

MEDIA RELEASE

29 September 2023

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BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH LAUNCHES WITH CALL TO GENERAL PRACTITIONERS AND THE COMMUNITY TO PROMOTE SCREENING FOR EARLY DETECTION

*Family doctors roped in for the first time to promote screening
for breast cancer as early detection remains critical*

SINGAPORE — In line with the nationwide Healthier SG preventive health initiative, general practitioners (GPs) will be roped in, for the first time, for Breast Cancer Awareness Month (BCAM) 2023. Breast cancer will also feature as a topic at Healthier SG roadshows in the next two months.

BCAM begins on 1 October 2023, with this year's campaign theme "Keeping Her In The Picture" as a call for people to keep in mind the women in their lives and encourage them to go for breast cancer screening if they are eligible. If you are a woman yourself, you should also keep your loved ones in the picture by going for screening and/or doing monthly breast self-examination.

Women aged 50 to 69 are recommended to go for mammograms once every two years. Those aged 40 to 49 should go for annual mammogram screening after a discussion with their doctors.

To illustrate this year's theme, a heart-shaped pink frame measuring 2.2m by 2.2m was unveiled at a press conference held at the National University Health System Tower Block on 29 September.

The National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) is the chair of this year's BCAM national campaign, launched in collaboration with agencies and institutions, namely the Breast Cancer Foundation, Health Promotion Board, SingHealth Duke-NUS Breast Centre, Singapore Cancer Society and Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

To spread the message of regular breast cancer screening, patients and members of the public are encouraged to take their pictures with this BCAM frame which will be sited at the National University Hospital Medical Centre as well as at selected partner sites for the month of October.

Members of the public are encouraged to download and use pink digital frames for their photographs by searching for "@ncisnuhs" on the Instagram Stories stickers panel.

Together, the BCAM agencies and institutes are calling for the community, especially key partners such as primary care physicians, to join the fight against breast cancer

by empowering women and their loved ones to “keep her in the picture” and take charge of their breast health by prioritising regular mammogram screening.

Screening rates among Singapore women

Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer for women here. It accounted for three in 10 cancer cases among women from 2017 to 2021, based on the Singapore Cancer Registry's annual report for 2021.

The disease is more common in women aged 50 and above and the risk increases with age.

The National Population Health Survey 2022 noted that close to two-fifths, or 37.6 per cent, of Singapore women aged 50 to 69 reported that they had gone for mammography in the last two years, an increase from 31.1 per cent in 2021. This suggested that screening rate is returning to pre-COVID-19 level, which was at 38.7 per cent in 2019.

For the five-year period from 2017 to 2021, the age-standardised incidence rate of breast cancer was 74.6 per 100,000 women. It was the leading cause of cancer death among females in that period, accounting for 17.2 per cent of cancer deaths among women.

Assistant Professor Samuel Ow, Chairman of BCAM 2023 Organising Committee and Senior Consultant, Department of Haematology-Oncology, NCIS, said: “We are taking an enormous, proactive step towards preventive health with Healthier SG, and there is no better time than now to enlist the support of our GPs and the community in the fight against breast cancer. For Singapore citizens enrolled in Healthier SG, the mammogram screening is fully subsidised, and we encourage all eligible women to check with their enrolled Healthier SG clinic when they are due for their next screening.”

Dr Nelson Wee, Deputy Head of Primary Care at Healthway Medical Group which has over 60 clinics islandwide, said: “A GP is everyone’s family doctor and the first line of contact for many patients. As a GP, I see it as my duty to inform my female patients about breast cancer screening and dispel any myths that they may have about undergoing a mammogram.

“Even if a woman is given the all-clear in previous years, she cannot be complacent and should continue to go for regular screening, which has been shown to be most effective when done regularly and at the appropriate intervals. GPs can help to remind these women to do just that.”

