



Concept Note

Caribbean Civil Society Cervical Cancer Advocacy Workshop

March 21 - 22, 2013

Background

The Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC)

The HCC was formed in 2008. It arose out of 2007 Declaration of Heads of Government of CARICOM on NCDs. The HCC is a regional network of Caribbean health NGOs and civil society organizations with the remit to address NCDs. The organisation was recently registered as a not-for-profit company. In December 2012 the HCC finalised the 2012-2016 Strategic Plan, with strategic areas of Advocacy; Enhancing Communication; Capacity Building; and Promoting mHealth and eHealth. These four strategic areas will inform its functioning over the next 3 years.

The HCC works closely with regional and international leaders in NCD prevention to leverage the power of civil society by strengthening and supporting our membership in the implementation of programmes aimed and reducing the morbidity and mortality associated with NCDs.

Cancer of the Cervix

Every year, over 500,000 women develop cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among women in the developing world, and the largest cancer killer among women in most developing countries. Annually, approximately 275,000 women die from the disease, about 88% of whom live in developing countries with 159,800 deaths in Asia, 53,000 in Africa, and 31,700 in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Caribbean is among the top four highest sub-regions in the world with respect to incidence of cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is the second leading cause of death among Caribbean women. Cervical cancer mortality rates in the Caribbean are several magnitudes higher than countries such as the USA. The vast majority of cervical cancer deaths are unnecessary. Cervical cancer can for the most part be prevented and if diagnosed early is effectively treatable.

HCC, PAHO/WHO and the American Cancer Society (ACS).

The workshop is supportive of an agreed joint plan of action between PAHO and the HCC and specifically addresses the line of collaboration that speaks to cervical cancer prevention and treatment. Additionally, the workshop is being partially funded by the American Cancer Society (ACS) and honours a commitment made by the HCC to the ACS. The ACS recently supported the attendance of an HCC volunteer at an advocacy workshop in Montreal, Canada, and an international cancer conference held in that city.

Objectives

The primary objective of the Workshop will be to build advocacy capacity around cervical cancer prevention and treatment among Caribbean regional Cancer non-governmental organizations in support of the *“Regional Strategy and Plan of Action for Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control in Latin America and the Caribbean”*, approved by the 48th Directing Council of PAHO/WHO.

Participating NGOs will also be trained in the critical value of an empowered patient who can advocate for supportive programmes thus ensuring this is one of the components of their organizational cervical cancer advocacy action plans.

Outputs

- Caribbean cancer societies will become better aware of, become trained in, and motivated to embark on Cervical Cancer Advocacy initiatives.
- Each cancer society will have produced a **Cervical Cancer Advocacy Action** Plan for its organization and post the workshop the HCC will provide technical support to organizations as needed in the implementation of action plans of cancer societies.
- A **Cervical Cancer Advocacy Action Handbook** will be finalised and made available to all delegates and the wider HCC network
- An **e-petition** around cervical cancer will be initiated and fully executed by cancer societies following the workshop.
- A **Social Media How-to Guide** will be finalised and shared electronically and in hard copy with workshop delegates and widely in the HCC network.
- A **Caribbean Cancer Network** will be established and will be supported as needed by the HCC following the workshop.

Activity and duration

The workshop will be held over two days, 21- 22 March 2013 on the island of St Maarten.

Activities at the workshop will include presentations, facilitated discussions, breakout group discussions and plenary sessions.

Day 1: Participants together with the faculty will spend the first half of this day being updated on the extent of the problem of cervical cancer in the Caribbean, its preventive nature, and the programming, policy and advocacy initiatives that have thus far been taken to address the issue. Regional and International best practices and models will be reviewed to lay the groundwork for the development of organizational advocacy action plans.

The second half of the day will focus on the introduction of the Draft Civil Society Cervical Cancer Advocacy Handbook and using this as a guide to develop organizational advocacy action plans. The principles of advocacy and the value of advocacy in the context of cervical cancer prevention and treatment will be revisited to lay the foundation. The Handbook (containing stepwise strategies for the development and implementation of advocacy initiatives including practical ways of contributing to PAHO’s strategic plan for cervical cancer) will be used as a tool for this session and the morning sessions during Day 2.

Day 2: The first quarter of Day 2 will focus on the finalization of realistic and achievable organizational advocacy action plans. The plans will detail specific actions to be taken at country level around prevention, treatment and survivor support advocacy strategies. The participants will then be asked to present their plans and feedback on the utility of the Handbook with a view to finalizing it for wider distribution to regional civil society actors working in this field.

The latter part of the morning on Day 2 will be dedicated to developing/ strengthening social media skills and initiating planning for the development of an E-Petition signature campaign. The remainder of Day 2 will be centered around discussing the acceptability of a Caribbean Cancer Network. It is hoped that participating organizations will demonstrate commitment to this 'body' by determining the methods around its establishment and developing a consensus plan of action for its development.

All participants will be required to complete an evaluation form to provide feedback on workshop and assist in the planning of future HCC events.

Beneficiaries and inputs

Participants at the workshop will be representatives of cancer societies and foundations in the Caribbean.

Project management

The workshop is being organised by Mrs. Maisha Hutton, Manager, HCC, and Dr. Virginia Asin-Oostburg, member of the Board of Directors, HCC.

Sponsors and Supporters

Sponsors and supporters include:

- The Sint. Maarten Ministry of Public Health Social Development And Labour, Collective Prevention Services (local administrative)
- American Cancer Society
- Health Action Partnership International, UK
- GlaxoSmithKline