

News Release

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Merck and Uganda Ministry of Health Join Hands to Fight Diabetes and Cancer

- **Merck kicks off combined diabetes and cancer awareness campaign as part of Merck Cancer Control Program in Africa**
- **Merck provides more than 2,000 Ugandans with free cancer education and diabetes screening during the campaign**
- **By 2016, 30,000 Ugandans should be reached with free diabetes screening and education as part of “Merck Uganda Diabetes Day”**

Kampala, Uganda, November 18, 2015 – Merck, a leading science and technology company, in partnership with Uganda Ministry of Health today kicked off a combined diabetes and cancer campaign in Uganda as part of the Merck Cancer Control Program. The program is one of the initiatives of the Merck Capacity Advancement Program (CAP).

The CAP was launched by Merck in 2012 to expand healthcare capacity in the areas of research and development, supply-chain integrity and efficiency, pharmacovigilance, medical education, and community awareness in Africa and developing countries.

Through the combined community campaign, Merck aims to provide more than 2,000 Ugandans with free cancer education and diabetes screening and advice on how to lead healthier lives to enable them prevent the diseases.

In addition, in 2016 Merck aims to reach 30,000 Ugandans with free diabetes screening and education through its “Merck Uganda Diabetes Day” campaign which is dubbed “Every Day is a Diabetes Day”.



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Merck Uganda Diabetes Day is part of the pan African initiative "Merck Africa Diabetes Day" which aims to provide 300,000 persons in Africa with diabetes free screening and education in 2016.

"Supporting healthy families, healthy communities, healthy economies - this is our over-all target we want to achieve", said Kai Beckmann, Member of the Executive Board of Merck. "We are convinced, that this initiative will make a great contribution to advance cancer and diabetes healthcare in Uganda. The close partnership with ministries of health and universities in Africa is a key for the success of the diabetes and cancer awareness campaign."

At the campaign, Uganda's Minister of State of Health, Sarah Opendi stated that most patients report to the health facility when the cancer is at an advanced stage which poses a challenge because nothing much can be done to save the patient's life. "This is partly due to the nature of the cancers since they have no symptoms during the early stages but also due to our poor health seeking behaviours"

"According to the World Health Organization (WHO), over one third of cancer deaths are due to preventable causes such as a viral infection, poor nutrition and widespread tobacco use," said Sarah Opendi. "It is important to note that once diagnosed early cancer can be treated and cured. Uganda just like other developing countries faces a wide range of health system challenges and cancer is often not a priority in limited resource settings. Therefore the Ministry of Health appreciates private public partnerships with reputable companies like Merck to promote key health guidelines and raise awareness about cancer so that people learn how to detect and prevent it," Opendi added.

Successful awareness campaigns on Diabetes in Uganda

Merck previously partnered with the Ministry of Health, Makerere University and Uganda Diabetes Association to carry out medical camps and nationwide diabetes awareness through text messages via mobile phones (SMS) to healthcare providers and community members.

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Today Merck addresses cancer and diabetes at the same campaign, which will help to target the common risk factors for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity.

According to WHO, by 2020 there are expected to be 16 million new cases of cancer every year, 70% of which will be in developing countries where governments are least prepared to address the growing cancer burden and where survival rates are often less than half those of more developed countries.

Sarah Opendi emphasized: "Cancer awareness is very low in Africa, regardless whether the patient is educated or not. For example even doctors, teachers and bank managers are late in responding to the disease, therefore our partnership with Merck to implement their Cancer Control Program is very important for Uganda since educating the public and healthcare providers about the signs and symptoms of cancer will help promote early detection and better survival outcomes."

Merck has delivered healthcare services in Africa since 1897. With a population rising faster than in any other global market and a growing middle class, the company is increasingly tapping into the continent's innovative spirit to create health awareness and help respond to unmet medical needs. The Group's Executive Board is visiting 10 African countries this week to underscore its commitment and rising importance of the continent. Among others, Merck seeks to start local production diabetes treatment Glucophage in Algeria, inaugurate an office in Nigeria and start the sale of its Muse® Auto CD4/CD4% System to detect HIV.

Merck Capacity Advancement Program

Based on its long experience in diabetes management, which began in 1957 with the development of Metformin, Merck seeks to raise awareness on diabetes in Africa by supporting the healthcare system to prevent, diagnose and manage the condition effectively.

As part of the Merck Capacity Advancement Program, by end of 2015, more than 7,000 medical students in partnership with African universities such as University of Nairobi, Kenya; Makerere University in Uganda; Namibia University; University of Ghana; Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia; Muhimbili University of Tanzania; Eduardo Mondelane University in Mozambique and Agostinho Neto University in Angola, in addition to Asian universities such as Maharashtra University, India and Indonesia University will benefit from European-accredited clinical diabetes and chronic diseases management training, which is seeking to equip them with skills to avert the diabetes epidemic. Merck is planning to target more than 25,000 students by the end of 2018 expanding to more African and Asian Universities.



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Merck is a leading science and technology company in healthcare, life science and performance materials. Around 40,000 employees work to further develop technologies that improve and enhance life – from biopharmaceutical therapies to treat cancer or multiple sclerosis, cutting-edge systems for scientific research and production, to liquid crystals for smartphones and LCD televisions. In 2014, Merck generated sales of € 11.3 billion in 66 countries.

Founded in 1668, Merck is the world's oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company. The founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed corporate group. Merck, Darmstadt, Germany holds the global rights to the Merck name and brand. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the company operates as EMD Serono, EMD Millipore and EMD Performance Materials.