



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **SINGAPORE CANCER SOCIETY INTRODUCES EMPOWHER, A PROGRAMME THAT PARTNERS CORPORATES AND ORGANISATIONS TO ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN'S SCREENING**

- Only 30-40% of women in Singapore go for cancer screening compared to 60-70% in other similarly developed countries
- Singapore Cancer Society partners businesses and organisations to empower female employees to take charge of their health
- Female employees of participating corporates and organisations will enjoy screening benefits all year round for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening

**10 March 2022** – In honour of International Women's Day 2022, Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) introduces EmpowHer programme, which advocates for corporates and organisations to empower their female employees to take charge of their health.

EmpowHer partners corporates and organisations as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programmes to give back to their female employees. With cancer being the leading cause of death in Singapore<sup>1</sup>, participating corporates and organisations are encouraged to increase awareness about cancer and early detection. SCS will work with the partners to offer cancer screening benefits and create a more conducive work environment that supports the health of female employees. Programme partners will commit to educating, encouraging or allowing time off to go for screening and shifting their mindset towards a cancer-friendly workplace that welcomes and retains staff that are undergoing cancer treatment.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.moh.gov.sg/resources-statistics/singapore-health-facts/principal-causes-of-death>

Women made up almost half the workforce in 2019<sup>2</sup> yet they only make up 30-40% of cancer screening participants, while other developed countries see screening rates of 60-70%. Screening is an important approach to catching cancer in its early stages and thus embarking on treatment early.

Common reasons for not getting screened include high cost, and lack of time, no signs or symptoms, fear of pain<sup>3</sup>. EmpowHER programme is designed to lower such barriers.

Breast, colorectal and cervical cancers are among the top 10 cancers affecting Singaporean women today<sup>4</sup>. Due to low screening rates, only 33.9% of breast cancer cases, 41.7% of cervical cancer cases, 15.6% of colon cancer cases, and 21.1% of rectal cases are diagnosed at Stage 1, when they are most treatable. When cancer is detected in the early stages, not only is there a higher chance of a full recovery, but treatment also costs less, which reduces the financial burden on patients. By making the commitment to invest in the health of female employees, EmpowHER partners can expect to see women being more engaged in the workforce.

Under EmpowHER programme, female employees of participating corporates and organisations will enjoy these benefits all year round:

- \$25 funding assistance to get their mammograms done at participating screening centres
- Cervical cancer screening (Pap test/ HPV test) at no cost at participating clinics
- Faecal Immunochemical Test kits at no charge to women aged 50 and above

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<sup>2</sup> Singstats: Female Resident in Labour Force as % of Total Resident in the Labour force

<sup>3</sup> National Population Health Survey (NPHS) 2019, National Health Surveillance Survey (NHSS) 2013, National Health Survey(NHS) 2010, Health Behaviour Surveillance of Singapore (HBSS) 2007

<sup>4</sup> Singapore Cancer Registry 50th Anniversary Monograph (1968 – 2017)

“We are always looking out for new ways to address the cancer care gaps we have identified in our community. By partnering with SCS on EmpowHer, corporates send a strong message that they care for and recognise the importance of their employees’ wellbeing. Through EmpowHer, corporates can help employees to be more aware of the importance of screening and offer additional screening benefits to complement existing health packages. Many women are multi-taskers, juggling roles as employees, entrepreneurs, spouses, mothers, daughters, with great aplomb. Good health will enable them to continue contributing to the society. We strongly encourage corporates to get in touch with us to learn more about this opportunity,” said Singapore Cancer Society Chief Executive Officer Mr Albert Ching.

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**About Singapore Cancer Society ([www.singaporecancersociety.org.sg](http://www.singaporecancersociety.org.sg))**

Established in 1964, Singapore Cancer Society is a self-funded social service agency which provides patient care services to needy cancer patients through its welfare, hospice home care, cancer treatment subsidy and rehabilitation support programmes. In addition, the Society also provides free cancer screening services and promotes cancer awareness and prevention through its public education and community outreach programmes.

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