Creating a Civil Society Led Cervical Cancer Advocacy Movement
The Caribbean Cervical Cancer Electronic Petition

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Outline

• Cervical Cancer in the Caribbean
• HCC Response
• The Caribbean Cervical Cancer Electronic Petition
• Outcomes of CCCEP
• HCC Advocacy Model
• Challenges
• Successes
• JCS Perspectives
• Lessons Learned
• Next Steps

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Strengthening Caribbean NCD CSOs

HCC Strategic Areas

mHealth eHealth

Advocacy

Communication

Capacity Building

CCCEP

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Who is the Jamaica Cancer Society?

The Jamaica Cancer Society is a non-profit, non-governmental organization, established in 1955 and charged with a mandate to “fight and defeat cancer in all its forms.” The Society offers islandwide screening for breast, cervical, and prostate cancers through its fixed and mobile clinic. We also offer selected treatment and diagnostic services through our team of volunteer physicians. We are big on public health education and we provide counselling and support for cancer patients and their families.
70% of deaths are due to 4 major NCDs and 24% occur below the age of 70 years old

Source: Registrar General Department 2010
The Hard Cold Facts

• Approximately 2245 women in the Caribbean die annually from cervical cancer
• The Caribbean is among the top four highest sub-regions in the world with respect to incidence of cervical cancer
• The Caribbean has the highest burden of HPV in the Americas
• More than 95% of cases of cervical cancer can be prevented or 2100 of the 2245
• Increased awareness, screening and effective prevention and control measures needed

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The Hard Cold Facts

- Lack of effective community based interventions to eliminate disparities in screening rates
- Scarcity of resources
- Competing priorities
- Absence of national/regional cancer registries
- Lack of Governance/Regulations
HCC Response: Cervical Cancer Advocacy Plan for Caribbean Civil Society

• American Cancer Society funded regional Cervical Cancer Advocacy Plan

• Role of Civil Society in Advocacy
  – Empower the public by building public awareness to demand improved services
  – Identify legislative priorities and help develop legislative measures
  – Watchdogs - Hold governments accountable and support action

• Health advocacy critical gap among Caribbean Civil society
  – focus on service delivery

• Objectives: Increase civil society advocacy capacity; improve public awareness; increase high-level advocacy; improve support for women living with cervical cancer

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The Caribbean Cervical Cancer E-Petition

CCCEP

- Led by 20 Caribbean Cancer Societies with strong private sector support
- The first Caribbean-wide health-specific electronic petition conducted across the Caribbean by the people of the Region
- Builds on successful 2011 GTM mHealth campaign 700,000+ texts
- **Aim:** To improve prevention, control and treatment of cervical cancer through strengthened policies and programmes using an innovative eHealth platform to increase public awareness and empowerment and drive social movements
  - Targets Heads of Government of CARICOM and asks them to Increase Caribbean women’s access to affordable cervical cancer screening
- **Objective:** To obtain 500,000 e-signatures from Caribbean people in support of the universal access to cervical cancer screening

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Advocacy Effect – Civil Society Movement around Cervical Cancer

Caribbean Cancer Societies
Highlighting National Policy and Legislative Gaps and building public awareness to pressure Governments

Caribbean People
Increased awareness driven by CSOs → Empowered → Social Mobilisation → Informed Social Movements demanding change

Highlighting Regional/ National and Legislative Gaps and working at both levels to change POLICY

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How Successful is the E-Petition?

• 6000+ signatures to date
• Increased public awareness
• High level support from Governments
• Influence lifestyle behaviours and attitudes
• Increased numbers of pap smears

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How Successful is the E-Petition?

• Increased revenue
• Increased community based interventions
• Creation of a regional Public Service Announcement (English & multi-language)
• Cement the relationship among Caribbean CSO around a common cause

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We Signed have YOU?

SIGN HERE
Challenges & Successes
Jamaica Cancer Society Perspective

• Identified the Media as a major partner
• Launched the CCEP in Parliament as the Minister of Health gave his sectoral presentation
• Got the majority of Parliamentarians to sign
• Conducted public health education on cervical cancer to corporations, schools, service clubs, community groups
• Used Relay for Life Event – the JCS single largest public awareness initiative, to solicit signatures.
• Increased numbers of pap smears

Increased revenue

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Challenges & Successes
Jamaica Cancer Society Perspective

- Competing priorities
- No budget to sustain communication strategy
- Community groups not have access to internet
- E-Petition a novel idea
How Do We Get Government’s Input?

- Establish relationship between Government and Civil Society
- Government must be educated on public health issues
- Define legislative priorities
- Health literacy a priority
- Strategic alliances
- Shared responsibilities – conduct social audits

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Lessons Learned

• Need to demonstrate value of advocacy to gain CSO ‘buy-in’
• Successes of regional advocacy campaigns highly reliant upon strong CSOs at national level with strong national networks to create social movements
• Innovative strategies needed to reach hard to reach communities such as paper based signatures and use of mobile phones
• Traditional media needed to support electronic media in promotion efforts
• High level regional commitment needed to validate advocacy and specifically e-advocacy
• Use of existing activities/events to build momentum and attract increased signatures
Next Steps

• Increased activities regionally and nationally in order to achieve targets
  – Working with CSOs to promote the petition through related projects
  – Cervical Cancer Awareness Month January 2014

• The final results of the petition will be presented to Heads of Government.

• Explore regional mechanisms for the acknowledgment of e-advocacy
THANK YOU

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