



International Childhood Cancer Campaign - SIOP/ICCCPO/UICC Press Release

Global Cancer Organisations launch a 'Signs and Symptoms' campaign for childhood cancer on International Childhood Cancer Day to promote early detection and referral.

Geneva | 15th February 2014 – Today, International Childhood Cancer Day, is the launch of a 'Signs and Symptoms campaign' by the International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP), the International Confederation of Childhood Cancer Parent Organizations (ICCCPO) and Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) to raise the knowledge and awareness of health workers about the warning signs of childhood cancer. This campaign builds on last year's commitment by SIOP, ICCCPPO and UICC to disseminate information on signs and symptoms of childhood cancer to health professionals, community healthcare workers and the general public to promote early detection and referral of suspected cases for further examination, treatment and care.

Childhood cancer has high survival rates - frequently 80% and above in high-income settings. However, survival rates are drastically lower in low- and middle-income countries, frequently ranging from under 10% to 60%. As childhood cancer is relatively rare, health professionals are often not able to distinguish early warning signs from other more common childhood infections and diseases. Consequently, children may be treated for other illnesses and only diagnosed with cancer late, if at all.

Chairman of ICCCPPO, Kenneth Dollman, the father of a daughter who has survived childhood cancer, explains ' Childhood cancer is not commonly seen by primary health professionals, because of this there is often a delay between when parents first take their child to a health professional knowing something is seriously wrong, to when the cancer patient is correctly diagnosed. This campaign aims to help reduce this critical delay.'

The development of educational materials for health workers supported by strong referral mechanisms to specialized facilities and psycho-social support is important to improving early detection and access to treatment, care and support for children and their families. As SIOP President Prof. Giorgio Perilongo explains "this allows for early referrals, early diagnoses and hopefully the beginning of an appropriate treatment regimen. The prevailing myth that cancer only affects adults, especially in low and middle-income countries where awareness and knowledge about the disease may be lacking, further adds to the challenges in detecting childhood cancers early on. Recognizing the early warning signs of childhood cancer is critical and is the first step to fighting this disease."



To kick off the campaign, SIOP, ICCCPO and UICC have developed a poster and pocket card with common signs and symptoms of childhood cancer. The poster and pocket card are available in different languages and can be accessed on the SIOP, ICCCPO and UICC websites. They will be followed by the development of further educational materials and activities to build knowledge and awareness about childhood cancer at country level. “The signs and symptoms campaign aims to increase awareness and knowledge of the symptoms of childhood cancer and generate health sector and public support for better detection, diagnosis and treatment” says Tezer Kukluk, a paediatric oncologist and UICC President elect.

SIOP, ICCCPO and UICC commit to supporting health workers in recognizing signs and symptoms of childhood cancer and will work through their member networks for local impact.

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About the International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP)

Established in 1969, the International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP), with over 1500 members, is the lead organization concerned with the issues of children and young people who have cancer. The society envisions that “no child should die of cancer.” To realize this vision, SIOP’s mission are to: (1) ensure that each child and young adult with cancer has access to state-of-the-art treatment and care; (2) ensure that all involved in childhood cancer worldwide, have access to the latest progress through meetings, networking, and continuing professional development; (3) support those caring for children and young adults with cancer to provide the best curative and palliative therapies; and, (4) advocate for appropriate long-term follow-up for children and young adults after treatment for cancer. Professor Giorgio Perilongo is the president of SIOP. SIOP is governed by a board of directors and has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. <http://www.siop-online.org>

About the International Confederation of Childhood Cancer Parent Organizations

The International Childhood Cancer Confederation of Parents Organizations (ICCCPO) is the largest organization of its kind representing patients, survivors and families of children with cancer. ICCCPPO wants to see a world where the issues faced by children with cancer, survivors and their families, both in the short and long-term, are understood by families, healthcare professionals and the wider community to ensure that children with cancer and those who survive this disease receive the best possible care wherever they are in the world at the time of diagnosis and beyond. ICCCPPO's mission is to share resources, information and experiences in order to improve access to the best possible treatment & care for children with cancer everywhere in the world. www.icccpo.org

About the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)

UICC is the leading international non-governmental organisation dedicated to the prevention and control of cancer worldwide. It is the largest cancer-fighting organisation of its kind, with over 760 member organisations across 155 countries representing the world’s major cancer societies, ministries of health, research institutes, treatment centres and patient groups.

UICC is dedicated to continuing to work with world leaders to increase their support for cancer control measures, and hold them to account for the cancer commitments made in the UN Political Declaration on Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs). <http://www.uicc.org>