



## **Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF) funded nearly 50,000 fully subsidised mammogram screenings for low-income women over the past six years**

- *BCF to extend the Breast Cancer Foundation Encouragement for Active Mammogram (BEAM15) programme after success of having provided nearly 50,000 fully subsidised mammogram screenings in Singapore since 2013.*
- *Over six years, BEAM15 funded nearly 11,000 first-time screeners and more than 39,000 repeat screenings.*
- *Between 2013 and 2016, almost 200 cases of breast cancer were detected through BEAM.*
- *With the provision of BEAM, we also saw a 160% increase in take up of mammogram screenings under BEAM from 1,773 in 2014 to 4,655 in 2015.*

**Singapore, 15 July 2019** – Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF), announced today that it will extend its successful Breast Cancer Foundation Encouragement for Active Mammograms (BEAM15) programme. BEAM15 was launched in partnership with Health Promotion Board (HPB) in 2013 and has provided free mammogram screenings for nearly 50,000 low-income Singaporean women. With the extension, BCF will provide \$1 million to fund at least another 20,000 mammograms in the next two years. Henceforth, the programme will be known simply as BEAM.

Since the programme's inception, BCF has funded over \$2 million in mammogram screenings across 20 centres under National Healthcare Group Diagnostics (NHGD), and SingHealth polyclinics located island-wide as well as on the Mammobus. BEAM15 operates broadly under the guidelines of BreastScreen Singapore (BSS).

BEAM15 has achieved its objective of increasing the uptake of mammogram screening amongst low-income women who are age 50 and above. Between 2013 and 2016, almost 200 cases of breast cancer were detected through BEAM. BCF has always advocated that early detection saves lives and saves breasts and because of BEAM15, we have helped 85% of the

stricken participants detect their breast cancer early (at Stages 1 and 2), which is crucial for significantly improved survivorship rates.

Through the course of the programme, a total of 49,906 mammogram screenings were funded with a 40% increase in first-time and repeat screeners. 2018 recorded 11,288 mammogram screenings, compared to 8,059 in 2013 when the programme first started. BEAM15 also recorded nearly 10,877 (21.8%) first-time screeners as compared to 39,029 (78.2%) repeat screeners. Of the total screenings given in 2018, 78% of them were received by Chinese women, 13.4% by Malay women, 7.7% by Indian women and 0.9% by women of other ethnicities in Singapore.

“When I was younger and working, I had colleagues who had breast cancer and saw what they had to undergo during treatment. That made me realise that my health is my responsibility and I used to have to pay for the mammogram. So when I received the letter for a free mammogram, I immediately went and did it quickly because I know early detection is very important. Better to know early than find out at Stage 4! Now, when every two years is up, I will go and do it and I also encourage all my friends to go for one too!” said Ms Quah, 60, homemaker and mother of two, who has received two free mammograms under BEAM15.

Mrs Noor Quek, President, BCF said, “Breast cancer can happen to anyone, and early detection of the condition is crucial for all women regardless of background. BCF is pleased with the impact brought about by BEAM15 and we are committed to continue this success with an added \$1 million funding for the next two years under BEAM. We are grateful for the support from our partners as we work hand-in-hand to help low-income women in Singapore gain equal access to mammogram screenings. We are very heartened to see more women take up screenings for the first time, and also for repeat screeners who are doing this regularly. BCF continues to empower women to take charge of their breast health through our efforts, including the Community Mammobus Programme, that not only makes mammogram screenings affordable to women in Singapore, it brings screenings to their doorsteps.”

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in Singapore. To detect breast cancer early, it is recommended that women carry out regular breast self-examinations every month. In addition, women of age 50 years old and above should go for bi-annual mammogram screening.

Recognised as a societal issue that impacts survivors, their families, and the communities around them, BCF has established befriending and psychosocial support programmes for patients, their caregivers – both male and females, family members, partners and employers. Leading the charge on BCF’s breast cancer education and advocacy on early detection is newly appointed General Manager, Mr David Fong, who brings with him years of experience in commercial, government, not-for-profit and faith-based organisations.

