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MINISTRY OF HEALTH
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GABORONE

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

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PRESS RELEASE

MORE THAN HALF CASES OF CANCER OCCUR IN WOMEN

The Ministry of Health joins the global community in commemorating World Cancer Day 2026 today. The day is observed annually on 4th February. This global initiative provides an opportunity for all stakeholders including Government, private, all health professionals, communities, civil society and development partners, to work together to reduce the burden of cancer and improve the quality of life for those affected.

Cancer remains a significant public health challenge in Botswana, contributing to illness, disability and premature death. **There were 2 317 new cases of cancer in Botswana in 2022. Over half (59%) of the new cases occur in women, with cervical cancer, breast cancer and Kaposi's sarcoma being the commonly occurring cancers.** It is estimated that, on average, a person in Botswana has about a one in ten chances of developing cancer by the age of 75 years. However, **many cancers can be prevented and successfully treated through healthy lifestyle choices, regular screening, early diagnosis and timely access to quality care.**

This year's theme "United by Unique" underscores the importance of placing people at the centre of cancer prevention, care, and support, recognising that every individual's experience with cancer is unique.

The theme also calls for a people-centred approach to cancer care that goes beyond the disease to address the physical, emotional, social and psychological needs of individuals and their families. It also highlights the need for equity in access to cancer prevention, diagnosis, treatment, palliative care and survivorship services.

In commemoration of World Cancer Day 2026, the Ministry of Health encourages all Batswana to:

- Adopt healthy lifestyles, including balanced nutrition, regular physical activity and avoidance of tobacco use as well as harmful use of alcohol.
- Participate in the recommended regular cancer screening services such as cervical, breast and prostate cancer screening.
- Seek medical attention early when experiencing unusual signs or symptoms.
- Support people affected by cancer and help reduce stigma and discrimination.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Nyanga'.

Dr Christopher Nyanga
For Acting Permanent Secretary