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U.S.-MIDDLE EAST PARTNERSHIP FOR BREAST CANCER AWARENESS AND RESEARCH MARKS ONE YEAR OF TOUCHING LIVES IN THE ARAB WORLD

Washington, DC – In just one year, the U.S.-Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research has energized women and inspired action to save lives. Announced by Mrs. Laura Bush in June 2006, the Partnership is the first collaborative effort to help countries in the Middle East fight breast cancer through improved awareness, clinical resources, and world-class research.

The Partnership is facilitated by the U.S. Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), uniting Susan G. Komen for the Cure and The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center with local partners in the region.

The effort provides help at a critical time. According to Dr. Ahmed Mubarak Al Mazrouei, director general of the Health Authority Abu Dhabi, as many as 75 percent of all breast cancer cases in Abu Dhabi are still diagnosed and treated at a very late stage, compared to 30 percent in the U.S. and Europe. "We need powerful awareness campaigns ... I'm sure we can learn a great deal from the vast experience of our U.S. counterparts in this field," Al Mazrouei told the Emirates News Agency.

In its first year, the Partnership has sparked a series of impressive actions by its members and plans for future activities:

- Country launches were held in the UAE (October 2006) and Jordan (March 2007).
- Susan G. Komen for the Cure facilitated three Breast Cancer 101 training sessions to targeted audiences in the UAE and Jordan: women in the workplace at Citibank UAE, female university students in Abu Dhabi and medical personnel in Amman. As a result of successes in the Middle East, Komen for the Cure is expanding its global outreach strategy and will be piloting a detailed curriculum for breast cancer outreach, advocacy, community engagement and fundraising in 10 countries in 2008 and beyond, including the Middle East.
- The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center invited delegations from Jordan and Saudi Arabia to participate in its prestigious Sister Institution Conference dedicated to global oncology in June 2007. Renowned experts from 47 delegations representing 20 countries worldwide engaged in active breast cancer research planning.
- A multi-disciplinary team of 25 M. D. Anderson breast cancer clinical and research faculty members have volunteered to serve on an advisory steering committee for the Partnership. They will lend their expertise to develop comprehensive collaborations in breast cancer prevention, research, clinical care and education.
- The Government of the UAE issued a decree to implement within five years a comprehensive strategy to lower breast cancer mortality rates.



- The U.S. Agency for International Development has pledged additional support specifically for breast cancer initiatives at King Hussein Cancer Center in Jordan.

“The women of the Middle East have shown remarkable energy and determination in the fight against breast cancer this year as they’ve built this powerful coalition to save the lives of their mothers, sisters and friends,” said Nancy G. Brinker, founder of Susan G. Komen for the Cure. “The investment of the Middle East Partnership Initiative has helped accelerate their progress, creating a growing international partnership of medical professionals, government officials and civil society to empower women.”

“Through our collaborative work, the U.S.-Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research is advancing our shared vision of reducing the global burden of breast cancer through our scientific research and medical discoveries,” said Dr. Kendra V. Woods, director of Extramural Programs for The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center.

State Department senior advisor Erin Walsh said the Partnership’s impact has been increased dramatically by the dedication of its private-sector partners. “Susan G. Komen for the Cure and M. D. Anderson are delivering an amazing level of resources, expertise, and compassion to the women of the broader Middle East,” Walsh said. “They really are bringing the best America has to offer in breast cancer care and advocacy.”

The Partnership’s second year will continue the efforts in the UAE and Jordan and expand its reach to additional countries. As the Partnership grows across the Middle East, Arab women will have greater opportunities to ensure their health and well-being through education, awareness and empowerment.

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