

# Towards more equitable access to cancer services

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, February 2, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- UICC launches three-year campaign to create more equitable access to cancer services

On 4 February, the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) will launch a new three-year campaign for World Cancer Day that brings together individuals, organisations and governments around the world in an effort to create awareness and help [close the gap in cancer care](#).

The campaign highlights the significant barriers related to socioeconomic factors, stigma and discrimination that prevent many people around the world from accessing life-saving preventive services, diagnostics, treatment and care. These barriers lead to wide discrepancies in the risks of developing and surviving cancer.

"By 2030, it is estimated that 75% of all premature deaths due to cancer will occur in low- and middle-income countries. Importantly, this care gap is not only between high- and low-resource settings. Disparities exist within most countries among different populations due to discrimination or assumptions that encompass age, cultural contexts, gender norms, sexual orientation, ethnicity, income, education levels and lifestyle issues. These factors potentially reduce a person's chance of surviving cancer – and they can and must be addressed."

– Prof. Anil d'Cruz, President of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), Director of Oncology at Apollo Hospitals, India

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions to cancer services and exacerbated existing health inequities, with a high risk of seeing an increase in cancers diagnosed at a later



stage and therefore cancer-related deaths.

The 2022-2024 World Cancer Day campaign is designed to raise awareness about this “cancer care gap” and ask for greater equity. The campaign calls on the cancer community, governments and health care providers to take actions adapted to national needs and resources to reduce inequity and improve access to cancer services:

- \* Acknowledge and address the [social determinants of health](#) that constitute many of the barriers to equitable care within countries.
- \* Develop person-centred, inclusive public health policies that take into account the specificities and needs of different populations based on ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, geographical location, education and income.
- \* Implement comprehensive, resource-efficient national cancer control plans integrated into universal health coverage schemes that take a community-based, participatory approach.
- \* Establish robust data registries that provide public health authorities with a clear picture of a country’s cancer burden and needs.
- \* Engage in community outreach and provide transportation, accommodation and childcare support to facilitate effective access to health services for rural populations.
- \* Expand the use of technological innovations (digital health, mobile screening units, self-sampling test kits) and provide the necessary resources (staff, training and support) so that they can be more widely used.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened health inequities and created an even greater need for action to mitigate the adverse impact on cancer incidence and survival. Understanding and addressing the social determinants of health and their impact on cancer can considerably improve outcomes for at-risk populations, particularly for cancers that can be more easily detected and treated such as cervical, breast, colorectal and childhood cancers.”

– Dr Miriam Mutebi, Member of the Board, Union for International Cancer Control and Consultant Breast Surgical Oncologist, Clinical epidemiologist and health systems researcher, Aga Khan University Hospital, Kenya

Efficient and widely accessible cancer services will save countless individuals from a premature and often painful death. Greater equity in health care will also strengthen families and communities, benefit the economy with greater workforce participation and offer net savings to health budgets.

The campaign website for World Cancer Day provides extensive detail on the different barriers people are experiencing in accessing care, how this affects prevention, treatment, survival and support, and offers examples of actions that governments, organisations and individuals around the world can take to close the gap in cancer care.

“As individuals, as communities, we can and must come together and break down barriers. We

have achieved a lot in the last decade in cancer care and control around the world but not addressing inequities in society is slowing our progress. Closing the care gap is about fairness, dignity and fundamental rights to allow everyone to lead longer lives in better health."

- Dr Cary Adams, CEO of the Union for International Cancer Control

#worldcancerday

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### ACCESS THE PRESS KIT

Factsheets on cancer, World Cancer Day

What is the care gap?

How to improve equity in cancer care

Press kit materials are also available in Arabic, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish.

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### CONTACT

If you would like more information or are interested in arranging an interview with a UICC representative, please contact:

Eric Grant

Communications and Media Manager, UICC

grant@uicc.org

+41 (0) 79 125 1523

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### About the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)

The Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) is the largest and oldest international cancer-fighting organisation. Founded in Geneva in 1933, UICC has over 1,200 member organisations in 172 countries. It enjoys consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and has official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). UICC has over 50 partners, including associations, companies and foundations committed to the fight against cancer. UICC is a founding member of the NCD Alliance, the McCabe Centre for Law & Cancer and the International Cancer Control Partnership (ICCP) and established the City Cancer Challenge Foundation in January 2019.

UICC's mission is to both unite and support the cancer community in its efforts to reduce the

global cancer burden, promote greater equity and ensure that cancer control remains a priority on the global health and development agenda. It pursues these goals by bringing together global leaders through innovative and far-reaching cancer-control events and initiatives, building capacities to meet regional needs and developing awareness campaigns.

[www.uicc.org](http://www.uicc.org)

## About World Cancer Day

World Cancer Day takes place every year on 4th February and is the uniting global initiative under which the world comes together to raise the profile of cancer in a positive and inspiring way. Spearheaded by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), the day aims to save millions of lives each year by raising awareness and improving education about the disease while calling for action from governments and individuals across the world.

World Cancer Day 2022 is led by the theme "Close the care gap", recognising the power of knowledge and challenging assumptions. This first year of a new three-year campaign on equity, raises awareness about the lack of equity in cancer care and barriers that exist for many people in accessing services and receiving the care they need. The theme was informed by a report issued by UICC entitled "Social Determinants of Health and Cancer".

This year follows on from the success of last year's campaign at the height of the pandemic, which saw over 840 activities taking place in 116 countries, including 152 iconic monuments in 91 cities were lit up in the colour orange for World Cancer Day, over 20,000 press articles published in 156 countries, and nearly 700,000 social media posts were shared, including at the highest levels from US President Joe Biden, French President Emanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. More than 110,000 campaign materials were downloaded from the website, with 50,000 custom posters generated by visitors.

For more information, please visit: [www.worldcancerday.org](http://www.worldcancerday.org)

For more information about specific country events, please visit:

[www.worldcancerday.org/map](http://www.worldcancerday.org/map)

Eric Grant  
UICC  
+41 79 125 1523  
grant@uicc.org

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