PRESS RELEASE

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BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH (BCAM) 2007 AIMS TO DRIVE GREATER PARTICIPATION IN EARLY SCREENING IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BREAST CANCER

Global statistics revealed that one in ten of all new cancer cases diagnosed worldwide each year is a cancer of the female breast. In Singapore, the number is rising. Do not succumb to your fear, do your mammogram today!

26 September 2007 (Singapore) - The Cancer Institute, National Healthcare Group (TCI) together with Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF), National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) and Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) will jointly launch the 10th BCAM on Saturday, 29 September 2007 at the Ulu Pandan Camp at 9.00 am.

BCAM is an international event held in October every year to create and increase the awareness of breast cancer - the most common cause of cancer-related deaths among women globally. According to the World Health Organisation, more than 1.2 million people will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year worldwide. Closer to home, there are about 1,100 new cases and about 270 deaths per year.

BCAM 2007’s key message anchors on the importance of screening and early detection of breast cancer. This unanimous focus has been the driving force behind the four organisations that formed the BCAM committee, which is chaired by TCI this year.

Dr Lim Siew Eng, BCAM 2007’s organising chairperson said, “The Singapore Cancer Registry shows that the incidence of breast cancer among women has been rising, with no sight of a plateau. Every day, three women have been diagnosed with breast cancer between 1988 to 2002.”

1 http://breast-cancer-research.com/content/6/6/229/abstract
Dr Lim, who is also the Senior Consultant Medical Oncologist at TCI@National University Hospital added, “Patients who are detected earlier can recover with adequate treatment. Hence, early detection is still one of the more successful and effective methods to reduce breast cancer incidence and mortality. We hope that BCAM can heighten awareness and improve participation rates in breast cancer screening. It is important that women take the first step in protecting themselves before anyone else can help her.”

For this, SCS has made the first step easier by organising discounted mammography screening, at rates ranging from $50 to $130, at various clinics and hospitals for ladies who meet the criteria.

Chairman of SCS Dr Koo Wen Hsin said, “In the past, cost was a main deterrent for women especially those from the lower income group. We hope this annual offer of discounts will enable more women to be screened. SCS will continue to strive to help those needy who are diagnosed with cancer in affording treatment. If detected early, breast cancer is a curable disease and in many developed countries, early detection and cure has led to a higher rate of survival.”

“BCF has come a long way in our fight against breast cancer and is a strong advocate of screening and detection. We are pleased with the increasing awareness and acceptance of such methods among the local females and hope that we can continue to impress the importance of regular screening”, said Mrs Noor Quek, a founding member and Treasurer of the Breast Cancer Foundation.

Dr Yong Wei Sean, NCCS’s Consultant Breast and General Surgeon added, “Prevention is better than cure. Besides good practice of regular screening, we want to encourage the public to adopt an active lifestyle through regular exercise and maintaining healthy eating habits such as limiting intake of high-fat food and keeping alcohol consumption moderate. Studies show that alcohol consumption and high-fat diet are associated with increased risk of breast cancer. These are important measures to reduce the risk of cancer and we should keep ourselves healthy to enjoy good quality of life.”
**Pink Ribbon Drive**

This year, BCAM 2007 Launch will kickoff with a car rally event ‘Pink Ribbon Drive’ where a fleet of vehicles decked out in BCAM’s theme colour will ply the roads to generate awareness among the public. There will also be awareness messages on the cars to ‘drive home’ the importance of early breast cancer detection. Each participant will be given a goodies bag worth $200 and the best-dressed car gets to drive away with $500 worth of prizes.

Our Guest-of-Honour, Mr Khaw Boon Wan, Minister of Health will flag off the entourage of participating vehicles which will be driven by breast cancer survivors and activists, with the National Healthcare Group Diagnostics’ Mammobus (a mobile mammography clinic) leading the way. Participants can expect lots of good fun and entertainment at the Opening Launch/Carnival such as the Treasure Hunt Race where clues and treasures are hidden in various parts of Singapore.

