



Strong Social Circle and Support System Alleviates Hurdles to Mammogram Screening

Themed ‘Empower Her’, this year’s National Breast Cancer Awareness Month campaign brings screening and breast care education closer to the community with more than 20 nation-wide activities planned for the month of October

27 SEPTEMBER 2024, SINGAPORE – According to the latest 2023 National Health Population Health Survey, slightly more than one-third (34.7%) of Singapore women aged 50-69 had gone for mammogram screening in the last two years. This was a 3% dip from the previous year and a significant contrast from western counterparts that average a 50% to 80% mammogram rate at population level.

The low screening rate among women in Singapore can be attributed to several factors, including; lack of urgency or necessity due to perceived health, fear of pain and diagnosis, and some just never thought about screening as they ‘feel fine’.

To encourage and increase awareness about mammogram screening, the theme for this year’s National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM) campaign is ‘Empower Her’. The campaign, which takes place yearly in the month of October, highlights the importance of a strong social support system for women to get screened and, if diagnosed with breast cancer, to undergo the necessary treatments, and lead a fulfilling and normal life.

“Breast cancer is not a journey that women should walk through alone – from the initial screening, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship. Medical professionals need to do our part to educate women on the importance and the ease of mammogram check-ups. Family, friends and relatives should encourage the women in their life to go for their regular breast screening, and stand by them should they be diagnosed with breast cancer. Most importantly, despite societal and individual expectations, women need to prioritise themselves and be their biggest advocate. This is what we hope the theme ‘Empower Her’ conveys to the public,” shared Adjunct Assistant Professor Juliana Chen, Chairperson of NBCAM 2024 Organising Committee and Senior Consultant, Breast and Endocrine Surgery at Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

During the month of October, more than 20 nation-wide activities have been planned by the NBCAM committee, which consists of Breast Cancer Foundation, National University Cancer Institute, Singapore, Health Promotion Board, Singapore Cancer Society, SingHealth, and National Healthcare Group’s (NHG) Tan Tock Seng Hospital, the appointed chairing organisation this year. (Full list of activities on Annex 1)

NBCAM 2024 was launched by Ms Jane Ittogi, First Lady of the Republic of Singapore, on 27 September 2024 at Bugis Junction. Twelve breast cancer patients and survivors, aged 41 to 70, participated in a unique fashion show wearing apparel from local fashion brand Esse. Titled ‘Walk of Resilience: Garden of Flowers’, the fashion show conveyed that life goes on even after a breast cancer diagnosis.



“As a brand that champions body positivity and feeling confident in one's own skin, it is our honour to be a partner for this year’s NBCAM and dress the survivors for this fashion show. The resilience and positivity of the survivors are truly inspiring,” shared Alicia Tsi, Founder of Esse.

Bringing Breast Care Closer to the Community

In partnership with the National Healthcare Group Diagnostics, a mammobus will be parked at two malls over two weekends in October. Eligible Singaporeans or permanent residents will be able to get their screening in the mammobus for free (details on eligibility criteria in Annex 1). Having the mammobus at the malls signals that getting a mammogram is as normal as heading to the mall and aims to encourage women to get screened.

Mammobus details:

Date	Time	Location
27 September 2024	10am to 10pm	Bugis Junction (outdoor, near fountain area)
5 & 6 October 2024	10am to 10pm	Bugis Junction (outdoor, near fountain area)
12 October 2024	10am to 10pm	Woodleigh Mall (outdoor)

In July 2024, breast care specialists from Tan Tock Seng Hospital, conducted a training session for primary care providers from clinics, polyclinics and community partners. Titled ‘Breast 101: Managing Common Breast Conditions and Understanding Breast Cancer’, the session allowed participants to better understand breast screening and its updated referral framework, challenges faced by breast cancer survivors, and how they can be supported in their cancer survivorship journey.

With the evolving breast care landscape, such training sessions empower general practitioners to stay up to date with the latest trends and developments – allowing patients to recover and receive treatment closer to home.



QUOTES FROM NBCAM 2024 AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS

TAN TOCK SENG HOSPITAL

“We are honoured to be chairing this year’s National Breast Cancer Awareness Month’s organising committee – which sees us working closely with our colleagues from the National Healthcare Group (NHG), namely Khoo Teck Puat Hospital and Woodlands Health, to further educate on breast cancer and advocate on the importance of screening. Through close collaboration and knowledge sharing with other breast care specialists, and our partners in the community and neighbourhoods, we can make breast cancer a less daunting journey for our patients, and elevate the quality of breast care for all.” - **Adjunct Assistant Professor Juliana Chen, Senior Consultant, Breast and Endocrine Surgery, Tan Tock Seng Hospital**

BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION

“Breast Cancer is the most prevalent cancer among women globally and in Singapore, highlighting the urgency of ongoing discussions around breast health, accessible screening, and early detection. This year, BCF is dedicating itself to addressing the specific challenges faced by Malay Muslim women and expanding our efforts to boost national breast cancer screening rates. Women from all walks of life must understand the severe risks associated with late diagnosis, and it’s our responsibility to continuously provide them with the necessary resources and information as a community.