BEAM15 is one aspect of BCF’s extensive efforts to encourage early detection of breast cancer through regular breast checks to save lives. Women here can also participate in the Community Mammobus Programme (CMP) that was launched by BCF, Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) and NHGD in 2018. Under CMP, mammogram screenings are offered on the Mammobus at no charge for eligible Singaporeans who screen for the first time, and eligible Singaporean re-screeners and Permanent Residents who are eligible can receive funding assistance to offset part of the cost of screening. More information on CMP can be found at <https://www.bcf.org.sg/our-services/community-mammobus-programme/>.

More information about BEAM can be found in Annex 1 below.

[End]

### **About BCF**

Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF) is a non-profit organisation with the mission to eradicate breast cancer as a life-threatening disease. Set up in 1997, BCF is committed to raising awareness about breast cancer through talks, events and publications that advocate early detection through regular screening, as well as supporting survivors and their families through various befriending, training and wellness activities. As one of the few advocacy groups in the world with a Men’s Support League that was integrated with Caregiver Support Group in year 2017, BCF aims to encourage greater male participation in society’s fight against this affliction.

For more information, please visit [www.bcf.org.sg](http://www.bcf.org.sg). For updates on BCF’s latest work and initiatives, follow BCF at @bcf.pink (Facebook) and @bcfsg (Instagram).

**For media enquiries, please contact:**

<p>Mazuin Khamis Assistant Manager PR &amp; Communications Email: <a href="mailto:mazuin@bcf.org.sg">mazuin@bcf.org.sg</a> Tel: (65) 6833 4736/ (65) 9677 0259</p>	<p>Dawn Teo Account Manager Email: <a href="mailto:dawn.teo@havas.com">dawn.teo@havas.com</a> Tel: 9623 0369</p>	<p>Nicole Tan Senior Account Executive Email: <a href="mailto:nicole.tan@havas.com">nicole.tan@havas.com</a> Tel: 9615 0920</p>
--	--	---

## **Annex 1 – Factsheet**

### **Eligibility criteria for BEAM**

	<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>
Nationality	Singapore citizens (women only)
Age	Aged 50 years and above (based on year of birth)
Screening History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First screen: Have never had a mammogram or</li> <li>• Rescreen: Recent mammogram was two or more years ago</li> </ul>
Cardholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a valid Community Health Assist Scheme card (either blue or orange) or</li> <li>• Have a valid Community Health Assist Scheme card (either blue or orange) and a valid Pioneer Generation card for those aged 65 and above</li> <li>• Have a valid Community Health Assist Scheme card (either blue or orange) and a valid Merdeka Generation card for those born from 1 January 1950 to 31 December 1959</li> </ul>
Other Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not be pregnant</li> </ul>

**BEAM is available at BreastScreen Singapore (BSS) Centres operated by:**

#### National Healthcare Group Diagnostics (NHGD)

▪ <a href="#">Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic</a>	▪ Mammobus
▪ <a href="#">Bukit Batok Polyclinic</a>	▪ Pioneer Polyclinic
▪ <a href="#">Choa Chu Kang Polyclinic</a>	▪ Queenstown Polyclinic
▪ <a href="#">Clementi Polyclinic</a>	▪ <a href="#">Toa Payoh Polyclinic</a>
▪ Geylang Polyclinic	▪ <a href="#">Woodlands Polyclinic</a>
▪ <a href="#">Hougang Polyclinic</a>	▪ <a href="#">Yishun Polyclinic</a>
▪ <a href="#">Jurong Polyclinic</a>	

## SingHealth

▪ Bedok Polyclinic	▪ Punggol Polyclinic
▪ Bukit Merah Polyclinic	▪ Sengkang Polyclinic (expected to resume mammogram service in mid-2020)
▪ Outram Polyclinic	▪ Tampines Polyclinic
▪ Pasir Ris Polyclinic	

- **Community Mammobus Programme**

Updated locations can be found at <https://www.bcf.org.sg/our-services/community-mammobus-programme/>