

LAST YEAR, ROTARY RAISED SH3.5B FROM THE ROTARY CANCER RUN

By Juliet Kasirye

In an effort to reduce the growing burden of cancer among Ugandans, Rotary is seeking to raise approximately sh5b from runners to complete the Cancer Treatment Centre at Nsambya Hospital.

Since early diagnosis increases chances of survival, the Rotary Cancer Programme board chairperson, Stephen Mwanje, said these funds will also be used to create awareness about cancer countrywide and provide free cancer screening services.

"Many people die of cancer because of late diagnosis. Some people believe it is witchcraft, yet it is actually cancer. Once cancer is diagnosed early, chances of survival are high," Mwanje said. Last year, Rotary raised sh3.5b from the Rotary Cancer Run. This year, their target is to raise sh5b and finish the cancer infrastructure in 2027, according to Mwanje.

The Rotary cancer run scheduled for August 30, will be held under the theme *Gwanga Mujje*, which is a public call for community service.

"As Rotarians, we are people of action and do not believe in lamenting. Since no single person or entity can tackle cancer and succeed, we need to come together and raise awareness so that people seek timely medical assistance," Mwanje stated.

He made the remarks during the press conference ahead of the signing of the memorandum of understanding with C-Care International Hospital Kampala (IHK), held at Namuwongo on Thursday.

ROTARY SEEKS SH5B TO COMPLETE CANCER CENTRE

PHOTO BY JULIET KASIRYE



From left: Prudence Asobola, the projects manager C-Care Uganda, Musinga and Mwanje display signed copies of the MOU during a press conference at C-Care IHK at Namuwongo last Thursday

During the ceremony, C-Care handed over a cheque of sh100m to Rotary.

"This partnership implies that every year, we will organise at least 100 medical camps across Uganda. Last year, we did 73 camps; now we are looking at 100 camps across the country. Therefore, since the

partnership is for three years, we are looking at organising 300 camps across the country," explained Mwanje.

"The reason cancer cases surge is because we are simply tackling cancer from the wrong angle. Prevention is better than a cure. Other than waiting to get sick and rush for treatment, this

is where C-care comes in handy," disclosed Mwanje.

The executive director of Rotary Cancer Programme, Nelson Kabwama, said the Rotary Cancer Programme focuses on four pillars: Creating awareness, offering treatment, putting in infrastructure and training the staff operating the machines to treat cancer.

"As we sign the MOU, we want to support diagnosis and testing. We are expecting 100,000 runners, and looking forward to raise a net sh5b using *Gwanga Mujje* slogan, by asking all Ugandans to be part of the Run," explained Kabwama.

According to the Uganda Cancer Institute, Uganda registers over 35,000 new cancer cases annually, mostly cervical, breast, prostate and oesophageal cancers.

The general manager for C-Care IHK, Dr Miriam Mutero Musinga, said their target is to increase awareness because they believe prevention is better than cure.

"In our communities, we still have very late diagnosis of cancer and therefore, many patients come to get services when it is too late," noted Musinga.

"We are seeing an increase of cancer in children and through awareness and health education sessions that we are going to have across the country, especially in hard-to-reach areas, we will educate parents about the red flags, and when they can go and seek care."

RISK FACTORS

While age 65+ is the top risk factor, many cancers are linked to preventable lifestyle choices, according to World Health Organisation.

Factors that increase the likelihood of developing the disease include lifestyle behaviours (smoking, diet, obesity), environmental toxins (radiation, asbestos) and biological factors (ageing, genetics).