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சுவசிரிபாய

SUWASIRIPAYA

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சுகாதார, போசணை மற்றும் சுதேச வைத்திய அமைச்சு
Ministry of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine

General Circular Letter No: 01-48/2016

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

World Breast Cancer Awareness Month – October 2016

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is commemorated worldwide during the month of October every year. Programmes which support early detection, treatment as well as supportive care for breast cancer survivors are conducted during this month with the objective of increasing public awareness and action for early detection and prompt treatment of breast cancers.

Despite the fact that breast cancer is the commonest cancer among women it has very good prognosis if detected in the early stages. The five-year survival rate is higher, if detected and treated early and promptly which would result in high cure rates, greater possibilities of conservative surgery preserving body image and less aggressive treatment options.

In Sri Lanka, an average of 2500 new cases of breast cancer is detected, annually and account for approximately 25% of all cancers detected among females.

Early diagnosis is encouraged by increasing public awareness on breast cancer; breast – self-examination (BSE) and clinical breast examination (CBE). In addition, a series of guidelines have been formulated and communicated in the form of handbooks to primary care medical officers and other primary healthcare workers.

In spite of these strategies a considerable proportion of cases of breast cancer are detected in the late stages which is probably due to underutilization of services available for early detection as well as lack of awareness among the general public with regard to the importance of breast awareness and BSE.

You are hereby kindly requested to conduct the under mentioned activities in your area with a view of commemorating breast cancer awareness month with the support of the Medical Officer/Maternal & Child Health, Medical Officer/Non-Communicable Diseases, Medical Officer/Planning, Medical Officer/Health Education and all Medical Officers of Health.

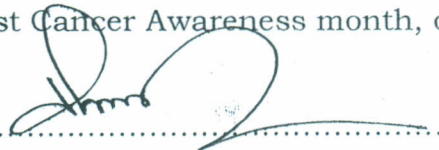
1. Lectures, discussions and **training of trainer (TOT) programmes** for Medical Officers of Health, Primary Care Medical Officers and General Practitioners with the participation of resource personnel at provincial or district level (E.g. Consultant Surgeons, Consultant Oncosurgeons, Consultant Radiologists, Consultant Oncologists, Consultant Community Physicians).
2. **In-service training programmes** for primary health care staff with special focus on early detection of breast cancer at each Medical Officer of Health (MOH) area.
3. **Advocacy programmes** for heads of government institutions (E.g. schools, District Secretariat office, office of the Provincial /Zonal Director of Education, Pradeshiya Sabha, Urban /Municipal Councils etc).
4. **Awareness programmes** on early detection of breast cancers for female staff of government and private sector institutions.
5. **Community participatory programmes** such as a walk/ an exhibition on breast cancer at areas of public gathering such as railway stations/ /bus stand / market place including 'Sunday pola' etc.
6. **Enhanced activities** related to early detection of breast cancer and management at Well Women Clinics, Healthy Life Style Centres, Surgical Clinics, Breast Clinics and Mobile cancer screening clinics.

7. The **colour theme** for the breast cancer is pink. Therefore considering the feasibility, it is advisable to decorate out patient departments & clinics using pink tapes and balloons etc during the month of October to promote the message of early detection. These initiatives could be introduced to the private sector and non governmental sector through the active participation of civil society organizations (eg.NGOs, community based organizations, traders association etc)
8. Coordinate with trader's unions and well wishers in the area to organize various programmes, including decoration of public places, shops, etc with pink colour bulbs, balloons and pink ribbons.

Please note that, health education material such as leaflets, flash cards on BSE, mannequins on BSE, banners on Breast Cancer Awareness month etc distributed by the National Cancer Control Programme could be utilized for these awareness programmes.

Your leadership, guidance and active participation in this national endeavour would be much appreciated.

You are advised to submit a report to the Director/ National Cancer Control Programme on the activities conducted by your institution with regard to Breast Cancer Awareness month, on/before the 15th of November 2016.



Dr. Palitha Mahipala

Director General of Health Services

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Director General of Health Services
Ministry of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine
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- Cc: 1. Hon. Minister of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine
2. Hon. Deputy Minister of Health Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine
3. All Provincial Ministers of Health
4. Secretary, Ministry of Health Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine
5. Additional Secretary (MS)
6. All DDGs
7. Director – NCCP, MCH, NCD, HEB, PHC, NIHS, PHSD