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Cervical Cancer Action for Elimination

News Brief | June 2019

New coalition name!

In February 2019, the Cervical Cancer Prevention Initiative steering committee approved a motion to rebrand as **Cervical Cancer Action for Elimination** (CCAIE) in response to the World Health Organization's call to action to eliminate cervical cancer.

World Health Organization drafts Global Strategy towards the Elimination of Cervical Cancer as a Public Health Problem

"Elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem is a flagship project of WHO. In May 2018, the Director-General of the World Health Organization announced a global call to action towards the elimination of cervical cancer, underscoring renewed political will to make elimination a reality, and called for all stakeholders to unite behind this common goal...In January 2019...the Executive Board requested the Director-General to develop, in consultation with Member States and other relevant stakeholders, a draft global strategy to accelerate cervical cancer elimination, with clear targets for the period 2020–2030." The WHO Secretariat held a [web-based consultation](#) on the draft global strategy as a step toward the final document, which ended May 30. The consultation was open to Member States, organizations of the UN System, academics and non-State actors.

Countries on the move

On 10 January 2019 the **Malawi** Ministry of Health launched the national human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination program for girls aged 9 to 14 years. Cervical cancer is the main cause of cancer deaths among women aged 15 to 49 years in the country. More than 4,000 women were newly diagnosed with cervical cancer and 2,879 died in Malawi in 2018, giving it the highest mortality rate worldwide.

In February, USAID announced "funding to accelerate the introduction of a screen-and-treat strategy for HPV and cervical pre-cancerous lesions for the prevention of cervical cancer in **Malawi**." The grant of USD 5.1 million was made to a consortium between the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Malawi College of Medicine and will evaluate the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of integrating testing for HPV and thermocoagulation treatment for cervical pre-cancerous lesions with voluntary family planning at static and community-based sites.

USAID announced funding of a consortium between the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Maputo, **Mozambique** and the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center that will integrate existing screening and treatment technologies with voluntary family planning programs, while testing the feasibility and efficacy of innovative diagnostic tests for HPV. Mozambique has the second-highest mortality rate for cervical cancer globally.

The new programs in Malawi and Mozambique are the first USAID-funded programs to prevent cervical cancer in the context of broader women's health, other than under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). These new programs will coordinate closely with PEPFAR investments in both countries.

Other developments in cervical cancer prevention

International HPV Awareness Day is March 4 every year

"Inaugurated in 2018, March 4 has now been established as International HPV Awareness Day. The commemoration is part of the International Papilloma Society's commitment to increase worldwide understanding of HPV and how it affects us all. The annual campaign day encourages everyone to take action to learn about HPV, and how to manage the risk of HPV related cancers. The International Papillomavirus Society has recruited a large global partnership to work together to help raise awareness of HPV on March 4th and throughout the year. For more information about the campaign, partners, and to access International HPV Awareness Day campaign tools and resources, visit the [campaign website](#)."

AORTIC International Conference on Cancer in Africa to be held in November

The AORTIC Conference will be held November 5 to 8, 2019, in Joaquim Chissano International Conference Center in Maputo, Mozambique. AORTIC expects to welcome more than 1000 participants from over 55 countries to engage with the theme "Cancer in Africa: Innovation, Strategies, Implementation" and benefit from a program developed by an internationally-representative scientific program committee. AORTIC is the largest and longest-established international conference that has a multidisciplinary focus on cancer in Africa and takes place solely in Africa. Visit the [AORTIC conference website](#) for more information.

International partner news

- In March 2019, **TogetHER for Health** announced its first call for proposals under the Cervical Cancer Grants Program. Established in response to the lack of access to cervical cancer prevention, screening and treatment services in low- and middle-income countries, the Program provides small, highly-targeted grants to generate learnings and strengthen adoption of cervical cancer primary and secondary prevention technologies. These learnings will directly inform introduction and scale-up planning. Open to non-governmental organizations working within cervical cancer prevention, the call closed on April 29th and winning proposals will be announced in early June. You can read more about the initiative [here](#).
- *Cancer Screening in the Developing World: Case Studies and Strategies from the Field* has won a bronze medal from the Independent Publisher Book Awards in the Health/Medicine/Nutrition category. The book, from Dartmouth College Press, is edited by Dr. Madelon Finkel, a member of the Advisory Board for the **Global Initiative Against HPV and Cervical Cancer (GIAHC)**. Dr. Shobha S. Krishnan, President of GIAHC, also contributed a chapter, outlining GIAHC's global experience with cervical cancer prevention.
- The Medical Women's International Association will hold its Centennial Congress July 25 to 28 in New York City. A panel discussion will raise awareness about the World Health Organization call for cervical cancer elimination initiative. The panel, *The World Could End Cervical Cancer if It Tried: Forming the Us vs HPV Coalition*, will be chaired by Dr. Shobha S. Krishnan of GIAHC.
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Side events for cervical cancer at the Women Deliver Conference

- TogetHER for Health, the Union for International Cancer Control, the American Cancer Society, Jhpiego, Project Concern International, Pathfinder International, and Population Services International will host an exciting side event at the upcoming Women Deliver Conference. The event, [Not Without a Cervix! Advocating for an Effective Cervical Cancer Response](#), will be opened by WHO Assistant Director General Dr. Princess Nothemba Simelela, and will provide an opportunity to discuss the future of the cervical cancer response, including exciting new technologies and promising models of integration within sexual and reproductive health programs. Attendees will also discuss their ideas about how to increase cervical cancer's visibility as a critical women's health issue at Women Deliver and beyond. Event Details: Sunday 2 June, from 6 to 8 PM in the Vancouver Convention Center West Building. Please RSVP to info@togetherforhealth.org.

- The American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists, Pathfinder International, PATH, Abt Associates, and other partners will participate in an expert convening and workshop with policy makers, health care providers, multilateral agencies, NGOs, private sector representatives and advocates on eliminating cervical cancer at the Women Deliver Conference in Vancouver, BC. The event, [*Expert Convening: Creating Recommendations for Locally Driven Solutions to Eliminate Cervical Cancer*](#), will take place Sunday 2 June from 3 to 5 PM at the Vancouver Convention Center. Participants' input will inform development of recommendations to support implementation of local solutions to strengthen the continuum of care—from prevention to treatment—in low-resource settings.
- The World Health Organization will host a side event at the Women Deliver Conference: [*Every Country can eliminate Cervical Cancer*](#) on Tuesday 4 June, 8 to 10 PM in the Vancouver Convention Center. This will be a brainstorming event to find the best ways to "mobilize a women's movement, put this on the development agenda, and drive national action towards 2030 targets that save lives...Learn about prevention, early detection and management of cervical cancer; brainstorm on building integrated, women-centered services; share experiences on reaching all girls and women."

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