February 2024

Together in the fight against cancer

Dear AAI Partners and Friends,

First, a very Happy New Year! Last year, BVGH conducted our largest annual number of training programs. Working closely with our partners in Africa, BVGH defined knowledge gaps and priorities, developed training programs, engaged international topic experts, and hosted 30 digital and in-person training programs. Approximately 7,000 oncology healthcare professionals participated in these programs. Programs were conducted in both French and English and included the following recently completed courses: French Palliative Care, Advanced Pathology, and Oncology Pharmacy. Experts from leading cancer institutes worldwide volunteered their time to develop and deliver lectures that were tailored to the specific needs of our African Access Initiative (AAI) partners. Building on programs conducted in 2023, BVGH will host new courses addressing AAI hospitals’ priorities, such as Treatment of Prostate Cancer and Hematologic Cancers. We are also planning programs that address hepatocellular cancer screening and treatment, and clinical trial training. Stay tuned for upcoming program announcements and sign up to receive AAI training program announcements directly to your inbox here.

Our team was honored to participate in Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centers’ Cure4Cancer event – led by Dr. Bob Li and colleagues, in December. The event brought together cancer leaders from Australia, China, Brazil, and our Nigerian AAI partners – Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) Managing Director & CEO – Mr. Aminu Umar-Sadiq – and Medserve CEO, Dr. Toluope Adewole.

We are excited to build on our AAI activities and partnerships and look forward to continuing development and implementation of programs that strengthen clinical capacity, deliver essential medications and technologies, diversify clinical trials, and improve cancer patient outcomes.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Dent, President & CEO
BIO Ventures for Global Health
Cameroon ICU Nursing Team Engages in Virtual Mentorship

From left to right: Ms. Becca deDufour (BSN, RN, CCRN, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center), Nurse Grace NTIMEU KEPNDEP (Lead ICU Nurse, Mbingo Baptist Hospital), Dr. David Sunday (Lead ICU Physician, Mbingo Baptist Hospital), Ms. Joanna Tomicich (DNP, NP-C, AGACNP-BC, FCCM, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center)

Recognizing that the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) nursing team at Mbingo Baptist Hospital (MBH) in Cameroon would benefit from ICU-specific training beyond their nursing degrees, Dr. David Sunday and Nurse Grace NTIMEU KEPNDEP, MBH, reached out to BVGH for help. BVGH connected with Ms. Becca deDufour and Ms. Joanna Tomicich of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK) to explore a customized training and mentorship program. Based on insights shared by Ms. NTIMEU KEPNDEP and Dr. Sunday, Ms. Tomicich, an advanced practice provider and acute care nurse practitioner, and Ms. deDufour, an ICU nurse, combined their ICU experience to assemble a multidisciplinary team from MSK to support MBH’s needs through digital presentations and discussions. Consisting of respiratory therapists, physicians, nurses, a dietician, social workers, and advanced practice providers, the MSK multidisciplinary team approach resulted in a well-rounded, informative method to education and knowledge sharing that covered the full range of responsibilities held by the ICU nurses at MBH.

The MSK online lectures are interactive, allowing for questions to be asked and answered live, with the option of sending additional questions to the MSK team via email or WhatsApp at any time. Sessions either introduce a topic requested by the MBH ICU team or build on a topic that was previously presented but the team would like to learn more about, and recordings of each session are shared with the MBH ICU team for members who were unable to join. Sessions have been held up to three times per month since May of 2023, with 19 sessions completed to date and more to come.
Francophone Clinicians Build Palliative Care Knowledge and Confidence

Participants in the French AAI Palliative Care Digital Training Course

Through its English-language AAI Palliative Care digital training program, BVGH equipped nearly 2,000 healthcare providers around the world with newfound skills and knowledge to enhance the quality of life of cancer patients, especially those with late-stage disease. Building upon the successes of the English course and leveraging the Palliative Care Interdisciplinary Curriculum, BVGH led a 12-session Francophone AAI Palliative Care digital training program in collaboration with Hauteville Public Hospital Center; Balsam – The Lebanese Center for Palliative Care; and the National Cancer Control Program of Côte d’Ivoire. Through this program, 688 healthcare professionals from 26 countries attended lectures covering vital palliative care topics such as strategies to communicate with patients and their families, methods of managing pain and symptoms associated with end-of-life care, contextualizing palliative care principles to low-resource settings, and more.

