

HCPAN partners government to relieve patients' financial burden

Ogechi Ukaogo

Health care providers of Nigeria, HCPAN is set to collaborate with the public sector in relieving citizens of financial burdens through health insurance.

Taking into consideration the current economic status of the country, the association has decided that a better way to help is to encourage citizens to invest in health insurance as they wouldn't even need to pay out-of-pocket when they are at the hospitals since their bills will be covered by their insurance companies, thereby moving health insurance forward in the country.

President of HCPAN, Dr. Umar Sanda, disclosed these plans in Lagos recently during the organisation's 12th National Annual General Meeting/Scientific Conference.



Immediate past President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria, PSN, and Chairman of the occasion, Olumide Akintayo; Dr. Sanda; and former Commissioner for Health in Lagos State, Dr. Leke Pitan at the 12th National Annual General Meeting/Scientific Conference of the Health Care Providers Association of Nigeria, HCPAN held in Lagos recently

"Since many citizens find it difficult to even purchase simple malaria drugs and pay their hospital bills especially with the increased price of majority of health products due to the ongoing recession, HCPAN, a private elementary association of various health professionals including medical doctors, nurses, pharmacists and

laboratory scientists has decided to partner with the government and public sector to relieve Nigerians of the financial burden brought by hospitals while receiving quality health treatment."

According to the President of HCPAN, although the association itself has its own challenges in terms of cash availability, espe-

cially occasioned by the economic recession, we could perform better with assistance from the government.

According to him, considering this health insurance initiative "we will pull money together in order to treat just a few people but it can be made better if the three tiers of government can come in and assist."

42 nurses, others receive training on breast cancer

Oblinna Odoh

A Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) in Abuja has trained 42 delegates drawn from Federal Capital Territory, FCT, Enugu and Kebbi States respectively on breast cancer patient navigation.

The organisation similarly launched a toll free

centre on cancer awareness.

The beneficiaries include nurses, Breast Cancer Survivors, and social workers.

The organisers of the programme include Project Pink Blue - Health & Psychological Trust Centre, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH), Union for International Cancer

Control (UICC), Pfizer, U.S. Embassy in Nigeria and the National Hospital, Abuja.

Speaking at the event, a United States (US) based Patient Navigator and Fulbright Specialist, Laurie Taurianen, applauded the initiative, stressing that it will give succour to the less privileged cancer patients in the rural communities

around the country.

According to her, "Cancer patient navigation was introduced in the 1990s and its goal is to detect breast cancer in its early stages. At this stage the survival rate is high. It also aimed at educating and empowering cancer patients while breaking the barriers they face in access to cancer care," she said.

Vaccinate your children against cervical cancer - HEDEN

A non-governmental organisation, Health Education and Empowerment Initiative, HEDEN, has stressed the need for an early and thorough medical screening by any individual once a sign of cervical cancer is noticed.

This, according to the organisation, is to ward off the disease and create a new lease of life.

The advice was given by the Executive Director of the organisation, Mrs. Folasade Ofurune, during an awareness programme by the organisation at Ijoko-Lemede area, Ifo Local Government Council of Ogun State at the weekend.

Also, the organisation urged parents to vaccinate their children, boys and girls, pointing out that cervical cancer is preventable by receiving the Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine before first sex from age 11 or above.

According to ICO Information Center on Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), there are 14,089 cervical cancer cases and 8,240 deaths in Nigeria annually.

The national burden of cervical cancer is high which indicates a great need for awareness, early detection and treatment.

Ofurune described cervical cancer as a fatal disease if left unrecognised and untreated. She further stated that

it is very important for every woman to undergo regular cervical screening to detect abnormalities.

"Regular cervical smear testing through pap's test or screening with low cost methods using Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (VIA) are the most effective ways of detecting cervical abnormalities, which may be the early signs of the disease," she said.

She expressed confidence that with the support of the Society for Family Health, SFH, screening of women aged between 25 and 60 years will continue in order to diagnose women during the long pre-cancerous phase.

Ofurune said the intense campaign in the less developed communities was carried out as a result of the high mortality from cervical cancer.

The awareness programme which was taken to a faith-based women group in Abule-Ijoko, Ogun State, was supported by the SFH.

The programme included talks, video presentations on symptoms of cervical cancer, its progression, stories of how early detection saves lives, question and answer session and eventual screening and treatment of women who tested positive.

During the programme, about nine positive cases were treated.

Turmeric, *Curcuma longa*, is a perennial herbaceous plant that reaches up to one million tall. Highly branched, yellow to orange, cylindrical with aromatic rhizomes. The leaves are alternate and arranged in two rows.

Many people can identify ginger but not very many are familiar with turmeric. In appearance, ginger and turmeric look alike. Turmeric is roundish and if chewed colours the tongue.

Turmeric can be used in the treatment of diabetes by helping to moderate insulin levels. It also improves glucose control and increases the effect of medications used to treat diabetes.

Another significant benefit is turmeric's effectiveness in helping reduce insulin resistance, which may prevent the onset of Type-2 diabetes. However, when combined with strong medications, turmeric can cause hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar). It is best to consult a healthcare professional before combining turmeric with your diabetes drugs.

Using turmeric as a food seasoning can reduce serum cholesterol levels. It is a known fact that high cholesterol can lead to other serious health problems.

Maintaining a proper cholesterol level can prevent many

Healing with Turmeric (2)

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cardiovascular diseases.

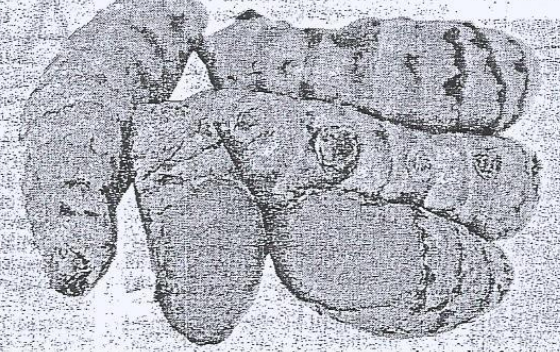
Turmeric contains a substance known as lipopolysaccharide, which helps stimulate the body's immune system. Its antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal agents also help strengthen the immune system.

A strong immune system lessens the chance of suffering from colds, flu and coughs. If you do get a cold, a cough or the flu, you can feel better sooner by mixing one teaspoon of turmeric powder in a glass of warm water and drinking it once daily. You may add one or two spoons of honey to sweeten.

Turmeric can be used in the treatment of diabetes by helping to moderate insulin levels

Turmeric is very effective in treating wounds as it speeds the wound healing process. The modes of action include the modulation of redness and swelling and oxidation.

Another key reason turmeric has been used in so many cultural dishes in the East for millennia is because of its soothing properties on digestion.



Turmeric, the perennial plant that looks similar to ginger roots, but tends to form long fingers rather than knobby clumps

Common scents that give your health a boost

Aromatherapy is a form of alternative medicine that's been used for centuries to heal the mind and body. Aromatherapy uses essential oils from plants that are either rubbed into the skin, inhaled, or put into baths.

Even prestigious institutions like the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center uses aromatherapy to bring about mental and physical changes in the body.

Among common scents that can give your health a boost is peppermint, which is one of the most useful scents in your aromatherapy arsenal. First, sniffing peppermint oil can help you lose weight. A study conducted by neurologist Alan Hirsch of the Smell & Taste Treatment and Research Foundation in Chicago, found that people who used inhalers infused with peppermint lost nearly five pounds a month.