

The Cervical Cancer Prevention Initiative

Investing in Cervical Cancer Prevention 2015–2020



Year One Update

November 2016



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On November 3rd and 4th, 2015, Cervical Cancer Action (CCA) hosted a high-level conference in London called *Investing in Cervical Cancer Prevention 2015–2020*. The conference brought together key partners to take stock of recent global progress in cervical cancer prevention, spur expanded action and investment, and establish a consensus vision for what is required to meet our global goals and safeguard our commitments to the health of women and girls.

The conference was attended by 75 individuals, representing 44 international agencies, global philanthropies, national governments, international nonprofit organizations, and vaccine and medical diagnostic companies. Representatives hailed from Argentina, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Uganda, the United States, several European countries, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The London meeting report is listed among the resources at the end of this paper.

At the conference, CCA and its partners launched *Taking Cervical Cancer Prevention to Scale: Protecting All Women and Girls*, a five-year global initiative to tackle the growing burden of cervical cancer in low- and lower-middle-income countries. Earlier this year the founders decided to shorten the name to *The Cervical Cancer Prevention Initiative*, or CCPI.

The Initiative convenes a multisector partnership focused on fostering collaboration, commitment and investment to expand global efforts to ensure that all girls and women in low- and lower-middle-income countries have access to cervical cancer prevention within ten years.

Now, about one year post-London, we are providing an update. This paper highlights CCPI accomplishments since London and explains our evolving understanding of how CCPI members will work together. It also celebrates the nascent efforts of our six working groups, along with these exciting global milestones:

Cervical cancer global milestones over the past year

- **United Nations (UN) Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon called for the elimination of cervical cancer.**
- **Seven UN agencies launched a Global Joint Programme on Cervical Cancer.**
- **Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance approved new countries for HPV vaccine support, including populous Indonesia.**
- **The Global Fund approved its first allocation specifically targeting cervical cancer.**
- **Cervical cancer was highlighted in the new *Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescent's Health*.**
- **The Indian government organized a high-level meeting on moving the cervical cancer agenda forward.**
- **Every Woman, Every Child advocated strongly for cervical cancer prevention during the World Health Assembly and, with Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon (PRRR), led a "Twitter Relay" with the potential to reach nearly three million people.**
- **UNAIDS, WHO, and the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (GCWA) released an Advocacy Brief on leveraging the synergies between HIV, HPV, and cervical cancer.**
- **Rotary International organized cervical cancer prevention projects in every continent where there are Rotary clubs.**
- **Harvard and the American Cancer Society published ground breaking modelling of the cost of cervical cancer prevention globally.**
- **The New England Journal of Medicine published an important thought-piece on the importance of graduating from pilot projects to scale-up.**
- **The CCPI mobilized six working groups focused on scaling up prevention worldwide (see pages 3-5).**

Collaboration on cervical cancer prevention is reaching new heights

The past year has seen the base of stakeholders expand rapidly, especially groups whose primary focus has been on HIV/AIDS or maternal mortality, and who now feel that cervical cancer must be addressed along with those other health challenges. Every Woman Every Child, UNAIDS, the World Bank, the Global Fund, Women Deliver, and Rotary deserve special mention as groups which have expanded their engagement. Seven United Nations agencies—WHO, IAEA, IARC, UN Women, UNAIDS, UNFPA, and UNICEF—are coming together for the first time to fight cervical cancer. The list of Gavi-supported countries offering HPV vaccine is growing. A host of new scientific papers were published documenting, among other topics, the safety and efficacy of HPV vaccination (even with only two doses), the cost of prevention programming, and evidence supporting cost-effective screening and preventive treatment strategies. Finally, and thankfully, this past year more women were screened and treated, and more girls vaccinated, than ever before!

Still, the majority of girls and women remain unprotected

We do not have a clear picture of the number of women screened every year, nor how many needing preventive treatment receive it. A study in Kenya showed that, in 2014, only 13.4 percent of eligible women were screened. We can be sure that coverage is limited in other low-resource settings in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as well. And it is estimated that fewer than three percent of girls who should be vaccinated actually receive the vaccine in less developed regions. We can say with confidence that coverage of both interventions is shockingly low.

