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சுகாதாரம் அமைச்சு
Ministry of Health

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எனது இல) NCCP/CPED/GOSL/36/2024
My No.)

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Your No. :)

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திகதி) 11.07.2024
Date)

General Circular No:

All Provincial Directors of Health Services (PDHS)
All Regional Directors of Health Services (RDHS)
All Heads of Institutions
Medical Officers of Health (MOOH)

World Breast Cancer Awareness Month – October 2024

Breast cancer is the most common cancer detected among females both globally and locally. According to the National Cancer Registry-Sri Lanka-2021, out of all female cancers 27% were breast cancers accounting to 5485. Among males, 124 new cases of breast cancer were identified. Over the years, the incidence of breast cancer is on the rise.

Breast cancer awareness month is an annual international health campaign organized every October to increase awareness of breast cancer, encourage early detection, refer for prompt treatment and support those affected by the disease. The importance of early detection is, when detected at an early-stage breast cancer could be completely treated.

Early detection of breast cancers is facilitated by the following,

- Raising public awareness on symptoms and signs of breast abnormalities
(‘බව විසින්, බව වෙනුවෙන්’) (Annex I)
- Self-Breast Examination (SBE)
- Clinical Breast Examination (CBE)

The services for early detection of breast cancers are available at the Well Women Clinics and Healthy Life-style Centres throughout the country. In addition, Breast clinics established at selected tertiary/ secondary care hospitals supplement the early detection programme (Annex II). The backup diagnostic modalities, namely mammography services (Annex III) and pathological laboratory services are available and expanded throughout the country to accelerate the process of diagnosis of breast cancer.

The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) is always working with multiple stakeholders to promote awareness and improve early detection of breast cancer. The main activity planned for this year is a series of island wide walks promoting awareness throughout the month. The NCCP has developed special health promotional material for this campaign with the support of external stakeholders.

All hospitals, Medical Officers of Health, Medical Officers in Charge of Primary Medical Care Institutions are requested to conduct the activities mentioned below in your area with the support of the Regional Director of Health Services (RDHS), Consultant Community Physicians, Medical Officer/Maternal & Child Health (MO/MCH), Medical Officer/Non-Communicable Diseases (MO/NCD) and Regional Supervising Public Health Nursing Officers (RSPHNO).


1. Three awareness raising walks per district need to be arranged through the RDHS Office. MO/NCD in each district will act as the focal point and all the government health institutions (line ministry and provincial) in the district must provide fullest cooperation for this activity. The NCCP must be informed about the dates of all walks beforehand. **It is mandatory that each walk consists of at least 100 participants.** NCCP will provide necessary funds to procure refreshments for 300 participants per district through the relevant RDHS. MO/NCD must ensure the participation of multiple stakeholders in the district without restricting to the health sector (e.g. Non-Governmental Organizations [NGOs], District Secretariat Offices, Tri-Forces, Department of Police, Schools, Government Offices etc.). The list of MO/NCDs in each district are annexed (Annex IV). The necessary publicity regarding the walk must be sought with the help of local journalists, electronic and print media.
2. It is advisable to decorate Out-Patient Departments & clinics in hospitals/ MOOH clinics; using **pink** tapes, balloons or a suitable eye catching and cost-effective decoration during the month of October to spread the message with regard to breast cancer, where logistically possible: since pink is the internationally accepted **color theme** to honor survivors, remember the deceased, and to support the progress we are making towards defeating breast cancer. These initiatives could be introduced to the private sector and NGOs through the active participation of civil society organizations.
3. Conducting lectures, discussions and training of trainer (TOT) programmes on early detection of breast cancer should be carried out at hospital level and at each Medical Officer of Health (MOH) area. These activities could be supplemented by the promotion of enhanced activities related to early detection of breast cancer and their management at Well Women Clinics, Healthy Lifestyle Centres, surgical clinics, breast clinics, Cancer Early Detection Centres (CEDC) and mobile cancer screening clinics.
4. A **'Breast Cancer Awareness Desk'** could be set up in hospitals and other healthcare institutions, providing information on breast cancer. The following healthcare staff can be mobilized to be at the desk, such as Nursing Officers, Public Health Nursing Officers (PHNO) or Public Health Midwives who could answer questions asked by the public on breast cancer and provide any other relevant information through IEC materials.

5. **Social media** could be used to spread the message of early detection of breast cancer. e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Web page of the institution, WhatsApp or Viber groups. You can use data in the circular attached here with for those social media posts.

IEC materials and health education material already distributed by the National Cancer Control Programme to the regions such as leaflets, flash cards on SBE, mannequins on SBE (if available at RDHS), banners etc. could be utilized for the above-mentioned awareness programmes.

You are advised to submit a summary report on the special activities conducted by your institution/ district to commemorate World breast cancer awareness month - October 2024 to reach the Director - National Cancer Control Programme, on or before the 15th of November 2024. Report can be submitted via email to: nccpmohsl@gmail.com.

Your leadership, guidance and active participation in this national endeavor will be much appreciated.


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cc.

1. Hon. Minister of Health
2. Hon. State Minister of Health
3. All Provincial Health Ministers
4. Secretary, Ministry of Health
5. Additional Secretary (MS)/ (PHS)
6. All Provincial of secretaries of health
7. All DDGs
8. Director – NCCP, MCH, NCD, HPB, PHC, NIHS, PHSD