



CATHOLIC HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION

Spring Edition

September 2026

UPDATES

A SEASON OF RENEWAL: BRINGING HOPE, HEALING AND COMPASSION TO OUR COMMUNITIES

As nature begins again, **spring invites us to renew our commitment to caring for one another and to bringing hope and healing wherever it is needed most.** It is a season that reminds us that even after difficult times, there is always the possibility of new life, growth and renewal.

For Catholic health care, this season speaks beautifully to our calling to serve with **compassion, dignity and love.** Every act of care – whether comforting someone who is unwell, supporting a vulnerable family, visiting someone who feels alone, or advocating for better access to health services – can become a seed of hope in another person's life.

As flowers begin to bloom and the days grow warmer, may we also allow compassion to bloom within our communities. May this new season renew the strength of our healthcare workers, caregivers, faith communities, partners and volunteers who continue to serve those most in need.

This spring, may we plant kindness, nurture hope and continue growing healthier, stronger and more caring communities together.

67 MINUTES OF LOVE, DIGNITY AND UBUNTU: HOLY CROSS HBC CELEBRATES MANDELA DAY



In celebration of Mandela Day, Holy Cross Home-Based Care (HBC) dedicated its 67 minutes to supporting an elderly man who lives alone, without relatives or children to assist him.

The team cleaned and organised his home, spent meaningful time talking and sharing a meal with him, and offered much-needed companionship. Their visit provided far more than a clean and comfortable home – it brought care, dignity, human connection and a reminder that he is not forgotten.

Through this simple yet meaningful initiative, Holy Cross HBC embodied the true spirit of Ubuntu – “I am because we are.” It is a beautiful reminder that caring for vulnerable members of our communities does not always require grand gestures. Sometimes, giving our time, presence and compassion can make a profound difference in someone's life.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR HIV PREVENTION: CATHCA PARTICIPATES IN WRHI WORKSHOP

The CATHCA team participated in an insightful Community Advisory Board (CAB) Capacity Strengthening Workshop, organised by Wits RHI (WRHI) on 13–14 August 2026. The two-day workshop focused on Community Engagement and Demand Generation for PrEP Choice and Long-Acting LEN, strengthening participants' knowledge of the HIV prevention landscape and the importance of informed prevention choices.

The workshop provided an important platform for learning and practical engagement. Sessions explored prevention literacy, community engagement and peer support, respectful community entry, building trust, and responding to myths and misinformation using stigma-free language. Participants also took part in practical role-plays and discussions on how best to respond to community concerns.

Day two focused on turning prevention literacy into community action, including understanding the PrEP client journey, knowing different audiences, developing culturally appropriate messages and strengthening linkage to services.

For the CATHCA team, the workshop provided valuable insights that will contribute to strengthening our community engagement and health advocacy work and supporting communities to make informed choices about HIV prevention.



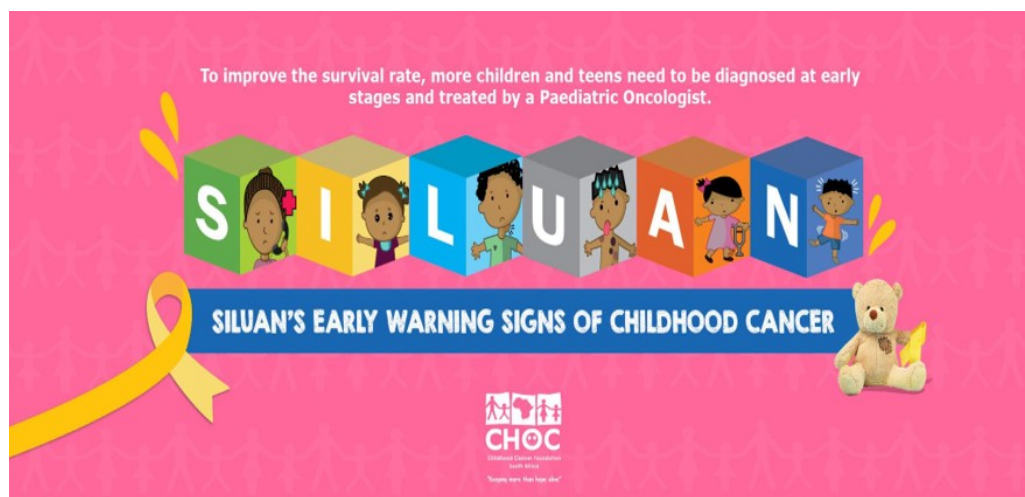
FROM RESISTANCE TO RESILIENCE: EMPOWERING THE CATHOLIC HEALTH CARE NETWORK

CATHCA continues to invest in strengthening the knowledge, skills and resilience of its Catholic Health Care Network. Through targeted learning opportunities, members across South Africa are being equipped to respond more effectively to emerging health and organisational challenges.

From Antimicrobial Resistance to Responsible Care
CATHCA members from Botswana, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and KZN joined the **National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD)** for an online workshop on

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). The training strengthened understanding of appropriate antibiotic use, AMR, Procalcitonin (PCT) testing and antimicrobial stewardship, with a focus on practical application in clinics, hospices, home-based care and outreach programmes.

From Financial Resistance to Organisational Resilience
Recognising that strong health services also require strong organisations, CATHCA partnered with **Inyathelo – The South African Institute for Advancement** to strengthen members' financial sustainability and resource mobilisation skills. Members from across seven provinces explored fundraising, donor engagement, partnerships and building sustainable support for community health services. This was followed by tailored financial advisory sessions to help organisations apply the learning to their own contexts.