Missed the course? Check out the recorded lectures here.

Equipping Pathologists with Advanced Expertise

Accurate and timely diagnosis plays a key role in ensuring successful cancer treatment outcomes. This past December, BVGH concluded its 2023 AAI Cancer Pathology Digital Training, a six-session course covering the fundamentals of breast, brain, ocular, and skin cancer pathology. These topics were requested by participants of past AAI programs. Expert trainers from Harvard, Stanford, and Yale universities addressed the key histopathological features of the cancers, provided introductions to the latest diagnostic
techniques, and presented cases. Overall, 371 healthcare professionals from 42 different countries participated in the course, which will ultimately contribute to enhanced cancer diagnosis across the African continent and beyond.

Missed the course? Check out the recorded lectures here.

**Highlighting the Essential Role of the Oncology Pharmacist**

Dr. Mapi Fleury (Lausanne University Hospital) and BVGH team prepare to launch the webinar

The oncology pharmacy team’s pivotal position in the multidisciplinary management of cancer patients cannot be understated. The oncology pharmacist is responsible for patient care through preparing and delivering cancer medicines, creating a safe workplace to handle hazardous materials, and ensuring overall patient safety. Healthcare leaders across Africa expressed to BVGH their concern over a lack of training and expertise in cancer care among pharmacists. In response, BVGH launched a two-part digital training series delivered in French on the basics of oncology pharmacy. Healthcare experts from institutions in the United States, Canada, Morocco, and Switzerland gave nine lectures on oncology pharmacy fundamentals, including chemotherapy dosing and dose scheduling, management of chemotherapy side effects, clinical research, pharmacy roles, best practices, and more. Over 260 healthcare professionals from 25 countries participated in this two-part series.

Missed the course? Check out the recorded lectures here.
BVGH Speaks on Global Health Equity at the Inaugural Cure4Cancer Event

Clinical trials offer cancer patients access to cutting-edge treatments and care, while ensuring that new therapies are safe and effective across diverse populations. Unfortunately, oncology trials are rarely available to cancer patients in sub-Saharan Africa. BVGH’s African Consortium for Cancer Clinical Trials (AC3T) platform was designed to ease barriers to conducting trials on the African continent, by featuring the capacity and experience of sites and investigators – but it will take sustained investments by many stakeholders to fully address the issue.

The inaugural Cure4Cancer Conference in New York this past December convened global oncology, industry and nonprofit representatives to discuss practical solutions and partnerships to push more international clinical trials forward. The conference was hosted by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, the Asia Society Policy Institute, and the Chinese Thoracic Oncology Group, and featured plenary discussions with experts from Australia, Brazil, China, Nigeria and the United States. BVGH and Nigerian partners NLCC and NSIA were represented on the panels, and highlighted the benefits – and challenges – of conducting clinical trials in LMIC settings, as well as the critical role of international collaborations in building research skills and experience for Nigerian investigators.

HypoAfrica Team Publishes Manuscript on Cancer Immunotherapy Use in Africa

BVGH and other members of the HypoAfrica clinical trial team published an article titled “Utilization of cancer immunotherapy in sub-Saharan Africa”. Read the full manuscript here.

AAI Collaboration Results in Pathology Capacity Manuscript

BVGH, Hawassa Comprehensive Specialized Hospital, and City of Hope published an article describing the results of their years-long program to strengthen breast cancer diagnosis in Africa. Published in BMC Cancer, the publication, “Building Pathology Capacity in Sub-Saharan Africa to Improve Breast Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment: Training Laboratory Technicians in High-quality Manual Immunohistochemistry” can be read 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/8stQmomGXAifY2ah8

- Hematologic Cancers in Adults
- Prostate Cancer (French)
- Grant Writing Peer Review Workshop

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

Thank you to our AAI Partners