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U.S.-Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research Holds Training for Nurses Treating Breast Cancer Patients

Partners with Oncology Nursing Society (USA) and Bethlehem University to develop curriculum tailored to the Palestinian Territories

Bethlehem, West Bank – Today the U.S.-Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research, in partnership with the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) and Bethlehem University, launched a three-day pilot training workshop for 40 public and private sector nurses who treat women with breast cancer in the West Bank and Gaza. The Partnership created the curriculum in direct response to requests from nurses in the Middle East who said that further training was needed to better understand breast cancer and the special considerations for caring for women with breast cancer.

“Breast cancer is the most common cause of cancer death among Palestinian women,” says Mariam Samara Awad, Lecturer in the Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences at Bethlehem University. “We will gain great benefits from this innovative training program and look forward to further collaborations to improve the quality of care and practice in regards to breast cancer.”

Led by ONS Trainers, Laila Mansoori, an Advanced Registered Nurse (RN) Practitioner at the University of Washington’s Breast Health Center in Seattle, and Susan Newton, R.N., M.S. from Dayton, Ohio, the pilot program training curriculum was developed with support from nurses in the Middle East and North Africa in order to build knowledge in treating breast cancer patients. Both trainers have been working with Palestinian nurses and local experts to localize the training, ensuring that it is relevant to the Palestinian nursing community.

In addition to designing the workshop curriculum for the West Bank and Gaza as well as a core, regional curriculum, ONS donated its comprehensive text on breast cancer care, *Site-Specific Cancer Series: Breast Cancer*, for use and adaptation by the U.S.-Middle East Partnership. The text has been translated into Arabic and will be made available on the Partnership’s website for workshop participants and other nurses in the region to have as a resource (www.bcpartnership.org).

“Once a diagnosis has been given, nurses play an essential role in caring for people with breast cancer,” says Paula Rieger, RN, MSN, AOCN®, FAAN, Chief Executive Officer for ONS. “We are excited for the opportunity to both teach and learn from our colleagues in the West Bank as they strive to enhance the care they provide to their patients.”

The Partnership will hold a second pilot workshop for nurses in Amman, Jordan, November 7-9 and will make the core curriculum available on its website after feedback from the pilot workshops has been incorporated.

The U.S.-Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research was created in direct response to calls from women in the Middle East who are leading the fight against breast cancer. Through the Partnership, launched in June, 2006, participants have increased clinical research collaboration efforts, public awareness about the importance of early detection, implementation of outreach strategies, and distribution of treatment information. In addition to ONS, key U.S.-based partners include Susan G. Komen for the Cure® and The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. Learn more at www.bcpartnership.org. This project is funded through the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). MEPI supports efforts to expand political participation, strengthen civil society and the rule of law, empower women and youth, create educational opportunities, and foster economic reform throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In support of these goals, MEPI works with non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and academic institutions, as well as governments. More information about MEPI can be found at: www.mepi.state.gov.

The Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), based in Pittsburgh, PA, is a professional organization of more than 37,000 registered nurses and other healthcare professionals. ONS is committed to excellence in oncology nursing and to leading the transformation of cancer care by initiating and actively supporting educational, legislative, and public-awareness efforts to improve the care of people with cancer. ONS provides nurses and healthcare professionals with access to the highest quality educational programs, cancer-care resources, research opportunities, and networks for peer support. Learn more at www.ons.org.

Bethlehem University's Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences was established in 1976. It has four distinct programs: a four-year course leading to the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, occupational health, physiotherapy and entry to midwifery degree. The university also offers a two-year post-baccalaureate program leading to a Diploma in Midwifery and a one-year post-baccalaureate program leading to a Diploma in Neonatal. Through their education, the graduates are prepared to contribute to the promotion of the health of the Palestinian people.

ICF International facilitates the U.S.-Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research through a cooperative agreement with MEPI. Through this agreement ICF International develops and implements cutting-edge models for U.S.- MENA public-private partnerships intended to engage women throughout the MENA region. As the Partnership provision of health education and awareness information to women of this region grows, ICF continues to unite breast cancer advocates, doctors, nurses, researchers, and survivors, and increase breast cancer awareness and research opportunities.

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