We are deeply committed to educating both men and women through our extensive outreach and education programs, aiming to raise awareness, promote early detection, and support the breast cancer community. With signature events like Pink Light Up and the Pink Ribbon Walk this October, as well as sharing the poignant stories of survivors, we are uniting the community in this cause. Together, we can make a difference and save lives.” - **Ms Adeline Kow, General Manager, Breast Cancer Foundation**

HEALTH PROMOTION BOARD

“Breast cancer remained the most common cancer among Singapore women in the past 50 years (source: National Registry of Diseases Office, 2024). Early detection and timely management is crucial in the fight against breast cancer. When breast cancer is identified early, treatment can be more effective, lowering the risk of serious complications and resulting in better survival rates. Regular mammogram screening serves as a critical tool for early detection, acting as the first line of defense against the progression of the disease.

We recommend women who are 50 years old and above to go for a mammogram once every two years. Women 40 to 49, can screen for breast cancer, annually, provided their doctor has discussed the benefits and limitations with them. We will continue to work with our community partners to educate and encourage women to take preventive steps to protect their health. Under Healthier SG, enrollees will enjoy fully subsidised breast cancer screening and your doctor will refer you to participating polyclinics.” - **Vivian Sim, Director of Health Screening & Management, Health Promotion Board**



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY CANCER INSTITUTE, SINGAPORE

“Empowerment through knowledge and engagement is our strongest tool in the fight against breast cancer. This BCAM, we aim to unite to educate, screen, and support every woman. Together, we can empower her to take charge of her health and build a future beyond and free from breast cancer.” -

Dr Matilda Lee, Consultant, Department of Haematology-Oncology, National University Cancer Institute, Singapore

SINGAPORE CANCER SOCIETY

“Breast cancer remains the most commonly occurring cancer and the top cause of cancer-related deaths for women in Singapore. However, with early detection and treatment, the chances of surviving Breast cancer increase significantly.

Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) provides mammogram screening at SCS Cancer Screening Clinic @ Bishan at no cost for eligible Singaporeans. Additionally, we partner the National Healthcare Group Diagnostics and the Breast Cancer Foundation where we work with grassroots organisations to bring the Community MammoBus to the heartlands for breast cancer screening. Take charge of your personal health and take action by booking a mammogram screening with SCS by calling 1800-SCS(737) 3333. Together, we can fight breast cancer!” - **Mr Albert Ching, Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Cancer Society**

SINGAPORE HEALTH SERVICES (SINGHEALTH)

“Empowering breast cancer patients is a collective effort. At SingHealth, our multidisciplinary teams empower patients and their loved ones through health education and awareness of screening and cancer treatments. Our various patient support groups and programmes also provide emotional and community support to help uplift their spirits throughout their recovery and survivorship journey.” -

Clinical Assistant Professor Sim Yirong, Senior Consultant, Department of Breast Surgery, Division of Surgery and Surgical Oncology, Singapore General Hospital and National Cancer Centre Singapore



CHINESE GLOSSARY

Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH)	陈笃生医院
Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF)	乳癌基金会
Health Promotion Board (HPB)	保健促进局
National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS)	新加坡国立大学癌症中心(国大癌症中心)
Singapore Cancer Society (SCS)	新加坡防癌协会
Singapore Health Services (SingHealth)	新加坡保健服务集团
Adjunct Assistant Professor Juliana Chen Chairman, Breast Cancer Awareness Month (BCAM) 2024 Organising Committee Senior Consultant, Breast & Endocrine Surgery, Department of General Surgery Tan Tock Seng Hospital	陈佳纯客座助理教授 主席 2024 年乳癌意识月组委会 高级顾问医生 乳腺外科 普通外科部门 陈笃生医院
Ms Adeline Kow General Manager Breast Cancer Foundation	侯秀明 总经理 乳癌基金会
Mr Vivian Sim Director, Health Screening & Management Health Promotion Board	沈惠芳林瑞财 健康检查与管理署署长 保健促进局
Dr Matilda Lee Consultant Department of Haematology-Oncology National University Cancer Institute, Singapore	李欣玮 顾问医生 肿瘤血液科 新加坡国立大学癌症中心
Mr Albert Ching Chief Executive Officer Singapore Cancer Society	钟良兴 首席执行官 新加坡防癌协会
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Alicia Tsi Founder Esse The Label	徐俐玲 总经理和设计师



About Tan Tock Seng Hospital

Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) is the flagship hospital of the National Healthcare Group, Singapore. As a pioneering hospital with strong roots in the community for 180 years, TTSH is recognised as the People's Hospital, serving residents living in Central Singapore.

