

Saudi Arabia Launch of U.S.–Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research

First Lady Laura Bush Highlights Multinational Efforts to Raise Long-Term Awareness and Support

RIYADH– October 24, 2007– Saudi Arabia witnessed the launch of the U.S.–Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research. The partners in the launch are the King Fahad Medical City, Saudi Cancer Society, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, and The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. The partnership is facilitated by the U.S. Department of State’s Middle East Partnership Initiative, bringing together distinguished medical professionals and breast cancer awareness advocates from Saudi Arabia and the United States in an effort to work collectively in the areas of awareness, research, training, community outreach, and women’s empowerment.



The launch event was held under the patronage of Her Highness Princess Hessa Bent Tarrad Al-Sha’lan, the Wife of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, and Mrs. Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States of America. Featured speakers at the event included First Lady Laura Bush; Dr. Abdullah Al-Amro, CEO, King Fahad Medical City; Hala Modellmog, President and CEO, Susan G. Komen for the Cure; and Dr. Kendra Woods, The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. Also speaking at the event was Dr. Samia Al-Amoudi, a breast cancer survivor from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, sharing her experiences coping with a breast cancer diagnosis.

“Over the next quarter-century, an estimated 25 million women around the world will be diagnosed with breast cancer,” Mrs. Bush said in her remarks yesterday at King Fahad Medical City. “Breast cancer does not respect national boundaries, which is why people from every country must share their knowledge, resources and experiences to protect women from this disease.”

Applying proven organizational, awareness, and medical models to develop long-term sustainability

Through this groundbreaking international collaboration, partners are developing efforts aimed at increasing awareness and knowledge about breast cancer, its early detection, and its treatment. From community needs assessments to bilateral medical exchanges, the activities adapt and apply proven organizational, awareness, and medical models to

develop long-term sustainability and programs that can be used in other areas of the Middle East. Among the planned activities in Saudi Arabia, King Fahad Medical City will work collaboratively with the University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center on cancer research, education assessments, and medical trainings. Additionally, the Saudi Cancer Society will work with Susan G. Komen for the Cure to apply its unique models for advocacy and awareness, including content expertise and best practices that have made it the world's largest and most successful breast cancer organization.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the third country to join the groundbreaking U.S.–Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research, having previously launched similar efforts to unite experts in breast cancer advocacy and research in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. First Lady Laura Bush announced the initial launch of the regional partnership during the Komen Mission Conference on June 12, 2006, in Washington, D.C. Delegates from Saudi Arabia and the UAE were invited to participate in the three-day conference, discussing their roles in disease research, prevention, treatment, and awareness.

Partnership to promote broader collaboration in research and the exchange of information

The U.S.–Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research is a direct response to calls from women in the Middle East who are leading the fight against breast cancer, as they seek to promote broader collaboration in research and the exchange of information on effective strategies to raise awareness of the importance of early detection, and to achieve wide distribution of information about treatment options.

The U.S.–Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research is the first partnership for fighting breast cancer between the United States and the Middle East in an effort to provide medical expertise and support to the region, and work collectively in the areas of awareness, research, training, community outreach, and women's empowerment. It is an initiative to reduce breast cancer incidence and increase early detection in Saudi Arabia through improved awareness, increased clinical resources, and world-class research.

The U.S.–Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research in Saudi Arabia includes:

The U.S. Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)

Founded in 2002 with bipartisan support from the U.S. Congress. It has brought the resources, experience, and the determination of the United States to bear in an effort to bolster the reform movement in the Middle East. MEPI has set in motion more than 350 programs in 15 countries of the Middle East and in the Palestinian territories. In four years, MEPI has underwritten a number of projects in the areas of education, economic growth, and women's empowerment and political participation. Its partners include local and international non-governmental organizations, businesses, universities, international institutions, and, in some cases, the governments of the region themselves.

Susan G. Komen for the Cure

The world's largest grassroots network of breast cancer survivors and activists fighting to save lives, empower people, ensure quality care for all and energize science to find the cures.

The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center

One of the world's most respected centers devoted exclusively to cancer patient care, research, education and prevention. Since 1944, almost 700,000 patients have turned to M. D. Anderson for cancer care in the form of surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, immunotherapy or combinations of these and other treatments. M. D. Anderson is also a leader in cancer research and education, championing distance learning opportunities and sharing knowledge around the globe.

King Fahad Medical City (KFMC)

Established in 2003 under the auspices of the Ministry of Health as a priority of the Government to enhance the level of healthcare provided to Saudi citizens. It stands as one of the premier healthcare organizations in Saudi Arabia and is considered among the largest in the Middle East. KFMC consists of four hospitals – Main, Children's, Women's Specialized, and Rehabilitation – and has the ability to provide specialized treatments for more than 50,000 inpatients and more than 600,000 outpatients annually.

The Saudi Cancer Society

A non-profit, charitable organization supervised by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Society's mission is to minimize the effects of cancer on the Kingdom's community. To accomplish this, the Society supports detection and treatment programs, encourages scientific research to identify the causes of cancer in the Kingdom, and contributes to the support of cancer awareness and prevention.