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The challenges are not technical or strategic—we know what to do to prevent cervical cancer and we have the tools to do it. Women are not being screened and girls are not being vaccinated due to funding constraints, and because in many places policies lag behind know-how. Screening and treatment have not been taken to population levels anywhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, or in countries like Brazil, India, or Indonesia. Programs in those countries are either national in policy but only partially implemented, or are location-limited pilots and women are protected only if they are lucky to live in the right town, or can afford to pay for screening from a private provider. Middle-income countries which are not eligible for Gavi support are having trouble paying for HPV vaccine and some countries that "graduated" from Gavi support do not feel that they are able to continue investing in vaccination.

Recognizing these challenges, the CCPI partners are working together to:

- 1. Scale-up prevention services for all women and girls.**
Build political commitment for developing appropriate policies and integrating vaccination and screening/preventive treatment into school health, women's health, and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs. Urge partners with limited prevention programs to increase access.
- 2. Expand the stakeholder base globally and in countries.**
Strengthen and expand national and global-level commitment and investment in cervical cancer prevention, and support collaboration for more effective implementation. Building on lessons learned from the AIDS movement and HIV activism, engage civil society, particularly the women's rights movement and women living with HIV.
- 3. Encourage innovation and shared learning.**
Support efforts to spur the next generation of vaccination, screening and preventive treatment technologies, programmatic innovations and scalable approaches, and to share new learning broadly.
- 4. Track progress and encourage accountability**
Establish systems to track global progress in expanding coverage, monitor resource investments and compare levels of investment against global commitments and need.

CCPI accomplishments, Year One

- **Launch of the Initiative in London.** The energy and enthusiasm of London meeting participants demonstrated broad consensus that it is time to do more about cervical cancer worldwide. Twenty-six agency representatives made specific commitments for action during the meeting. And many of them agreed to work together, under the Initiative umbrella, to move our common agenda forward.
- **New collaborations.** Over the next few months we noticed a significant uptick in new, cross-partner support for cervical cancer prevention efforts. These included working together on a major event sponsored by Every Woman Every Child at the United Nations on World Cancer Day; collaboration to educate Rotarians worldwide about cervical cancer; and a global "Twitter Relay" that reached millions of people.
- **Development of a provisional work plan, focusing on the four goals.** Building on the excitement of the London meeting, Initiative members reached out to an array of stakeholders, seeking to develop a shared set of priority activities. The resulting framework was discussed and finalized at a face-to-face meeting of partners during the Women Deliver conference in Copenhagen in May 2016.
- **Deployment of working groups.** In Copenhagen the partners also decided that planning could best be accomplished by dedicated working groups (WGs), each focusing on a specific need linked to the four goals above.

CCPI Working Groups

Over the past few months six working groups have been established. All are active, and all welcome new members.

Working Group 1: Technical assistance to national-level planning and programming

Lead partner 2016: Marie Stopes International (MSI)

Other members 2016: International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Jhpiego, Ministry of Health/Tanzania, Ministry of Health/Uganda, Ministry of Health/Zambia, PATH, PSI and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The mission of Working Group 1 (WG1) contributes to Goal 1 above (scaling up prevention services). The group seeks to provide collaborative technical assistance including coordinating the costing of national plans, encouraging adherence to WHO guidance and indicators, and national partner mobilization and coordination. This may be accomplished by supporting or establishing country coordinating mechanisms or focal points in target countries.

WG1 will make recommendations on an initial set of countries where assistance can be offered. For each country the WG will assess what technical assistance is most needed and assess Initiative partner capacities and bandwidth to collaboratively provide it.

Working Group 2: Donor engagement and development

Lead partner 2016: Marie Stopes International (MSI)

Other members 2016: American Cancer Society (ACS), Grounds for Health (GFH), PATH, Pink Ribbon/Red Ribbon (PRRR), PSI and The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

WG2 is developing a strategy for Initiative partners to collaboratively engage and expand the global donor base for cervical cancer prevention in low- and lower-middle-income countries (Goal 2). The team is planning coordinated and targeted donor outreach with a range of bilateral and private donors. This effort may be supported through the development of donor-specific materials (including an investment case building on the Harvard/ACS Cost of Action study) and/or landscaping current and potential funding streams.

Working Group 3: National-level advocacy and technical assistance to access international financial support for national cervical cancer programming

Lead partner 2016: UNAIDS

Other members 2016: ACS, Jhpiego, PRRR and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

WG3 also addresses Goal 2, but with a specific focus on engaging national-level advocates and planners to include cervical cancer prevention in 2017–2020 Global Fund applications or Global Financing Facility national investment cases. This could include high-level and grassroots advocacy with civil society, such as the International Community of Women Living with HIV, to advocate for the inclusion of cervical cancer in national funding requests. Webinars and other information dissemination tools may be utilized to build awareness and demand for action. A community brief for civil society mobilization is being developed by UNAIDS, WHO, and the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS.