As one of the largest multidisciplinary hospitals in Singapore, TTSH operates more than 2,000 beds with centres of excellence including the National Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCID), Institute for Geriatrics & Active Ageing (IGA), NHG Eye Institute (NHGEI) and TTSH Rehabilitation Centre. The 600-bed TTSH Integrated Care Hub was set up to advance recovery and rehabilitative care.

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 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 organisation runs the Breast Cancer Centre, and satellite Breast Cancer Support Centre @ Khoo Teck Puat hospital. For more information, visit www.bcf.org.sg.

For updates on BCF's latest work and initiatives, follow BCF at @BreastCancerFoundationSg (Facebook), @bcfsg (Instagram), and Breast Cancer Foundation (LinkedIn).

About Health Promotion Board

The Health Promotion Board (HPB) was established as a statutory board under the Ministry of Health, Singapore, in 2001 with the vision of building "A Nation of Healthy People". HPB aims to empower Singaporeans to attain optimal health, increase the quality and years of healthy life and prevent illness, disability and premature death. As the key agency overseeing national health promotion and disease prevention programmes, HPB spearheads health education, promotion and prevention programmes as well as creates a health-supportive environment in Singapore. It develops and organises health promotion and disease prevention programmes, reaching out to the healthy, the at-risk and the unhealthy at all stages of life – children, youths, adults and older Singapore residents. Its health promotion initiatives cover nutrition, physical activity, mental well-being, health screening, tobacco control and communicable disease education.

More information can be found at www.hpb.gov.sg.

About National University Cancer Institute, Singapore

The National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) is an academic, national specialist centre for cancer under the National University Health System (NUHS), and is the only public cancer centre in Singapore that treats both paediatric and adult cancers in one facility.

As one of two national cancer centres in Singapore, NCIS (pronounced as "n-sis") offers a broad spectrum of cancer care and management from screening, diagnosis and treatment, to rehabilitation and survivorship, as well as palliative and long-term care. NCIS' strength lies in the multi-disciplinary approach taken by our clinician-scientists and clinician-investigators to develop a comprehensive and personalised plan for each cancer patient.



NCIS provides the full suite of specialised oncology and haematology services at the NUH Medical Centre at Kent Ridge, Singapore, including those by the NCIS Chemotherapy Centre, NCIS Radiotherapy Centre and NCIS Cellular Therapy Centre.

NCIS also offers cancer services at other hospitals in Singapore:

- NCIS Cancer & Blood Clinic @ Ng Teng Fong General Hospital
- NCIS Radiotherapy Centre @ Tan Tock Seng Hospital
- NCIS Radiotherapy Clinic @ Khoo Teck Puat Hospital

To bring cancer care even closer to our patients, our NCIS on the Go programme delivers a range of cancer services at clinics within the community for their convenience. For more information, please visit www.ncis.com.sg.

About Singapore Cancer Society

Established in 1964, the Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) is a self-funded social service agency which provides care services to cancer patients in need in areas such as cancer control and prevention, patient support services, and palliative care. SCS key services include cancer screening programmes, public education, financial and welfare services, psychosocial support, rehabilitation programmes and hospice care. For more information, please visit www.singaporecancersociety.org.sg.

About Singapore Health Services (SingHealth)

SingHealth, Singapore's largest public healthcare cluster, is committed to providing affordable, accessible and quality healthcare to patients. With a network of acute hospitals, national specialty centres, polyclinics and community hospitals offering over 40 clinical specialties, it delivers comprehensive, multidisciplinary and integrated care. Beyond hospital walls, SingHealth partners community care providers to enable the population to keep well, get well and live well. As part of the SingHealth Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre, SingHealth also focuses on advancing education and research to continuously improve care outcomes for patients. For more information, please visit: www.singhealth.com.sg

Members of the SingHealth group

Hospitals (Tertiary Specialty Care):

Singapore General Hospital, Changi General Hospital, Sengkang General Hospital, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, and Eastern General Hospital (*expected completion around 2029 to 2030*)

National Specialty Centres (Tertiary Specialty Care):

National Cancer Centre Singapore, National Dental Centre Singapore, National Heart Centre Singapore, National Neuroscience Institute, and Singapore National Eye Centre

SingHealth Polyclinics (Primary Care):

Bedok, Bukit Merah, Eunos, Marine Parade, Outram, Pasir Ris, Punggol, Sengkang, Tampines, Tampines North *and Kaki Bukit (upcoming)*

SingHealth Community Hospitals (Intermediate and Long-term Care):

Sengkang Community Hospital, Outram Community Hospital, and Eastern Community Hospital (*expected completion around 2029 to 2030*)



ANNEX A:

FULL LIST OF NATIONAL BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH 2024 ACTIVITIES - arranged in chronological order

