Rwanda is set to introduce brachytherapy, a targeted form of cancer treatment, as part of its accelerated effort to eliminate cervical cancer by 2027. The announcement came during a national review meeting held Tuesday in Kigali, timed to coincide with World Cancer Day.

Currently, the country relies on external beam radiotherapy available at Butaro Hospital and Kanombe Military Hospital. In this approach, radiation is delivered from a machine outside the body, passing through healthy tissues before reaching the tumor.

Brachytherapy, however, places a radiation source directly inside or near the tumor, allowing higher doses to be delivered more precisely and reducing exposure to surrounding organs.

Dr. Maniragaba Théoneste, Director of the cancer control unit at Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC), said the new treatment is expected to improve survival rates by concentrating radiation on the affected area. He added that medical staff have already been trained at Kanombe Military Hospital and that the service will soon be available to patients under national health insurance.

“We are now ready to begin providing brachytherapy, and patients who qualify will soon receive it,” Dr. Maniragaba said.

RBC said the country is making progress toward its 2027 goal, with 90% of eligible women vaccinated against HPV and 81% of symptomatic women screened. Yet the program still needs $27.8 million in funding, which the government is mobilizing with health partners.

Officials emphasized that early screening remains critical, warning that late diagnosis reduces the likelihood of recovery even when treatment options improve.