

# Media Alert

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## AMERICAN JEWISH JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE (JDC) PARTNERS WITH SUSAN G. KOMEN FOR THE CURE® TO EXPAND PROGRAMS INTO MONTENEGRO

*JDC and Susan G. Komen for the Cure® expand five-year women's health initiative  
taking major steps in sharing life-saving information and services throughout the  
world*

On May 11, 2009, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), in partnership with Susan G. Komen for the Cure®, the world's largest and most progressive grassroots network of breast cancer survivors and activists, expanded JDC's Women's Health Empowerment Program into Montenegro, which was once part of Yugoslavia, and declared independence from Serbia in 2006.

Breast cancer is a *leading killer among women in Former Yugoslavia*. Montenegro is a small country with a population of 680,000 people, and 140,000 are women older than 40. About 250 women are diagnosed with breast cancer every year, and the number of deaths is about 100. Most breast cancer cases are diagnosed at later stages. There are *only nine mammogram machines in Montenegro*, the quality of mammography is low, and medical experts are insufficiently trained. JDC and Komen held the first Peer Support Training and seminar for survivors in Podgorica on June 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>.

"The expansion of our partnership with Susan G. Komen for the Cure gives our Women's Health Empowerment Program even more strength in the battle against breast cancer, particularly in countries like Montenegro where the need is urgent," said Steven Schwager, JDC Chief Executive Officer. "The new program encourages early detection of breast cancer through educational and psychosocial activities, assists breast cancer survivors, and works with local government and medical professionals in the fight against breast cancer."

The initiative in Montenegro is a direct result of the April 2008 JDC-Komen sponsored First Regional Breast Cancer Conference for Former Yugoslavia held in Sarajevo. On May 18<sup>th</sup> and May 19<sup>th</sup>, JDC-Komen hosted the Second National Breast Cancer

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Conference in Moscow. Breast cancer is the ***most common cause of death among Russian women***, ages 45 to 55, and diagnosed in 50,000 Russian women every year. In fact, almost every second woman in Russia who is diagnosed with breast cancer dies.

At the Moscow conference, more than 150 participants, including medical professionals, staff from the Ministry of Health and Social Development, scientists, breast cancer survivors and activists, focused on the importance of early detection as a catalyst to reduce mortality rates, ways to improve treatment, doctor-patient communication, rehabilitation and social services. Conference outcomes addressed breast cancer issues and recommendations to formalize life-saving measures for women in Russia.

In Georgia, over 2,500 people gathered on May 10<sup>th</sup> for the first-ever Race for the Cure®, a partnership between Susan G. Komen for the Cure and Women Wellness Care Alliance HERA, and sponsored by JDC. This event brought awareness and much-needed information on screening and early detection to women throughout the region. Funds raised will be used to provide mammography services to the women of West Georgia.

“We are in the early days of a global cancer tsunami, with more than 1.3 million women facing a breast cancer in the coming year alone,” said Ambassador Nancy G. Brinker, Founder of Susan G. Komen for the Cure. “It is only through global collaboration that we can help women everywhere break their silence and take control of their health. Education, awareness and early screening are proven, effective tools in this global battle to save women’s lives in Former Yugoslavia, Russia and around the world.”

The five-year JDC-Komen partnership has increased public awareness, health programs and vital information sharing. In 2004, JDC partnered with Susan G. Komen for the Cure to re-launch a program in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In 2006, JDC’s Women’s Health Empowerment Program was expanded to Hungary. ***Breast cancer is one of Hungary’s deadliest cancers among women.*** In 2007, the partnership expanded into Russia. Outcomes from the 2009 Moscow conference are currently being shared worldwide. Following the First Breast Cancer Regional Conference for Former Yugoslavia in Sarajevo in April 2008, JDC-Komen decided to expand activities into Montenegro in May 2009.

### **About the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)**

Since 1914, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee has given global expression to the principle that all Jews are responsible for one another. Working today in over 70 countries, JDC acts on behalf of North America’s Jewish communities and others to rescue Jews in danger, provide relief to those in distress, revitalize and ensure a Jewish future for overseas Jewish communities, and help Israel overcome the social challenges of its most vulnerable citizens. JDC also provides non-sectarian emergency relief and long-term development assistance worldwide. More information can be found at [www.jdc.org](http://www.jdc.org).

### **About Susan G. Komen for the Cure®**

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Nancy G. Brinker promised her dying sister, Susan G. Komen, she would do everything in her power to end breast cancer forever. In 1982, that promise became Susan G. Komen for the Cure, which is now the world's largest breast cancer organization and the largest source of nonprofit funds dedicated to the fight against breast cancer with more than \$1.3 billion invested to date. **The Susan G. Komen for the Cure Global Promise Fund** is dedicated to reaching underserved people in areas where breast cancer death rates are highest by increasing breast health awareness; improving access to detection and treatment; recruiting and funding medical staff; providing services to breast cancer survivors and their families, and recruiting and training lay ambassadors to promote breast cancer awareness and treatment messages in underserved areas around the globe. For more information about Susan G. Komen for the Cure, breast health or breast cancer, visit [www.komen.org](http://www.komen.org) or call 1-877 GO KOMEN.

**About JDC's Women's Health Empowerment Program (WHEP)**

Established in 1995, JDC's Women's Health Empowerment Program (WHEP) is an innovative overseas public education movement that encourages the early detection of breast cancer, when it is treated more easily. The Program builds leadership, creates new services, such as support groups and hotlines, strengthens doctor to patient communication, and facilitates partnerships among government agencies, NGOs and the medical and health community. WHEP projects have been carried out in communities throughout the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Israel, and the Palestinian territories.

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