WG3 also seeks to establish teams of Initiative partners prepared to collaboratively support countries in developing their cervical cancer specific plans and budgets required for Global Fund applications and other funding.

Working Group 4: Advocacy for mainstreaming global cervical cancer prevention into RMNACH, UHC, and HIV/AIDS

Lead partner 2016: PRRR

Other members 2016: Cordaid, Every Woman Every Child (EWEC), Jhpiego, Ministry of Health/Zambia, PATH and the World Bank

WG4 addresses both Goals 2 and 4 (tracking progress). Team members plan to partner with global agencies, organizations and networks to build knowledge and foster engagement of RMNACH, UHC, and HIV/AIDS communities through direct engagement of specific networks, participation in global events and the identification of global champions. They will directly advocate for the mainstreaming of cervical cancer prevention into RMNACH and HIV/AIDS programs.

Working Group 5: Information for advocacy

Lead partner 2016: PATH

Other members 2016: EWEC, Grounds for Health, Jhpiego, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the Pan-American Health Organization, PRRR, PSI and the US CDC

This cross-cutting effort spans Goals 3 (innovation and shared learning) and 4, with an emphasis on common messaging, and the dissemination of information on best practices, innovations and global progress, and investment. The group has agreed to a common information sharing platform—the RHO Cervical Cancer website (www.rho.org)—and has been collaborating on global educational outreach through events and social media.

To bridge a major knowledge gap—the lack of publically available, country-specific cervical precancer screening and preventive treatment statistics—the team is gathering key service indicators in six low-resource countries. Should the effort prove successful, they plan to expand the effort significantly. The data they gather will provide a baseline against which to compare future coverage, and for cross-country comparisons.

Working Group 6: Initiative governance

Lead partner 2016: Sage Innovation

Other members 2016: ACS, IPPF, Jhpiego, PATH, PSI

This working group is developing recommendations for the governance structure, membership and financial sustainability of the Initiative. Once the structures and policies have been approved by our current membership, we will share them broadly.

Some important CCPI members have not been involved in working groups, but support the effort in other ways:

- Cancer Research UK
- FIGO
- Rotary International
- The Global Fund
- The International Planned Parenthood Federation
- UICC and
- Women Deliver

Looking towards the future

As our working groups develop more detailed action plans, and as we sort through various models of governance, chief on our minds is the issue of sustainable support. Most likely Initiative administration will be funded through member dues, member contributions, and grants.

But we are not waiting for all these pieces to fall into place—the WGs already are mobilizing country-based colleagues to compile reliable data on prevention services, are reaching out to the Global Fund and the Global Financing Facility about cervical cancer programming, and are looking at new, efficient ways to provide technical support to countries when it is needed. We anticipate that such efforts will increase in 2017.

Join us!

If you're not already a member of the Initiative, there are many ways that you can take part. For example, you could share information about the cervical cancer prevention work you are doing, and we could include that good news in future progress reports. If you are seeking partners, let us know and we can connect you. And if you are seeking to increase access in your country, perhaps some of our working group members can help!

Our team is committed, and your participation will make us stronger. All sorts of contributions can help—financial, in-kind, or your time and energy. All six working groups would love to have additional members to share in the satisfaction of doing what we all know needs to be done—getting cervical cancer prevention services to all girls, and all women, no matter where they live or how wealthy they are. It's a health issue, it's an equity issue, and it's the right thing to do.

Resources

- ❖ The **CCPI London Meeting report**: www.cervicalcanceraction.org/pubs/
- ❖ **Progress in Cervical Cancer Prevention: The CCA Report Card 2015** is a good introduction to prevention strategies for low-resource settings.
www.cervicalcanceraction.org/pubs/CCA_reportcard_low-res_2015.pdf
- ❖ The **RHO Cervical Cancer library** is an extensive online resource for information and tools from the leading cervical cancer agencies worldwide: www.rho.org
- ❖ **World Health Organization's Comprehensive Guide to Cervical Cancer Control: A Guide to Essential Practice** (“the Pink Book”) is an excellent technical resource.
www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/cancers/cervical-cancer-guide/en/
- ❖ **HPV, HIV and Cervical Cancer: Leveraging Synergies to Save Women's Lives** was produced by UNAIDS, WHO, the GCWA and the UN Interagency Taskforce on NCDs.
www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2016/HPV-HIV-cervical-cancer

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