

BREAST SOCIETY OF GHANA'S MESSAGE FOR PINKTOBER 2026

The Breast Society of Ghana is pleased to announce its theme for Breast Cancer Awareness Month (Pinktober) 2026: **Early Action, Better Outcomes.**

Breast cancer remains a major health challenge in Ghana and is the leading cause of cancer and cancer deaths among women. Too many women continue to present for treatment when the disease is advanced, at which point it is no longer curable. Early breast cancer is curable. Our country, Ghana, has been blessed with the modalities necessary to treat and cure breast cancer. There is no need to seek care abroad; indeed, Ghana has become a hub for specialist care in the subregion, and patients from across West Africa flock to Ghana for treatment. The statistics show that the survival rate of early breast cancer treated in Ghana is over 90%, which is as good as in developed countries. This is evidenced by the number of breast cancer survivors living amongst us, many of whom cannot share their survival stories for fear of stigmatization.

When the disease is advanced, the treatment options are limited, prolonged, more expensive, and, most importantly, survival is poor. This, unfortunately, is the story of most people diagnosed with breast cancer in Ghana. Behind every delayed diagnosis is a complex combination of factors: limited awareness, fear, stigma, misinformation, financial constraints, geographical barriers, and delays within the healthcare system.

We must change this.

Studies done worldwide have shown that delaying treatment, whether it's on the part of the patient or the health system, results in poor survival outcomes. Early action begins with recognising that breast cancer can affect anyone – mostly women, but also a few men and that breast symptoms should never be ignored. A lump, nipple discharge, a change in the shape or size of the breast, skin changes or any persistent abnormality should prompt timely medical attention. Often these symptoms are a sign of already advanced disease. **The evidence shows that the best way to diagnose cancer early is before any symptoms develop – through breast screening.** This Pinktober, the Breast Society of Ghana is calling on all women to take advantage of free primary healthcare and present themselves for breast screening at all levels of health facilities across the country.

We must also confront the persistent myths and misconceptions surrounding breast cancer and its treatment. No woman should delay seeking medical attention because she is afraid of losing her breast, fears chemotherapy, believes breast cancer is a spiritual curse, or relies solely on unproven remedies. Breast cancer is a disease that requires timely and appropriate medical care.

We call on the public to seek reliable information and consult qualified healthcare professionals when breast symptoms arise. We call on families and communities to support - not stigmatise - people affected by breast cancer. We call on the media, religious and traditional leaders, civil society organisations and community leaders to use their influence to promote accurate information and encourage timely care-seeking.

We also call on healthcare professionals and health institutions to strengthen systems that reduce avoidable delays. **We encourage healthcare providers to assess, investigate and refer clients with breast symptoms promptly.** Every person diagnosed with breast cancer deserves access to evidence-based, patient-centred and comprehensive treatment.

A call to Action

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recognises the importance of both early detection and action, evidenced by the Global Breast Cancer initiative targets established in 2021. It aims to have at least 60% of all breast cancers diagnosed at an early stage of the disease, for diagnosis to be completed within 60 days, and for 80% of diagnosed patients to complete their treatment.

Let us ensure that breast cancer is diagnosed early through breast screening, breast symptoms are recognised and reported early, patients reach appropriate health facilities without unnecessary delay, and that everyone diagnosed with breast cancer has a fair opportunity to receive timely, quality and comprehensive care. This is a shared responsibility for every Ghanaian - individuals, families, communities, religious bodies, healthcare systems, policymakers, and government agencies.

Because early action can lead to earlier diagnosis. Earlier diagnosis can expand treatment options. Timely treatment can achieve a cure and improve survival outcomes.

Early Action. Better Outcomes.

The time to act is now.

Signed by



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