

BRIDGING THE GAP

Enhancing Equitable Access & Innovation in Lung Cancer Care in Kenya

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kenya faces significant challenges in lung cancer care, particularly in terms of infrastructure, early detection, and treatment access. While specialized centers are located in Nairobi, rural areas remain underserved. The high costs of treatment, limited research funding, and lack of a formal screening program contribute to late-stage diagnoses and poor survival rates.

This policy brief outlines the gaps in lung cancer care in Kenya and offers actionable policy recommendations to improve infrastructure, access to treatment, research funding, early detection, and palliative care across the country.

INTRODUCTION

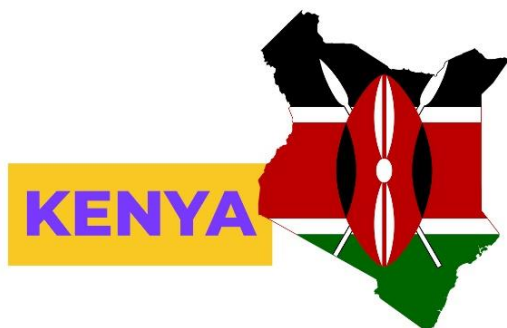
The Challenges of Lung Cancer Care in Kenya

Kenya's lung cancer care system is characterized by severe gaps in infrastructure, high treatment costs, and a lack of formal early detection programs. With the majority of specialized centers concentrated in Nairobi and treatment costs out of reach for many, particularly in rural areas, survival rates remain low. The country's overall lung cancer maturity level is classified as **Level 1 – Severe**.

This indicates that Kenya faces significant hurdles in building a comprehensive lung cancer care system that can provide equitable access to all citizens.



Kenya Ranks at Level 1 – Severe in the Lung Cancer Care Maturity Framework

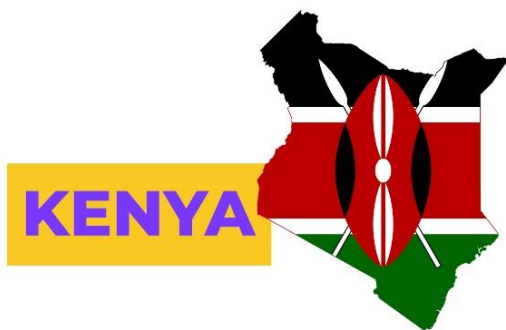


LUNG CANCER IN KENYA

Current Landscape and Systemic Gaps

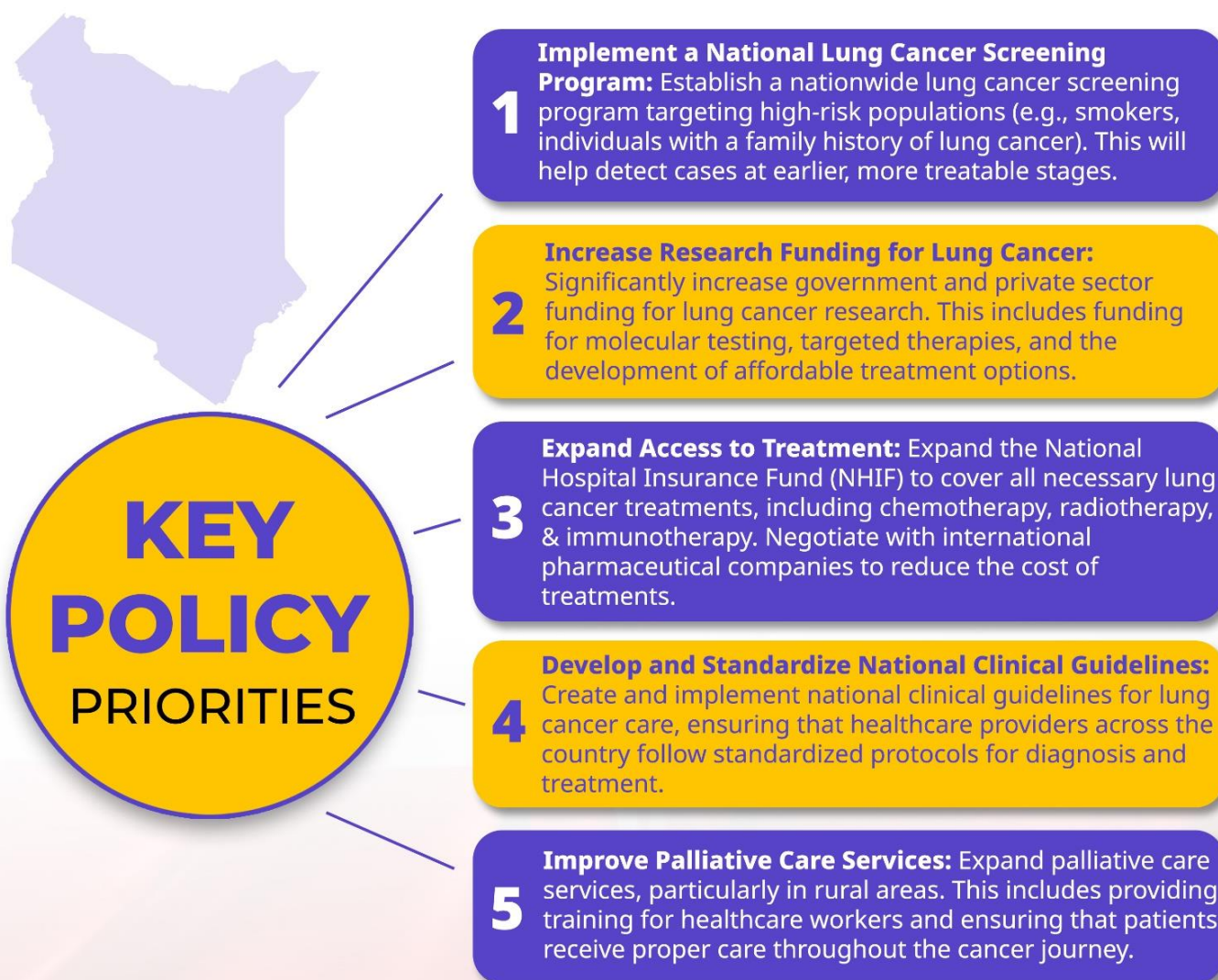
The following table outlines Kenya's strengths, systemic gaps, and proposed policy actions for each key pillar of lung cancer care:

Pillar	Current Status	Strength	Policy Action
Early Detection & Diagnosis	Lack of a formal lung cancer screening program, with late-stage diagnoses common (Stage III or IV).	Awareness efforts are emerging, but early detection is not widespread.	Implement a nationwide lung cancer screening program targeting high-risk individuals (e.g., smokers and those with a family history of lung cancer). Leverage community health workers to extend outreach.
Biomarker & Molecular Testing	Molecular testing infrastructure is lacking, with limited access to genetic profiling for lung cancer treatment.	Basic cancer care infrastructure exists in major cities, but access to specialized testing is sparse.	Invest in building molecular testing infrastructure and training healthcare workers to perform tests. Introduce mobile clinics to serve underserved areas.
Treatment Access	Treatment costs, including chemotherapy and radiotherapy, are prohibitively high for many. Only partial coverage exists under the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF).	A few specialized centers in Nairobi provide treatment, but affordability is a barrier for the majority of the population.	Expand NHIF coverage to include lung cancer treatments, including chemotherapy, targeted therapies, & immunotherapy. Partner with international organizations for financial support.
Clinical Guidelines	Clinical guidelines for lung cancer care are not consistently followed across the country.	Some guidelines exist in major hospitals, but there is no formal nationwide system for disseminating and adhering to them.	Develop and implement standardized national clinical guidelines for lung cancer treatment and ensure healthcare workers are trained to follow them.
Palliative & Survivorship Care	Palliative care services are underdeveloped and limited to a few centers in urban areas.	Some palliative care centers exist in Nairobi and Mombasa, but the reach is limited.	Expand palliative care services across the country, especially in underserved regions. Provide training and resources for healthcare providers to offer palliative care in all regions.



CONCLUSION & Call to Action

Kenya's lung cancer care system is facing severe gaps, which are contributing to high rates of late-stage diagnoses and poor survival outcomes. These gaps are exacerbated by the high costs of treatment, limited research funding, and a lack of early detection programs. Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for improvement. By implementing key policy actions focused on expanding treatment access, developing early detection programs, increasing research funding, and improving palliative care services, Kenya can take critical steps towards improving lung cancer care and outcomes for its citizens.



While Kenya's lung cancer care system is severely challenged, it has the potential for improvement with strategic policy actions. By focusing on early detection, treatment access, research funding, and palliative care, the country can create a more equitable and effective system for managing lung cancer. The government, healthcare providers, and international partners must collaborate to ensure that every Kenyan, regardless of where they live, has access to the care they need to fight lung cancer.