Cancer Foundation Offers Nigerians Free and Discounted Cancer Screenings**

BVGH is pleased to share that the Medicaid Cancer Foundation (MCF) will be hosting their annual Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Event this October. Running from October 1st to 31st, this event will provide free mammograms to women over the age of 40, as well as pap smears and human papillomavirus testing at a 50% discounted rate to all women. All screenings will be performed at MCF’s office in Utako, Abuja, Nigeria. You may find more information about this event and associated costs [here](#).

**Cormode Cancer Foundation on AIT and Plus TV**

Cormode Cancer Foundation (CCF) partners with [African Independent Television (AIT)](https://aitv.org) 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](https://www.worldcancercongress.org). CCF has launched a new partnership with [Plus TV](https://www.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, kindly submit this brief form: [https://forms.gle/jvRhgKS25QhHqTt9](https://forms.gle/jvRhgKS25QhHqTt9)

- Cancer Biopsy and Surgical Treatment – Began September 28 – Register here: [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5CGqK5M-RNuC9AXU4ps_2Q%](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5CGqK5M-RNuC9AXU4ps_2Q%)
- Cancer Pathology - Begins November 7th - Register here: [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_sDObqmAf5sxKJSmGlp5_Sg](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_sDObqmAf5sxKJSmGlp5_Sg)
- Treatment of Pediatric Cancer Patients
- Introduction to Grant Writing
Join the Fight
To learn more about AAI and to get involved, please contact Katy Graef.

Thank you to our AAI Partners