

Novartis Singapore Partners Breast Cancer Foundation to Support the Community Mammobus Programme

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Monday, 23 October 2023 — Breast cancer continues to be one of the most common cancers among women in Singapore, accounting for 17.2% of all cancer deaths among females. This concerning statistic is made more alarming by the low uptake of mammogram screenings¹ in the country. Despite 96% of female residents aged 50 to 69 being aware of mammography, only 37.6% have undergone the procedure in the past two years.¹



Novartis Singapore (Novartis) is partnering Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF) to support its community outreach and Community Mammobus Programme in efforts to drive mammogram screening registrations, promote the importance of regular screening, and early detection of breast cancer as it leads to higher chances of overall survival. The other partners of the Community Mammobus Programme are the National Healthcare Group Diagnostics (NHGD), and Singapore Cancer Society (SCS).

BCF's outreach efforts include conducting regular awareness talks aimed at educating the public about breast cancer, including prevention and early detection. In each talk, attendees are encouraged to sign up for a mammogram screening session.



Accessible Breast Cancer Screenings Within Communities

Owned by NHGD, the Mammobus, a mobile breast cancer screening service on wheels, brings the convenience of mammogram screenings to the doorsteps of workplaces and the community. Since 2018, NHGD has been working with SCS and BCF to encourage more women to go for mammogram screenings and provide funding assistance through the Community Mammobus Programme. Under this collaborative effort, the number of women undergoing screening for the first time has more than doubled since its inception².

The programme plays a crucial role in combating and increasing the low uptake of mammogram screening. This also aligns directly with the recently launched national *Healthier SG* initiative, encouraging Singaporeans to take proactive steps to manage their health, prevent onset of chronic diseases and lead healthier lifestyles.

Since 2022, BCF has scheduled a Mammobus on the last Friday of every month. In that year alone, 300 women went for screening, reflecting significant reach and effectiveness of the programme.

Amidst the backdrop of October's Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the collaboration underscores a concerted effort to increase mammogram screenings amongst women.

A Movement Advancing Access, Awareness and Action

"With breast cancer, early detection through regular screening improves one's prognosis and chances of overall survival. By supporting Breast Cancer Foundation, we hope to strengthen the Ministry of Health's efforts in encouraging women to go for regular screening. This also dovetails seamlessly with the Healthier SG initiative, advancing a collective stride towards preventive healthcare where every woman is empowered to take proactive steps in managing her breast health," said Poh Hwee Tee, Country President, Singapore & Asian Emerging Markets at Novartis Singapore.

Adeline Kow, General Manager at Breast Cancer Foundation, commented, "Raising awareness on breast cancer and the lifesaving power of early detection have been the cornerstones of our mission at the Breast Cancer Foundation. The Community Mammobus outreach and activations signify our collective efforts to empower women with the knowledge and accessibility to take proactive steps for their health. Each screening, conversation, and life touched amplifies our unwavering commitment to a future where the prevalence of breast cancer is significantly reduced, thanks to early detection and accessible treatment."

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About Breast Cancer Foundation

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 updates on BCF's latest work and initiatives, visit <https://www.bcf.org.sg> and follow BCF on:

- Facebook: @BreastCancerFoundationSg
- Instagram: @bcfsg
- LinkedIn: Breast Cancer Foundation

About the National Healthcare Group Diagnostics

National Healthcare Group Diagnostics (NHGD) is a business unit of NHG Cares Services, a strategic business group of the National Healthcare Group. NHGD provides quality laboratory and imaging services at the primary healthcare level. Via its extensive network of imaging centres, laboratories and a fleet of mobile service vehicles, NHGD provides one-stop imaging and laboratory services that are accessible, cost-effective, timely, seamless, and accurate. In its continuous quest for quality excellence, NHGD received international accreditation such as ISO 15189 for medical testing and medical imaging.

[1] - (2022) National Population Health Survey 2022. Ministry of Health of Singapore. Available at: <https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/resources-statistics/rep...> [Last accessed: October 9, 2023].

[2] - (2019) More Women Going For Breast Cancer Screening in the Community. National Healthcare Group. Available at: <https://corp.nhg.com.sg/Media%20Releases/More%20Women%20Going%20For%20B...> [Last accessed: October 9, 2023].

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