Quotes from BCAM 2023 agencies and institutions

Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF)

"For years, breast cancer is perceived as mainly a woman's issue and having little or nothing to do with men. But in line with this year's national campaign theme "Keeping Her In The Picture", the role of men takes on a newfound significance in the fight against breast cancer. The resounding, heartfelt call of 'Dear Men' from Breast Cancer Foundation serves to encourage men to talk about breast health, in urging the women they hold dear – mothers, sisters, daughters and other loved ones – to prioritise breast cancer screening. BCF is committed to advocate to both men and women through our outreach and education for awareness, early detection, and support for the breast cancer community. With BCF's signature events like Pink Ribbon Walk, we are rallying the community around *her*. Women battling breast cancer should feel unwavering support and strength from men in their lives: partners, dads, brothers, sons. The goal is for breast cancer to be merely words, not a life sentence, and saving lives via early detection should be a collective effort by men, the community, and women alike."

Ms Natalie Lau, Head of Advocacy and Communications, Breast Cancer Foundation

Health Promotion Board (HPB)

"The best way to protect oneself from breast cancer is to go for regular mammograms. Women who are 50 years old and above are recommended to go for a mammogram once every two years. Women who are 40 to 49 years old should screen annually for breast cancer, provided they have consulted their doctor and discussed the benefits and limitations of mammography with them. Early detection and timely treatment of breast cancer can improve health outcomes.

Although 96 per cent of Singapore female residents are aware of the importance of mammogram screening, only two-fifth or 37.6 per cent eligible women aged 50 to 69 years old had gone for screening in the past two years. Through the Screen for Life (SFL) programme, we have increased the accessibility and affordability of breast cancer screening. Eligible Singapore citizens enrolled in Healthier SG can also receive free breast cancer screening at participating SFL centres. We will continue our efforts to encourage women to take preventive steps and go for regular mammogram screening."

Mr Simon Lim, Group Director of Outreach, Health Promotion Board

Singapore Cancer Society (SCS)

"During BCAM, our outreach efforts span across Singapore, with advertisements prominently displayed at MRT stations and bus interchanges to promote SCS' \$25 mammogram funding assistance. Throughout the year, SCS Clinic @ Bishan provides mammograms at no cost to individuals holding blue and orange CHAS cards. Furthermore, our Community Mammobus Programme offers this vital service at subsidised rates. In November, SCS is expanding its footprint in the North of Singapore with the inauguration of SCS Survivorship Centre at Woods Square. This centre will serve as a sanctuary for cancer survivors to congregate, share concerns, and partake

in enriching activities to foster psychosocial and physical well-being. The new centre will complement our existing facilities, including the SCS Rehabilitation Centres at the National Cancer Centre Singapore and Jurong Medical Centre. We are committed to serving more communities in different parts of Singapore so that no one has to fight cancer alone.”

Mr Albert Ching, Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Cancer Society

Singapore Health Services (SingHealth)

“Early detection saves lives. According to the Joint Breast Cancer Registry report in April 2019, approximately 78 per cent of breast cancer in Singaporean women were diagnosed in early stages. Diagnosing breast cancer in the early stages potentially reduces the morbidity of breast cancer surgery and improves survival. At SingHealth Duke-NUS Breast Centre, our team of breast specialists encourage women to get screened and empower them to take charge of their breast health, as we journey with them from detection and diagnosis, to treatment and survivorship.”

Assistant Professor Mok Chi Wei, Organising Chair of SingHealth BCAM 2023 and Consultant at the Division of Breast Surgery, Changi General Hospital and SingHealth Duke-NUS Breast Centre

Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH)

“When it comes to health, women often prioritise their loved ones over themselves. This year’s theme of ‘Keeping Her In The Picture’ is an appropriate and timely reminder for carers, such as family and friends, to support women in their quest for breast health through increased education, encouragement, and understanding of various breast conditions – and eventually having them take an active step in breast screening. With Healthier SG, I am confident that more women will step forward and go for screenings, with the waiver of fees for eligible women. Tan Tock Seng Hospital, together with the National Healthcare Group, will ramp up our education efforts in getting more women to get screened.”

