

Inside KCCA, health ministry's five-year anti-cancer strategy

BY SHABIBAH NAKIRIGYA

KAMPALA. A new five-year partnership between Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), Ministry of Health, and the City Cancer Challenge Foundation (C/CAN) is set to overhaul how cancer is detected, diagnosed and treated in Kampala, with officials targeting long-standing gaps that have led to late diagnosis and preventable deaths.

At the core of the deal is a shift from fragmented care to a coordinated, patient-centred system that follows individuals from prevention and screening through to treatment and follow-up.

The KCCA Executive Director, Ms Sharifah Buzeki, said the initiative aligns with the authority's broader goal of improving public health and productivity under its Healthy Cities framework.

"A city cannot thrive if its people are burdened by preventable diseases. This is about protecting lives and livelihoods and the city will serve as a model, with successful interventions expected to be scaled to other parts of the country," Ms Buzeki, said. She said the deal repre-



KCCA Executive Director Sharifah Buzeki (2nd right); Executive Director of Uganda Cancer Institute, Dr Orem Jackson (right), and officials from the City Cancer Challenge Foundation hold the memorandum of understanding for the five-year partnership. PHOTO/GODFREY MUTUMBA

sents more than a policy commitment, adding that it is a long-term effort to ensure that a cancer diagnosis is no longer a death sentence, but a pathway to timely and effective care.

"The plan will begin with a compre-

hensive city-wide assessment to map weaknesses in cancer services, particularly delays in diagnosis and breakdowns in referral pathways," she said.

Ms Isabel Mestres, the executive director of C/Can said: "We are analysing the

full patient journey from prevention to treatment to identify where delays occur and how to make the system faster and more efficient," she said.

She added that the approach is unique because it is locally driven while benefiting from global expertise.

"This is not a one-size-fits-all model. The solutions are designed to respond to the realities and see how cancers can be kicked out from cities," she said.

Dr Sarah Zalwango, the KCCA director of public health, said: "The findings will guide targeted reforms, including expansion of screening services at KCCA health centres and training of frontline health workers to detect early signs of cancer," she said.

She added that the strategy prioritises common cancers such as cervical, breast, and prostate, which officials say are placing a growing burden on families and the city's workforce.

"A major component of the deal is strengthening referrals to specialised facilities like the Uganda Cancer Institute, ensuring that early detection translates into timely treatment," she said.