

[EMBARGOED UNTIL 4 FEBRUARY 2022]

Better Childhood Cancer Survival is achievable #ThroughYourHands

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Amsterdam, Netherlands – Geneva, Switzerland, 15 February 2022 – International Childhood Cancer Day (ICCD), held each year on 15 February, is an important day for children with cancer across the world. This year, children and families affected by childhood cancer and the healthcare professionals who look after them have joined forces to launch an Advocacy Toolkit to help advance more care for children with cancer globally. This will be accompanied by the creation of a 'Tree of Life' in virtual and physical formats in many countries in the world. The leaves of these Trees contain messages thanking healthcare professionals for improving the survival and quality of life of children and adolescents with cancer across the globe.

On International Childhood Cancer Day (ICCD) 2022, Childhood Cancer International (CCI) and the International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP) have combined forces to take the second step in the joint 3-year campaign by showcasing the essential role of healthcare professionals in improving the survival and quality of life of children and adolescents with cancer across the globe.

The ICCD Advocacy Toolkit (<https://siop-online.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ICCD-2022-Toolkit.pdf>) is available to inspire and guide campaign participation by healthcare professionals, parents, patients, survivors and advocates at all levels, with emphasis on regional activities in local languages, and has three main areas of action:

- 1) organising policy events with Ministries of Health and (global) health organizations to involve a wide range of stakeholders, eliminate myths on childhood cancer, and introduce solutions to barriers to care and challenges in achieving survival,
- 2) posting messages of hope and appreciation on the Tree of Life website (<https://iccd.care/>),
- 3) creating a physical Tree of Life in childhood cancer facilities such as by painting on a wall or creating collages, as well as doing it in electronic format on the Tree of Life website.

~ **400,000 children (0-19 years) are diagnosed with cancer each year.** Childhood cancers are a leading cause of mortality in many countries. Five-year survival varies from >80% to as low as <20% in some settings, especially low-and-middle-income countries, and childhood cancers are an increasing global disease burden marked by pronounced inequalities.

Childhood cancer treatment is cost-effective even in resource-limited settings. Health professionals' central role in providing these services saves lives and contributes to survivors' healthy and productive adulthoods.

João de Braganca, CCI President, praises the professionals working tirelessly to improve childhood cancer outcomes: *"Multi-disciplinary health professionals including doctors, nurses, and allied professionals such as physical and play therapists provide an irreplaceable contribution to the well-being of young cancer patients, their families, and survivors and deserve the utmost admiration and support."*

Kathy Pritchard-Jones, SIOP President, underscores the need to counter the impact of the pandemic on healthcare workers: *"The evidence is clear: COVID-19 has led to a substantial emotional and physical toll and often resulted in staff shortages. It is crucial to address these issues for the sake of professionals' well-being and to improve the provision of treatment and care, particularly in resource-limited settings."*

HRH Princess Dina Mired of Jordan, SIOP Patron and global health activist, speaks to the critical role of health professionals on the international agenda: *"As a mother of a cancer survivor, I know all too well the crucial role played by well-trained health care workers. This year's ICCD's advocacy campaign slogan 'The Right Treatment at the Right Time by the Right Healthcare Team' recognises the essential and integral role of trained and well-resourced professionals. In addition, the World Health Organization's Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer (GICC) has included health workforce training as one of its priority actions. This is in acknowledgement of the fact that without the essential contribution of the healthcare team, GICC's ambitious goals of improved survival and reduced suffering would not be achieved."*

The ICCD campaign aims to amplify the visibility of childhood cancer at all levels and reach the breadth of stakeholders with the power to effect life-saving change. Together, we can sustain and reinforce healthcare professionals in the fulfilment of their all-important role and make a positive difference for children and adolescents with cancer worldwide.

ENDS

CONTACTS AND NOTES FOLLOW

PHOTOS OF QUOTED INDIVIDUALS AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

CONTACTS

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ABOUT

Childhood Cancer International (CCI)

Childhood Cancer International was founded in 1994, as an umbrella organization of childhood cancer grassroots and national parent organizations. Recognized world-wide as the body representing children/adolescents with cancer, childhood cancer survivors and their families, CCI is today the largest patient support organization for childhood cancer. It is a global, parent-driven non-profit that represents 186 parent and childhood cancer survivor organizations in 95 countries, across 5 continents. CCI envisions that “Children and adolescents with cancer, benefit from the best possible treatment, care and support, anywhere in the world.” To learn more visit <https://www.childhoodcancerinternational.org/>

International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP)

Established in 1969, the International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP), is the only global multidisciplinary society entirely devoted to paediatric and adolescent cancer. The society has over 2000 members worldwide including physicians, nurses, other health-care professionals, scientists and researchers. Our members are dedicated to increasing knowledge about all aspects of childhood cancer. SIOP envisions that “No child should die of cancer: cure for more, care for all” and is aiming to improve the lives of children and adolescents with cancer through global collaboration, education, training, research and advocacy. To learn more, visit siop-online.org

CCI-SIOP ICCD Campaign

The 15th of February marks International Childhood Cancer Day (ICCD) to highlight the importance of community participation and support in the fight against childhood cancer in every country around the world. CCI and SIOP joined forces on a three-year campaign for ICCD (2021-2023) using the universal image of colourfully painted handprints of children to represent survival rates as well as the Tree of Life, symbolizing that childhood cancer is curable. Each year, a distinct group of childhood cancer stakeholders in highlighted: #throughourhands giving tribute to children and adolescents with cancer (2021), #throughyourhands with focus on healthcare teams (2022) and #throughtheirhands paying tribute to the families and caregivers (2023).

Alignment with the WHO Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer

The CCI and SIOP campaign is fully aligned with the #CureAll strategy of the breakthrough WHO Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer (GICC). Launched in 2018, the GICC is an unprecedented multi stakeholder global effort spotlighting childhood cancer as a major priority of the international child health and development agenda.