From Awareness to Early Action on Childhood Cancer

The network also partnered with the **Childhood Cancer Foundation South Africa (CHOC)** for a virtual training on the **early warning signs of childhood cancer**. Members from North West, Eastern Cape, KZN, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Gauteng strengthened their understanding of childhood cancer, early warning signs,

referral pathways, myths and stigma, and psychosocial support for children and families.

The memorable **SILUAN** warning signs provided a simple tool for recognising when a child may need

urgent medical attention—from changes in the eye and unexplained lumps to prolonged fever, aching bones and neurological signs.

KEEPING OUR NPOs STRONG: GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE MATTER



Good governance, accountability and compliance are essential to building strong and sustainable NPOs. A recent Department of Social Development workshop highlighted the importance of maintaining accurate governance and financial records, updating office-bearer information and meeting reporting requirements.

An NPO can be compared to a **car**: its vision and mission provide direction, its people keep it moving, and compliance keeps it **roadworthy**.

Good governance is not just about ticking boxes — it builds **credibility, sustainability and trust**.

So, is your organisation roadworthy?

MENTAL HEALTH MINISTRY TAKES ROOT IN POLOKWANE DIOCESE

A parish-based Mental Health Ministry is taking root across the Diocese of Polokwane, bringing faith, compassion and practical support closer to local communities.

Following training workshops in April and May 2026, parish mental health ministers have begun putting what they learned into practice: raising awareness, opening up conversations about mental health and helping people find appropriate support when needed. Early activities have already taken place in several parishes, showing how the ministry is beginning to grow from the ground up.

Bishop MJ Masela has been a strong supporter from the outset, opening the first training and later celebrating Mass with participants. His presence and encouragement have helped give the ministry a firm pastoral home in the Diocese.

As the ministry grows across Polokwane's 15 parishes, its message is simple: people facing mental health challenges should not have to walk alone.



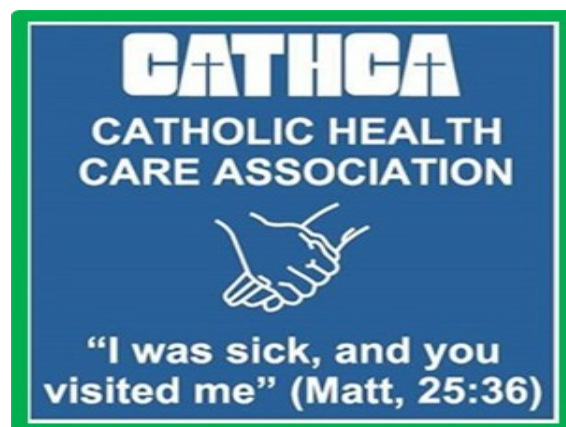
CATHCA is the Catholic Church's associate body for health in Botswana, eSwatini and South Africa. It is an affiliate of the Southern Africa Catholic Bishops' Conference. CATHCA has more than two hundred organisations as members. Currently, members are mainly community-based organisations working on issues related to HIV, tuberculosis and primary health care but also include health clinics and hospices run by religious sisters and a hospital in eSwatini. CATHCA is inspired by Matthew 25: 35-40 and particularly verse 36 "...I was sick and you took care of me." CATHCA is committed to serving the poor and the marginalised. It perseveres in providing compassionate health care in the spirit and service of Christ, even in the face of challenges and obstacles.

Vision

CATHCA envisions a world in which even the poorest individual has access to good quality and compassionate health care.

Mission

CATHCA exists to support and strengthen an evolving health care network of members serving the poor and marginalised, in collaboration with others.



GRASSROOTS VOICES TO HELP SHAPE SOUTH AFRICA'S HUMAN RIGHTS REVIEW

This October, grassroots realities will move closer to the national stage as CATHCA brings together 10 community-based non-governmental organisations from its network to help shape South Africa's human rights story.

Through focus group discussions, CATHCA will gather frontline evidence for its contribution to South Africa's fifth Universal Periodic Review (UPR), scheduled for November 2027. The UPR provides an important opportunity to highlight progress, persistent human rights gaps and areas requiring greater action.

Discussions will explore equitable access to quality healthcare; refugees, asylum seekers and migrants' access to basic services without discrimination, GBVF, children's rights, human trafficking, disability inclusion and the effects of poverty, food insecurity and inadequate water and sanitation.

By carrying evidence from the grassroots into the UPR process, CATHCA seeks to turn frontline experience into a powerful voice for accountability, stronger systems and meaningful change for those too often left at the margins.

The poster features the CATHCA logo at the top left with the tagline 'Together for a Just and Compassionate Society'. The main title 'GRASSROOTS VOICES' is in large, bold, yellow and white letters. Below it, the subtitle 'A STRONGER, MORE INCLUSIVE SOUTH AFRICA' is in white. The central image shows a group of people from behind, looking out over a cityscape at sunset. They are wearing shirts with the words 'COMMUNITY ACTION', 'HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL', 'STRONGER COMMUNITIES', and 'LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND'. To the right, a map of South Africa is shown with the text 'UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW SOUTH AFRICA' and 'FIFTH CYCLE NOVEMBER 2027'. Below the map, it says 'A key opportunity to highlight progress, persistent gaps and areas requiring greater action.' At the bottom, there is a row of icons representing various human rights issues: Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants; Gender-Based Violence and Femicide; Children's Rights; Human Trafficking; Equitable Access to Healthcare; Poverty, Food Security, Water and Sanitation; and Disability Inclusion. Each icon has a brief description of the issue. At the very bottom, the text 'From the ground up for a more just and inclusive South Africa.' is written in a stylized font, followed by the words 'LISTEN | INCLUDE | ADVOCATE | TRANSFORM'.

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