This year’s BCAM is endorsed by the Health Promotion Board, and supported with generous contributions from major sponsors Keratase, Mazda, Radlink Diagnostic Imaging, Sunbeam and Wacoal and co-sponsors AstraZeneca, Dunlop, Firestone, Harvey Norman, Marie France, Novartis and Roche.

**Annex 1  Calendar of Activities**
**Annex 2  Activities Highlights**
**Annex 3  List of medical centers & institutions offering Discounted Mammography**
**Annex 4  BCAM 2007 Sponsors List**
**About The Cancer Institute**
The Cancer Institute (TCI) of the National Healthcare Group (NHG) integrates the various cancer-related specialties at NHG, to provide comprehensive cancer services and programmes to tackle cancer. Its broad spectrum of cancer care ranges from public education, screening and early diagnosis, to treatment and long-term health maintenance. By utilising advanced therapies and facilities, drawing on the expertise of cancer specialists from different disciplines, patients are able to benefit from TCI’s high quality of inpatient and outpatient healthcare.

TCI@NUH is actively engaged in cancer research and experimental cancer therapeutics with the aim of providing better customised therapies for individual patients. Besides initiating their own research studies, TCI’s doctors collaborate with international research groups and partners in the pharmaceutical industries to conduct clinical trials on new and promising treatments for cancer.

Currently, TCI services are available at the National University Hospital, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Alexandra Hospital and NHG Polyclinics. We also collaborate with the general practitioners, clinical trial groups, hospices and cancer support groups to ensure that our patients receive the full continuum of care.

For more information, visit TCI’s website at www.tci.nhg.com.sg.

**About Breast Cancer Foundation**
Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF) is a non-profit charity organisation, established in October 1997. Under the leadership of its Patron, Mayor (Mrs) Yu-Foo Yee Shoon and her dedicated, enthusiastic executive committee comprising mostly lay people and some medical professionals, BCF’s mission is to: Eradicate breast cancer as a life-threatening disease.

Breast cancer, if detected early, can save lives and breast. BCF hopes that by raising awareness of breast cancer and encouraging women to screen regularly, breast cancer will be detected earlier and the chances of surviving the disease will be greatly enhanced. For more information, please visit BCF website at www.bcf.org.sg.

**About The National Cancer Centre Singapore**
The National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) is a leading national and regional comprehensive cancer centre, committed to excellence in clinical services, research and education and has a tradition of a high standard of delivery. Adopting a multidisciplinary and holistic approach to cancer care, NCCS not only diagnoses and treats but also provides a whole spectrum of allied health services from psychological and social counselling to an array of support groups and therapeutic programmes to assist our patients in their recovery.

NCCS has Singapore's largest talent pool of internationally qualified oncologists working together to improve the quality of life for patients and their family, houses state-of-the-art equipment and employs the latest therapies including personalised and targeted therapies, which maximise outcomes and minimise undesirable side effects.

The centre is also home to the Humphrey Oei Institute of Cancer Research whose researchers and investigators devote their energies to generate outcomes that can bring the results from bench to bedside. Actively collaborating with other world-class cancer centres and institutions to share and acquire the latest knowledge on cancer, NCCS strives to translate groundbreaking discoveries into innovative care and treatment for the patients. For more information, visit NCCS website at www.nccs.com.sg
About Singapore Cancer Society
Established in 1964, the Singapore Cancer Society is a self-funding voluntary welfare organisation on a mission to prevent and control cancer, and enhance health and quality of life in the community through education, research and patient care services. We have since assumed a leading role in the promotion of cancer prevention and control through education and research.

Today, our services have extended to include looking after the special needs of cancer patients and their families. This include the provision of financial assistance to needy cancer stricken families, continual support for cancer survivors, rehabilitation care for patients receiving treatment, and home medical care for terminally ill cancer patients.

For more information, please visit SCS website at www.singaporecancersociety.org.sg.

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