



The Republic of Uganda

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

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PRESS RELEASE

UGANDA TO HOLD 5TH CONFERENCE ON CANCER AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Kampala, 13th August, 2025 – The Ministry of Health, in partnership with the Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI) and the Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU), announces the **5th Uganda Conference on Cancer and Palliative Care** under the theme: *"Embracing Uniqueness and Empowering Communities."*

The theme underscores the need for inclusive, patient-centered care that reflects Uganda's diverse socio-economic, cultural, and geographic realities. The conference will take place **10–12 September 2025** at **Speke Resort, Munyonyo** and will focus on strengthening community-led solutions to improve access, equity, and holistic support for people living with serious illnesses.

This gathering will bring together leading experts, researchers, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and advocates to share knowledge, exchange best practices, and explore innovative approaches to scaling up cancer and palliative care services.

Conference Objectives

1. Showcase cancer and palliative care research from East Africa and beyond.
2. Share strategies for standardizing care across sub-Saharan Africa.
3. Document and map available resources for research, training, and service delivery.
4. Promote collaborative research and training among national, regional, and international institutions.

Key Topics

- Personalized and culturally inclusive care
- Community-driven care models
- Innovation, technology, and AI in cancer and palliative care
- Empowering healthcare professionals and caregivers
- Advocacy, policy, and sustainable financing
- Care for special and underserved populations

Leaders' Remarks

Dr. Olaro Charles, Director General Health Services: "The theme of this conference "Embracing Uniqueness" means tailoring care to the patient's culture, age, condition, and needs. "Empowering Communities" means giving people the knowledge, resources, and voice to take part in their own care. Strong community involvement improves early detection, adherence to treatment, and holistic support."

Dr. Jackson Orem, Executive Director, Uganda Cancer Institute: "While progress has been made in cancer prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, many patients still present late with limited access to

essential services. This conference is a vital platform to exchange knowledge, share research, and collaborate to close gaps in patient care.”

Mark-Donald Mwesiga, Executive Director, Palliative Care Association of Uganda: “Palliative care is not a luxury. it is a right. As we embrace the uniqueness of our patients and communities, we must ensure care is holistic, compassionate, and accessible to all. This conference gives a voice to those often unheard and celebrates the inspiring work happening in communities.”

Conference Highlights

Participants will engage in plenary discussions, interactive workshops, and public-friendly science sessions. Featured activities include:

- A high-level side event on health financing, leadership, and governance for CEOs and board members of cancer and palliative care institutions.
- A survivorship symposium.
- Workshops on access to medicines, humanitarian approaches, and emergency preparedness.
- Poster presentations and extensive networking opportunities.

Cancer and Palliative Care in Uganda

Uganda faces a growing cancer burden, with an estimated **34,000–36,000 new cases annually** and over **24,000 deaths**. Only 20% of patients reach UCI for treatment, and survival rates remain low. The Government is expanding capacity with new facilities, high-end radiotherapy equipment, and advanced diagnostics.

Palliative care, essential for quality of life, is available in **230 accredited facilities across 107 districts**, but still reaches only about **10–11%** of those in need. Uganda is a continental leader in integrating palliative care into its health system, supported by free oral morphine provision and a dedicated Division of Palliative Care at the Ministry of Health.

For more information including registration for the conference, visit <https://conference.pcauganda.org/>



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