
How the international cancer community is preparing for World Cancer Day 2018

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Language English

Apollo Cancer Hospital on World Cancer Day 2016. ©UICC

World Cancer Day takes place every year on 4 February and is the single initiative under which the world can unite to raise the profile of cancer in a positive and inspiring way. In 2017, close to 1,000 activities took place in 131 countries, with supporters mobilising action and inspiring change. Last year's World Cancer Day movement captured the world's attention, receiving over 11,000 press mentions in 135 countries, and nearly half a million tweets with the official hashtags.

As the coordinators of World Cancer Day, the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) brings together over

1,000 members (including cancer leagues and societies, research institutes, ministries of health and patient support groups) across more than 162 countries who are equally committed to reducing the global cancer burden. Last year, 77% of UICC members were actively engaged in World Cancer Day activities.

With World Cancer Day just around the corner, we connected with two of our members for insight into their own preparations to support this truly global event.

Christian Ntizmira, Executive Secretary of the Rwandan Palliative Care and Hospice and Patricia Pinto, a psychologist from the Liga Portuguesa Contra o Cancro (Portuguese League Against Cancer), tells us about the challenges, highlights, and value they see in being part of World Cancer Day.

Charlotte (UICC): What do the final days leading up to World Cancer Day look like for Rwandan Palliative Care and Hospice?

Christian: The final days before World Cancer Day are very busy for us, with meetings, phone calls, emails, and text messages all relating to the preparation of our event. We also spend a lot of time keeping updated on social media to see what else is going on in other parts of the world.

Charlotte: What would you say are some of the benefits of taking part in World Cancer Day?

Christian: One of the many benefits of taking part in World Cancer Day is having the ability to be connected with other activists from local and international layers of society. This has enabled the development of a secure network to control cancer and has allowed us to learn and be inspired by different experiences from around the world.

Charlotte: What are some of the potential challenges leading up to World Cancer Day for the Liga Portuguesa Contra o Cancro?

Patricia: The challenge we face this year is that World Cancer Day falls on a Sunday, and it is a little more difficult to effectively organise and execute over the weekend. In addition, the challenge we all continuously face is inspiring people to change their behaviour and take action now against cancer.

Charlotte: How do you incorporate the World Cancer Day key messages?

Christian: Our organisation translated the World Cancer Day key messages into our mother tongue of Kinyarwanda with the aim of helping the Rwandan population understand the importance of the campaign.

Charlotte: What are your top highlights for World Cancer Day?

Patricia: The main highlight for me is to see the world uniting over a disease that affects all of humankind. It is not easy to encourage all countries to join a consensus like this.

Charlotte: Final words?

Patricia: World Cancer Day celebrates every single person who has suffered from this disease, as well as all those

who have taken action in preventing and treating it.

It is an inspirational day and the perfect opportunity to help people understand that it is possible to prevent and beat cancer. On this day, we do not associate cancer with suffering but with hope!

Join our members and thousands of supporters around the world on 4 February for the final year of the 'We can. I can.' campaign: an empowering message that everyone – as individuals or as a collective – can take action to reduce the impact of cancer for themselves, the people they love and the wider world.

For more information on how your organisation can get involved this growing, global movement, visit worldcancerday.org.

About our UICC Members

Patricia Pinto is a psychologist at the Portuguese League Against Cancer and works closely within the Health Promotion Department. During her ten-year career, she has worked specifically with young people to promote academic success, vocational orientation and health education.

Dr Christian Ntizimira is the Executive Secretary of the Rwanda Palliative Care & Hospice Organisation (RPCHO), a non-profit organisation which advocates for access to pain control and palliative care in primary care. Dr Ntizimira pioneered the integration of end of life care into health services rendered to Rwandan patients with chronic illnesses in acute care and community settings. In 2016, he received the Young Cancer Leader Award from the UICC for advocating the complementarity of palliative care needed in humane cancer care.

Charlotte Boulton has a background in health psychology and is currently completing a communications internship with UICC, specifically focusing on engaging with members and supporters for World Cancer Day.

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