



Partnerships to Improve Cervical Cancer Care: The Belize Experience

Women's Cancer Forum

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The Belize Cancer Society

Belize



Scope of presentation

- Brief overview of the Belize Cancer Society
- Key partners and level of collaboration
- National Cervical Cancer Committee-development of Comprehensive Cervical Cancer Plan.
- Collaborative efforts to providing HPV vaccines as a “public good.”



The Belize Cancer Society-Founded in 1996

- The Organization was founded by an ordinary woman who became a politician and community activist-Juliet Soberanis.
- She was diagnosed with breast cancer at the end of a two year period of consultations, during which she was told that the lump was “nothing.”
- She wanted women to have access to information, diagnosis and treatment. She publicized her cancer journey.
- She died two years after being diagnosed.



Current Cancer Champion: Special Envoy for Women and Children

- The Prime Minister's wife was diagnosed with breast cancer.
- She made her journey a public one during treatment and has become a Champion-supporting efforts to establish a comprehensive cancer program for Belize:
 - leading an initiative to construct a cancer center,
 - seeking funds from international donor agencies,
 - Raises funds through her organization to benefit children including cancer care for children.



Organizational Mandate

- Our mission is to advocate, educate, provide evidence based guidance, and promote the awareness, prevention and treatment of cancer for the benefit of those affected and their families-through networking and partnership with public and private sectors.
- We envision that our NGO will continue to vigilantly advocate for policies and legislations that will facilitate affordable, available, effective and efficient services that are strategically and sustainably implemented via a comprehensive Cancer prevention and control program in Belize.



Key Strategies

- Institutional Strengthening
- Public Education & Outreach
- Core Services Development
- Advocacy



Ministry of Health

- BCS seen as a partner by the Ministry of Health:
 - Commissioner on the NCD Commission
 - Support initiatives of the BCS
 - Supports/leads the establishment of National Cervical Cancer Committee
 - Facilitate requests from the BCS for: development of comprehensive cancer program, sourcing funds for pediatric cancer treatment in Mexico, ImPACT study by IAEA.



Healthy Caribbean Coalition

- Collaboration with the Healthy Caribbean Coalition created numerous opportunities for the BCS to achieve its' advocacy objectives.
- BCS has been afforded to opportunity to work with an agency that provides advocacy guidelines, marketing strategies, networking opportunities and project funds to execute activities to advance BCS'score services development.
- Exposure to global and regional strategies with common goals has become the catalyst for the BCS to increase its' capacity to advocate for policies, standards and services for prevention and control of cervical cancer.



Healthy Caribbean Coalition

- Donor funds from HCC (courtesy of ACS and Australia Direct Aid) supports:
 - training of health professionals, creation of promotional material, the media, Wellness Ambassadors in private sector on NCDs and ending cervical cancer.
- Facilitates BCS's participation in Cancer and NCD Conferences resulting in global recognition of the work of BCS and HCC,
- Collaboration with WHO GCM on NCD in the development of a documentary showing civil society's efforts to manage cancer.



Belize Family Life Association

- BFLA is an affiliate of International Planned Parenthood Federation and is an ideal partner to work on cervical cancer control.
- Has access to resources from a globally recognized entity and is an accredited member which provides them with access to human and material resources.
- Benefits from IPPF networking with international partners like John Hopkins University.
- BCS and BFLA work in alignment with national strategies to fill gaps in services and enhance cervical cancer initiatives.



National Cervical Cancer Committee

Acknowledge that cervical cancer is a public health problem that is preventable and curable (incidence rate of 32.7 per 100,000).

- BCS led initiative for a national committee consisting of public and private sectors and civil societies..
- Endorsed “screen and treat” methods to reduce missed opportunities for screening in urban and rural centers.
- Pooled resources from BFLA and MoH supported the completion of a comprehensive cervical cancer program.
- VIA training by Dr. John Varallo Master Trainer, JPIEGO



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HPV vaccine initiative

- PAHO's CERVIVAC cost effective model determined that HPV vaccines as a cancer prevention activity would be highly cost effective.
- Vaccines will be added to national vaccine schedule to girls 9-13 years.
- To secure 'buy-in, BCS and MoH are holding meetings nation wide, with faith-based organization ahead of the launch in October, 2016.



The Belize Cancer Center Dangriga

The BCCD was founded by Belizean Oncologist and Nurse to provide access to chemotherapy.

-Patients receive chemotherapy regardless of their ability to pay.

The BCCD sought funding from the Social Security Board to enable cancer patients to receive funds in Guatemala.



Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory; tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.

Sun Tsu Ancient Chinese Military Strategist



Cancer Survivors Support Group activities

BCS Outreach to children with Cancer, hats donated by Mrs Norris of the Belize High School knitting club

