

CHOC Childhood Cancer Foundation South Africa

CHOC Childhood Cancer Foundation SA is a national organisation dedicated to providing assistance to children that are battling cancer or life-threatening blood disorders, and their families. CHOC was established in 1979 and has Divisions in: Johannesburg, Pretoria, Free State, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Eastern Cape and Western Cape.

CHOC recognises the inevitable disruption to family life when a child faces vigorous and often lengthy treatment and thus extends support to the families as well. CHOC aims to provide a fully integrated support programme to alleviate as much stress and strain as possible, ensuring that both the children and their families maintain an optimistic outlook that is so crucial to a positive outcome.

CHOC's goal is to improve the welfare and quality of care of children with cancer and offers families a wide range of psychosocial and practical support. With the children being treated at the specialist centres in major cities, many families need to travel long distances from home for treatment, often for extended periods. To assist them, CHOC has houses/lodges around the country to provide a "home away from home" for such families. Apart from the emotional and physical strain that goes with fighting a disease like cancer, CHOC also recognises the financial difficulties families often face too. We therefore assist families with practical support, such as funding for transport to ensure that no child abandons treatment because of a family not being able to afford transport costs.

CHOC further endeavours to contribute to creating world-class specialist treatment facilities through working closely with the medical staff to ensure that the medical and physical facilities in the centres are of a high standard and create a warm, child friendly environment; supporting health professionals in Paediatric Oncology to keep them at the leading edge of expertise; ensuring equality of treatment for all children through being an advocate for their cause; supporting research into studies investigating the causes and treatment of childhood cancer, and funding the childhood cancer registry. CHOC is committed to encouraging early detection and diagnosis as many children in our country are never diagnosed because their symptoms aren't recognized or are identified too late. We do this through promoting the Saint Siluan Warning Signs.

CHOC Western Cape

The CHOC Western Cape divisional office implements CHOC's programmes throughout the Western Cape, while working closely with and providing support to Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, Tygerberg Children's Hospital and Groote Schuur Hospital. A recent study conducted by the Tygerberg Hospital found that a large number of children in the Western Cape are undiagnosed, or diagnosed when the cancer has already advanced. If diagnosed early 70%-85% of children can be cured. CHOC therefore has a comprehensive awareness campaign

targeting communities, schools and clinics throughout the Western Cape to raise awareness and increase diagnosis.

CHOC Western Cape has three facilities that provide a 'home away from home' for disadvantaged families that travel long distances for treatment. The CHOC Lodge Tygerberg provides assistance to families receiving treatment at Tygerberg Children's Hospital, while the CHOC House Plumstead takes in families from Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital and Groote Schuur Hospital. Our newly acquired home in Bergvliet assists with the needs of the bone marrow transplant patients who need specific assistance for nine months or longer.

CHOC also assist these treatment centres to provide holistic care to the children. We've been instrumental in making the wards more child-friendly and have a dedicated volunteer programme that empowers the children while in hospital.

Seeing that more than 80% of the children come from disadvantaged backgrounds, CHOC Western Cape also assists with practical and nutritional support to the children and families, such as food, clothing, toiletries, and funding for transport to ensure that no child abandons treatment.

At CHOC we believe in keeping more than hope alive. We celebrate health and life, and empower our children to do the same under difficult circumstances.