Adjunct Assistant Professor Juliana Chen, Senior Consultant, Breast & Endocrine Surgery, Department of General Surgery, Tan Tock Seng Hospital and Central Health

Chinese Glossary

National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS)	新加坡国立大学癌症中心 (国大癌症中心)
Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF)	乳癌基金会
Health Promotion Board (HPB)	保健促进局
Singapore Cancer Society (SCS)	新加坡防癌协会
Singapore Health Services (SingHealth)	新加坡保健服务集团
Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH)	陈笃生医院
Assistant Professor Samuel Ow Chairman Breast Cancer Awareness Month (BCAM) 2023 Organising Committee	欧冠伟助理教授 主席 2023 年乳癌意识月组委会
Senior Consultant Department of Haematology-Oncology National University Cancer Institute, Singapore	高级顾问医生 肿瘤血液科 新加坡国立大学癌症中心
Ms Natalie Lau Head of Advocacy and Communications Breast Cancer Foundation	刘韶芸 宣传和传播主管 乳癌基金会
Mr Simon Lim Group Director, Outreach Health Promotion Board	林瑞财 外展署署长 保健促进局
Mr Albert Ching Chief Executive Officer Singapore Cancer Society	钟良兴 首席执行官 新加坡防癌协会
Assistant Professor Mok Chi Wei Consultant Division of Breast Surgery Changi General Hospital SingHealth Duke-NUS Breast Centre	莫继伟助理教授 顾问医生 乳腺外科部门 樟宜综合医院 新保集团杜克-国大乳腺中心
Organising Chair SingHealth Breast Cancer Awareness Month 2023	组织主席 新加坡保健服务集团年乳癌意识月组委会 2023
Adjunct Assistant Professor Juliana Chen Senior Consultant	陈佳纯客座助理教授 高级顾问医生

<p>Breast & Endocrine Surgery, Department of General Surgery Tan Tock Seng Hospital and Central Health</p> <p>Adjunct Assistant Professor, National University of Singapore Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine</p>	<p>乳腺外科 普通外科部门 陈笃生医院和中区社康联盟</p> <p>客座助理教授 新加坡国立大学杨潞医学院</p>
<p>Dr Nelson Wee General Practitioner Deputy Head of Primary Care Healthway Medical Group</p>	<p>黄伟杰 家庭医生 保健护理副主管 康威医疗集团</p>



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About the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS)

The National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) is an academic, national specialist centre for cancer under the National University Health System (NUHS), and is the only public cancer centre in Singapore that treats both paediatric and adult cancers in one facility.

As one of two national cancer centres in Singapore, NCIS (*pronounced as "n-sis"*) offers a broad spectrum of cancer care and management from screening, diagnosis and treatment, to rehabilitation and survivorship, as well as palliative and long-term care. NCIS' strength lies in the multi-disciplinary approach taken by our clinician-scientists and clinician-investigators to develop a comprehensive and personalised plan for each cancer patient.

NCIS provides the full suite of specialised oncology and haematology services at the NUH Medical Centre at Kent Ridge, Singapore, including those by the NCIS Chemotherapy Centre, NCIS Radiotherapy Centre and NCIS Cellular Therapy Centre.

NCIS also offers cancer services at other hospitals in Singapore:

- NCIS Cancer & Blood Clinic @ Ng Teng Fong General Hospital
- NCIS Radiotherapy Centre @ Tan Tock Seng Hospital
- NCIS Radiotherapy Clinic @ Khoo Teck Puat Hospital.

To bring cancer care even closer to our patients, our NCIS on the Go programme delivers a range of cancer services at clinics within the community for their convenience. For more information, please visit www.ncis.com.sg.

About the Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF)

Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF) is a social service agency in Singapore that aims to promote early detection of breast cancer and support the breast cancer community.

Established in 1997, BCF raises breast cancer awareness through talks, outreach events, research, and publications. It also provides psychosocial programs such as Healing Through The Arts (HTTA), support groups, and befriending activities for those affected by breast cancer. Subsidies are available to women with low income for prostheses and bras through its Positive Image and Appearance Scheme, and it runs a complimentary wig loan program.

BCF is self-funded and depends on public donations to provide quality services and programs. The organization runs Singapore's first flagship Breast Cancer Centre, and the satellite Breast Cancer Support Centre @ Khoo Teck Puat hospital.