1. Screen and Learn: TTSH Mammobus Deployment by NHG Diagnostics

Date: 27 September
Time: 10am – 7pm
Venue: Bugis Junction
Register at: <https://for.sg/nbcammammbus>

2. SingHealth BCAM 2024 Public Forum & Crafting Workshops

Date: 28 September 2024
Time: 10am – 12pm (Public Forum); 1.15pm - 4pm (Crafting Workshops)
Venue: National Cancer Centre Singapore, Lecture Theatre, Level 1, 30 Hospital Boulevard, Singapore 168583
Register at: <https://for.sg/shbcam2024-registration>

3. NCIS #EmpowerHer Wellness: Yoga

Date: 2 October & 16 October 2024
Time: 12pm – 1pm
Venue: NUH Medical Centre Level 10, Rosemary Room
For more information: www.ncis.com.sg/BCAM2024

4. #NCISPinkHour @ NUH

Date: 8 October & 15 October 2024
Time: 12pm – 2pm
Venue: NUH Medical Centre Level 3, Zone B
For more information: www.ncis.com.sg/BCAM2024

5. NCIS #EmpowerHer Wellness: Tai Chi

Date: 11 October 2024
Time: 8am – 9am
Venue: Botanic Gardens (Eco Garden)
For more information: www.ncis.com.sg/BCAM2024

6. Woodlands Health Public Forum: From Myth to Mastery – Breast Cancer Awareness

Date: 5 October 2024
Time: 8.30am – 12pm
Venue: Woodlands Health Campus Auditorium, Tower E, Level 1
Register at: <https://for.sg/wh-bcamforum2024>

7. SingHealth JumpPink 2024: A Mass Trampoline Dance

Date: 5 October 2024
Time: 10am – 10.45am (Session 1); 11am – 11.45am (Session 2)
Venue: Urban Park at Guoco Tower, Office Lobby Level 1, 1 Wallich St, Spore 078881
Register at: <https://for.sg/shbcam2024jumpink>

8. Screen and Learn: TTSH Mammobus Deployment by NHG Diagnostics

Date: 5 – 6 October 2024
Time: 10am – 10pm
Venue: Bugis Junction
Register at: <https://for.sg/nbcammammbus>



- 9. NCIS #EmpowerHer Wellness: Songwriting for Wellbeing**
Date: 11 October 2024
Time: 2pm – 5pm
Venue: Esplanade, Level 3, White Room
For more information: www.ncis.com.sg/BCAM2024
- 10. National Healthcare Group BCAM Carnival**
Date: 12 October 2024
Time: 10am – 4pm
Venue: Bidadari Community Centre & Woodleigh Mall
No Registration Required, Admission is Free
- 11. NCCS BCAM Patient Education Virtual CancerWise Workshop: Chemotherapy-induced Peripheral Neuropathy and Prevention of Lymphedema Post Breast Surgery**
Date: 12 October 2024
Time: 10am – 12pm
Platform: Zoom
Register at: <https://for.sg/cipnandlymphedema>
- 12. Screen and Learn: Mammobus Deployment by NHG Diagnostics**
Date: 12 - 13 October 2024
Time: 10am – 10pm
Venue: Woodleigh Mall
- 13. NCIS #EmpowerHer Wellness: Qigong**
Date: 19 October 2024
Time: 8am – 9am
Venue: Botanic Gardens, Lawn E
For more information: www.ncis.com.sg/BCAM2024
- 14. #NCISPinkHour @ NTFGH**
Date: 25 October 2024
Time: 12pm – 2pm
Venue: Ng Teng Fong General Hospital, Tower B, Level 2
For more information: www.ncis.com.sg/BCAM2024
- 15. NCCS BCAM Roadshow at Kovan**
Date: 26 October 2024
Time: 9am – 3pm
Venue: Kovan Event Hall (Outside Heartland Mall) Blk 204 Hougang St 21, Kovan City
No Registration Required, Admission is Free
- 16. Breast Cancer Awareness Webinar (English & Mandarin) by Singapore Cancer Society**
Date: 26 October 2024
Time: 10.30am - 12pm (English session); 2pm - 3.30pm (Mandarin session)
Platform: Live on Zoom & Facebook
Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9b6h3z>
- 17. Pink Ribbon Walk**
By Breast Cancer Foundation
Date: 26 October 2024
Time: 5.30pm
Venue: Marina Barrage



18. NCIS Health Talk - Let's Talk Boobs

Date: 27 October 2024

Time: 10.30am – 11.30am

Venue: Zoom

For more information: www.ncis.com.sg/BCAM2024

19. Pink Light Up

By Breast Cancer Foundation

Date: 1 –31 October 2024

Venue: Various locations

20. BCF On-the-ground Engagement Talk

Date: Beyond November 2024

Time: Various times

Venue: Various locations