



An initiative of Online Voices to *inform, inspire, and involve* everyone in the fight against non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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As we mark World Gynecologic Oncology Day, we at Being Africa urge the Government of Kenya and all civil society organizations to rally together in the fight against stigma and misinformation surrounding gynecologic health. Today, we confront an urgent challenge: the barriers that prevent women from seeking regular screening for cervical cancer and other gynecologic conditions.

Stigma remains a significant obstacle in our communities, where misconceptions about gynecologic cancers often lead to shame and silence. Women facing the possibility of cervical cancer are frequently burdened by fears and misunderstandings that prevent them from accessing essential health services. The Kenyan government and legislators must prioritize gynecologic health by allocating sufficient resources and structures to ensure the required services are available and accessible. Secondly, the Ministry of Health needs to prioritize gynecologic cancers screening, treatment, control, and support services at public healthcare facilities to alleviate preventable sufferings from women seeking these services. Civil society organizations, on the other hand, must step up to dismantle these barriers by fostering open dialogues, sharing survivor stories, and normalizing conversations about women's health. Together, we can create an environment where women feel empowered to discuss their health needs without fear of judgment.

Misinformation is another formidable adversary in our mission. In an age where information spreads rapidly, false narratives about HPV, screening procedures, and the implications of a diagnosis can lead to dangerous complacency. We must counteract these myths with facts, launching robust educational campaigns that not only inform but also engage communities. Civil society organizations must leverage social media, community events, and local partnerships to disseminate accurate information. By collaborating with healthcare professionals to create and share trustworthy content, we can ensure that women are equipped with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their health.

Moreover, increasing the rates of regular screening is critical to our mission. Early detection is the key to successful treatment, yet many women avoid these life-saving services due to lack of access, fear, or simply not knowing when to seek care.

Civil society has a vital role in promoting screening programs that are accessible and affordable. By organizing community-based screening initiatives, we can bring services directly to the women who need them most. This not only increases awareness but also demonstrates our commitment to their health and well-being.

On this significant day, we challenge the government, fellow civil society organizations and everyone with good meaning to join us in taking swift action. Let us unite our efforts to combat stigma, spread accurate information, and increase participation in regular screening. By working together, we can create a future where every woman is informed, empowered, and able to seek the care she deserves.

The time for action is now. Together, we can transform the landscape of gynecologic health, ensuring that no woman suffers in silence and that every life is valued. Let us be the change we wish to see.

THE END