For more information, visit www.bcf.org.sg. For updates on BCF's latest work and initiatives, follow BCF at @BreastCancerFoundationSg (Facebook), @bcfsg (Instagram), and Breast Cancer Foundation (LinkedIn).

About the Health Promotion Board (HPB)

The Health Promotion Board (HPB) was established as a statutory board under the Ministry of Health, Singapore, in 2001 with the vision of building "A Nation of Healthy

People". HPB aims to empower Singaporeans to attain optimal health, increase the quality and years of healthy life and prevent illness, disability and premature death. As the key agency overseeing national health promotion and disease prevention programmes, HPB spearheads health education, promotion and prevention programmes as well as creates a health-supportive environment in Singapore. It develops and organises health promotion and disease prevention programmes, reaching out to the healthy, the at-risk and the unhealthy at all stages of life – children, youths, adults and older Singapore residents. Its health promotion initiatives cover nutrition, physical activity, mental well-being, health screening, tobacco control and communicable disease education.

More information can be found at www.hpb.gov.sg

About the Singapore Cancer Society (SCS)

Established in 1964, the Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) is a self-funded social service agency which provides care services to cancer patients in need in areas such as cancer control and prevention, patient support services, and palliative care. SCS key services include cancer screening programmes, public education, financial and welfare services, psychosocial support, rehabilitation programmes and hospice care. For more information, please visit www.singaporecancersociety.org.sg

About the Singapore Health Services (SingHealth)

SingHealth, Singapore's largest public healthcare cluster, is committed to providing affordable, accessible and quality healthcare to patients. With a network of acute hospitals, national specialty centres, polyclinics and community hospitals offering over 40 clinical specialties, it delivers comprehensive, multidisciplinary and integrated care. Beyond hospital walls, SingHealth partners community care providers to enable the population to keep well, get well and live well. As part of the SingHealth Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre, SingHealth also focuses on advancing education and research to continuously improve care outcomes for patients. For more information, please visit: www.singhealth.com.sg

Members of the SingHealth group

Hospitals (Tertiary Specialty Care):

Singapore General Hospital, Changi General Hospital, Sengkang General Hospital and KK Women's and Children's Hospital

National Specialty Centres (Tertiary Specialty Care):

National Cancer Centre Singapore, National Dental Centre Singapore, National Heart Centre Singapore, National Neuroscience Institute, and Singapore National Eye Centre

SingHealth Polyclinics (Primary Care):

Bedok, Bukit Merah, Eunos, Marine Parade, Outram, Pasir Ris, Punggol, Sengkang, Tampines, Tampines North and Kaki Bukit (expected completion: 2026)

SingHealth Community Hospitals (Intermediate and Long-term Care):



Bright Vision Community Hospital, Sengkang Community Hospital, and Outram Community Hospital

About the Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH)

Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) is the flagship hospital of the National Healthcare Group, Singapore. As a pioneering hospital with strong roots in the community for 179 years, TTSH is recognised as the People's Hospital, serving a population of a million residents living in Central Singapore.

We work closely with our primary and community care partners to build Communities of Care in every neighbourhood. Together, we bring care beyond the hospital into the community as an integrated care network – Central Health.

As one of the largest multi-disciplinary hospitals in Singapore, TTSH operates 2000 beds with centres of excellence including the National Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCID), Institute for Geriatrics & Active Ageing (IGA), NHG Eye Institute (NHGEI) and TTSH Rehabilitation Centre. TTSH is set to open a 600-bed Integrated Care Hub in 2023 to advance recovery and rehabilitative care.

As a healthcare leader in population health, systems innovation, health technologies and workforce transformation, TTSH hosts Singapore's largest purpose-built innovation centre for healthcare - the Ng Teng Fong Centre for Healthcare Innovation (CHI) and its Co-Learning Network of 85 local and international partners and affiliates.

