

## WORLD CANCER DAY 2019

**"I AM AND I WILL"**

**"I AM AN ADVOCATE AND I WILL CALL FOR IMPROVED CANCER CARE"**

The Cancer Association of Zimbabwe joins the international community in commemorating World Cancer Day 2019, which is commemorated on the **4<sup>th</sup> of February** every year. This year's World Cancer Day (WCD) commemoration theme is **"I Am and I Will"**. This theme runs from year 2019 up to 2021 and compliments 2018 theme "We Can – I Can, Every Action Counts". Indeed cancer is not beyond us and **"we can"** do lot in the prevention and control of cancer. Truly, "you and I" can work together to reduce the cancer burden and "every action/step" that we take really counts. The theme **"I Am and I Will"** reminds us of the great potential inherent in us that we have to unlock in order to reduce the global cancer burden. The theme encourages individuals, corporates and governments to take a personal commitment to the reduction of the global cancer burden.

**"I AM AND I WILL" REMAIN COMMITTED TO: - INCREASE CANCER AWARENESS, AND REDUCE MYTHS AND MISINFORMATION:** Increased awareness and accurate information and knowledge can empower all of us to recognise early warning signs, make informed choices about our health and counter our own fears and misconceptions about cancer:

- ❖ **Early detection saves lives:** Although not all cancer shows early signs and symptoms, the majority of cancer in Zimbabwe do show early warning signs hence correct knowledge on cancer can help to promote early detection of cancer which in turn increase the chances of treatment success and reduces the cost of treatment as well. About 80% of the cancers in Zimbabwe are detected very late hence the need to dispel the current cancer myths and misconceptions and improve the availability and acceptability and affordability of early detection/screening services.
- ❖ Creation of 100% smoke free zones and providing information and access to smoking cessation tools
- ❖ Workplace programs that encourage employees to adopt a healthier behavior through wellness programs to promote early detection of some cancers and prevent occupational exposure to workplace carcinogens

**"I AM AND I WILL" REMAIN COMMITTED TO: EQUITY IN ACCESS TO CANCER SERVICES**

- ❖ Life-saving cancer diagnosis and treatment should be equal for all – no matter who you are, your level of education, level of income or where you live in the world.
- ❖ The availability, affordability and accessibility of cancer services need to be improved across the cancer care continuum. Early detection, diagnosis, treatment and palliative care services should be accessible to every citizen. This is important in protecting individuals and families from financial hardship as a consequence of out of- pocket medical expenses.
- ❖ The provision of universal health coverage (UHC)

**"I AM AND I WILL" REMAIN COMMITTED TO: - GOVERNMENT ACTION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND INVESTMENT IN CANCER CONTROL:** It makes a lot of economic sense for a nation to invest in cancer prevention and control than dealing with the consequences. Failure to invest in cancer prevention means that the nation will not be able to cope with the increase in the cancer cases and this will retard development due to increased health spending. Cancer burden, if not controlled is likely to retard Zimbabwe's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Government investment in cancer control will lead to increased productivity and improved quality of life.

**"I AM AND I WILL" REMAIN COMMITTED TO: - PREVENT CANCER AND REDUCE CANCER RISK FACTORS**

At least one third of cancers are preventable giving us every reason to champion healthy choices and prevention strategies for all, so that we have the best chance to prevent and reduce our cancer risks. Health lifestyle is helpful in reducing the risks of developing cancers:

- ❖ Tobacco use accounts for five million deaths every year, (22% of all cancer deaths). Reducing the rates of tobacco use will significantly decrease the global cancer burden.
- ❖ Alcohol use has been linked to cancers of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, bowel, liver and breast.
- ❖ Overweight and obesity are strongly linked with an increased risk of bowel, breast, uterine, ovarian, pancreatic, esophagus, kidney, and gallbladder cancers later in life.

**“I AM AND I WILL” REMAIN COMMITTED TO: - REDUCING CANCER SKILLS GAP IN THE HEALTH SECTOR**

- ❖ Addressing the current skills gap and shortage of healthcare professionals is the clearest way to achieve progress in reducing the number of premature deaths from cancer.

**“I AM AND I WILL” REMAIN COMMITTED TO: - REDUCING MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF CANCER ON CANCER PATIENTS AND THEIR RELATIVES**

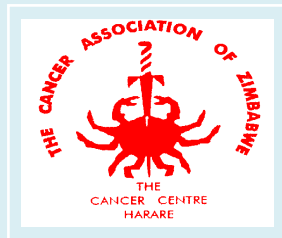
- ❖ Quality cancer care includes dignity, respect, support and love and considers not just the physical impact of cancer but respects the emotional, sexual and social wellbeing of each individual. Provision of psychosocial services may help to improve the emotional wellbeing of the patients.

**“I AM AND I WILL” REMAIN COMMITTED TO: - WORKING TOGETHER AS ONE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CANCER**

- ❖ Strategic collaborations that involve government, civil society, companies, cities, international organisations, agencies, research and academic institutions makes us stronger in our efforts to reduce the cancer burden. Joining efforts leads to powerful action at every level. We all have a role to play.

The theme **“I AM AND I WILL”** shows the world’s optimism in the fight against cancer and calls for personal commitment towards any intervention that will help reduce the global cancer burden. Cancer is not beyond our reach since we can do a lot in areas of cancer prevention, early detection, treatment and care. It is this *“personal commitment”* that can enable our nation to win the battle against cancer.

We take this momentous opportunity to urge government and its partners, members of the public and other stakeholders alike, to step up efforts towards prevention and control of cancer and improving the quality of life of those diagnosed of cancer.



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**OUR VISION: Universal access to cancer information and comprehensive cancer management services**

*“We are committed to cancer prevention and improving the quality of life of patients, their families and communities through timeous, cost effective and evidence based interventions” – Together We Can!*

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