



A Webinar to Commemorate **World Health Day 2026**

Policy and Regulatory Frameworks for Prevention and Treatment of Cancer in Africa

Organised by the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria in conjunction with the Pan African Cancer Research Institute (PACRI), University of Pretoria, and Dullah Omar Institute, University of the Western Cape.

Webinar Details:

Tuesday, 7 April 2026
10:00 – 11:30 AM (SAST)
Virtual

ZOOMLINK

Background

World Health Day provides an important opportunity to reflect on health not only as a medical issue, but also as a matter of dignity, equality, public accountability and human rights. The theme for 2026 is, "Together for health. Stand with science." The 2026 campaign emphasises scientific collaboration, evidence-based action and stronger health systems ([World Health Organization](#)) In commemoration of World Health Day 2026, the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, in conjunction with the **Pan African Cancer Research Institute (PACRI), University of Pretoria, and Dullah Omar Institute, University of the Western Cape** propose to host a webinar on **Policy and Regulatory Frameworks for Prevention and Treatment of Cancer in Africa.**

According to the World Health Organisation non-communicable diseases such as heart diseases, diabetes, cancer, and respiratory diseases are responsible for 41 million deaths (7 out of 10 deaths) globally. These deaths can be avoided with an additional investment of less than a dollar per person for a year. NCD-related deaths affect people in the prime of their years and cause health damage for millions more. It is estimated that 1 in 6 deaths is due to cancer and nearly 70% of deaths from cancer occur in low- and middle-income countries. Almost one third of deaths from cancer are caused by five leading behavioural and dietary risks: high body mass index, low fruit and vegetable intake, lack of physical activity, tobacco use and alcohol use.

In the African context, cancer is an increasingly urgent public health concern. It affects individuals, families and health systems, while also exposing wider inequalities in prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment and long-term care.

Access to cancer prevention, diagnosis, treatment and palliative care is closely connected to the enjoyment of other rights, including dignity, equality, information, bodily integrity and life. When people are unable to access screening, timely diagnosis or affordable treatment, the consequences are severe, especially for poor households, women, rural communities and other structurally disadvantaged groups. Policy and regulatory frameworks are crucial to ensuring the prevention and treatment of cancer. Well formulated laws, policies and programmes to prevent and treat cancer will ensure accountability on the parts of states to live up to their obligations under international and national laws.

The webinar aligns with **Sustainable Development Goal 3**, which seeks to **ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**. In particular, **Target 3.4** calls for reducing premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment. It also aligns with the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (2013-2020). Cancer therefore sits squarely within both the global health and development agenda and the broader socio-economic rights framework.

The urgency to address cancer-related deaths and morbidities in Africa must be grounded in human rights principles. According to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) the right to health guaranteed in regional and international human rights instruments

requires states to ensure available, accessible, acceptable, and quality access to prevention and treatment of cancer. More importantly, this requires states to commit resources towards address the root causes of cancer.

The webinar seeks to bring together scholars, students, medical practitioners, policymakers, civil society actors and other stakeholders to engage critically with cancer in Africa through a right-to-health lens. The webinar will examine prevention, early detection, equitable access to care, and accountability in health systems.

Purpose

The webinar aims to stimulate informed and interdisciplinary dialogue on cancer as a right-to-health issue in Africa and to examine how a rights-based approach can strengthen prevention, early detection, equitable care and accountability.

Objectives

The webinar seeks to:

- explore cancer within the broader right-to-health framework in Africa;
- examine the relationship between cancer care and the enjoyment of rights such as dignity, equality, information and life;
- highlight the importance of prevention, early detection and timely treatment;
- interrogate the legal, policy and health-system challenges that shape unequal access to cancer care; and
- promote dialogue on accountability, collaboration and rights-based responses to cancer burdens in Africa.

Target Audience

The webinar is intended for academics, students, legal practitioners, health professionals, policymakers, civil society organisations, development practitioners, community-based actors and others interested in public health, human rights and socio-economic justice in Africa.

Expected Outcomes

The webinar is expected to:

- deepen understanding of cancer as a public health and human rights issue in Africa;
- generate critical dialogue on prevention, early detection and equitable access to care;
- strengthen engagement among academic, medical, policy and civil society stakeholders; and
- lay a foundation for future work on health justice, accountability and inclusive care within broader socio-economic rights discourse.