Annex

BCAM 2023 Calendar of Events

Talks & Webinars

- 1. Breast Cancer Awareness Month Carnival**
By Yishun Health
1 October 2023, 8.30am – 1pm
Tzu Chi Humanistic Youth Centre
30A Yishun Central 1, Singapore 768796
- 2. Cancer Education & Information Services**
By National Cancer Centre Singapore
7 October 2023, 10am – 11am
Via Zoom
- 3. Women's Wellness: Focusing on Breast and Cervical Cancers**
By Jurong Medical Centre
7 October 2023, 10am – 1pm
Jurong Medical Centre
60 Jurong West Central 3, Singapore 648346
- 4. Breast & Colorectal Cancer Awareness Public Forum 2023**
By Tan Tock Seng Hospital
7 October 2023, 2pm – 5pm
Centre for Healthcare Innovation (CHI), Level 4 Auditorium
18 Jalan Tan Tock Seng Singapore 308433
- 5. Raising Breast Cancer Awareness**
By Parkway College
10 October 2023, 12pm – 4pm
Parkway College
80 Bendemeer Road #02-02, Singapore 339949
- 6. "Time to Look at Yours" Breast Cancer Awareness Webinar (English)**
Jointly organised by all partners
14 October 2023, 10am – 12.30pm
Via Zoom
- 7. "Time to Look at Yours" Breast Cancer Awareness Webinar (Mandarin)**
Jointly organised by all partners
14 October 2023, 2pm – 3.30pm
Via Zoom
- 8. Breast Cancer Awareness Talk (Malay) & Health Carnival**
Jointly organised by National University Cancer Institute, Singapore, National
Cancer Centre Singapore and Singapore Cancer Society
21 October 2023, 11.30am – 5.30pm

Geylang Wisma Serai
Persada Budaya, Level 1
1 Engku Aman Turn, Singapore 408528

Mammogram Funding Support/Activities

T&Cs apply*

- 1. \$10 Additional Mammogram Funding Assistance**
By National University Cancer Institute, Singapore
1 October – 31 December 2023
At participating Polyclinics:
(a) Bukit Batok Polyclinic
(b) Clementi Polyclinic
(c) Pioneer Polyclinic
By appointment only
- 2. \$25 Mammogram Funding Assistance**
By Singapore Cancer Society
1 October – 30 November 2023
Participating screening centres
By appointment only
- 3. Community Mammobus**
By Breast Cancer Foundation
27 October 2023, 9am – 4pm
Block 447 / 448 Sing Ming Ave Carpark
By appointment only
- 4. Breast Screening on Mammobus**
By National University Cancer Institute, Singapore
28 – 29 October 2023 & 4 – 5 November 2023, 9am – 4pm
Jurong Medical Centre
60 Jurong West Central 3, Singapore 648346
By appointment only

Exercise Sessions

- 1. Fit & Fab with NCIS**
By National University Cancer Institute, Singapore
20 October 2023, 7.45pm – 9.15pm
Atrium outside The Frontier CC
60 Jurong West Central 3, Singapore 648346
- 2. SingHealth "JumPink"**
By Singapore Health Services
22 October 2023, 10am – 12pm
Urban Park, Guoco Tower, Office Lobby Level 1
1 Wallich St, Singapore 078881
- 3. Pink Ribbon Walk**
By Breast Cancer Foundation

29 October 2023, 8am – 12pm
Marina Bay Sands Events Plaza

Other Activities

- 1. SingHealth BCAM 2023 Opening Ceremony**
By Singapore Health Services
30 September 2023, 11.30am to 4.30pm
National Cancer Centre Singapore, Lecture Theatre, Level 1
30 Hospital Boulevard, Singapore 168583
- 2. Pink Light Up**
By Breast Cancer Foundation
30 September 2023 – 31 Oct 2023
National Gallery & various locations island wide
- 3. Bowyers Block *Pink* Light Up**
By Singapore Health Services
1 October 2023, 7pm
Singapore General Hospital, Bowyers Block & Museum
Light-up Period: 1 – 25 October 2023
- 4. BCAM Roadshow 2023**
By National Cancer Centre Singapore
28 October 2023, 9am – 3pm
Kovan Event Hall
- 5. SingHealth BCAM Booth at Great Eastern Women Run Event**
By Singapore Health Services
29 October 2023, 6.45am – 11am
Singapore Sports Hub

