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

General Circular Letter No: 02.16.2019

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

World Cancer Day – 4th February 2019

The global cancer epidemic is enormous and is set to rise. There were 18.1 million new cases and 9.6 million people die from cancer worldwide every year (GLOBOCAN 2018). Over the next twenty years, cancer incidence is projected to increase to over 29.5 millions. Urgent action must be taken to raise awareness about the disease and to develop practical strategies to address the cancer burden.

In the Sri Lankan context, neoplasms are the second leading cause of deaths (Registrar General Department). According to the National Cancer Registry 2011, there were 17,482 incident cases with the overall crude incidence rate of 83.7 per 100,000 population and the age standardized incidence rate (ASR) of 89.2 per 100,000 population.

Cancer affects everyone in different ways and everyone has the power to take actions to reduce the impact of the disease on individuals, families, and communities. Every year, 4th of February is declared as the “**World Cancer Day**” to save millions of preventable deaths by raising awareness and education about the disease and pressing governments and individuals across the world to take action. The tagline for the campaign in 2019 -2021 is ‘**I am and I will**’. During the “World Cancer Day 2019”, it is necessary to take a positive and proactive approach to the fight against cancer, because:

- Cancer is a disease that knows no boundaries and has, or will, affect everybody either directly or indirectly during the lifetime.
- Actions taken by every person, organisation and government will help reduce the burden of cancer to achieve the goal of a 25% reduction in premature deaths from NCDs by 2025.
- Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, however, it is well known that more than one third of these deaths are preventable, and if detected early enough, many cancers are curable.

