

# The Breast Health Global Initiative



## Aims

Co-sponsored by the [Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center](#) and [Susan G. Komen for the Cure](#), the [Breast Health Global Initiative](#) (BHGI) is an ongoing global health alliance devoted to medically underserved women. The BHGI was founded by Dr. Benjamin O. Anderson, Chair and Director, in 2002.

The alliance is an extensive international network of government agencies, healthcare organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), for-profit and non-profit organizations, doctors, scientists, policy makers and advocates involved in breast health. BHGI is an outcome-oriented program that strives to develop, implement and study evidence-based, economically feasible, and culturally appropriate guidelines for "best practices with limited resources" oriented to low- and middle-income countries (LMCs) to improve breast health outcomes.

BHGI hosts and holds a biennial *Global Summit on International Breast Health* that is the foundational basis for development of the [Guidelines for International Breast Health and Cancer Control](#). Global summits were held in October 2002 in Seattle, Washington, and in January 2005 in Bethesda, Maryland, hosted by the National Cancer Institute's Office of International Affairs. The third global summit, hosted by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), is scheduled for October of 2007 in Budapest, Hungary, and will address implementation.

## BHGI principles, activities

Sequential step-wise improvements in breast health care and cancer control are better realized with evidence-based, culturally appropriate and economically stratified guidelines. BHGI develops its evidence-based, peer-reviewed, multi-disciplinary consensus **Guidelines for International Breast Health and Cancer Control** to define a stepwise systematic approach to breast health-care improvement for limited-resource settings ("best practices with limited resources" [http://www.fhcrc.org/science/phs/bhgi/guidelines/2005/bj\\_consensus\\_statements.pdf](http://www.fhcrc.org/science/phs/bhgi/guidelines/2005/bj_consensus_statements.pdf)).

The evidence-based Guidelines focus on early detection, diagnosis, treatment of breast cancer, and health-care systems. The Guidelines have a holistic perspective based on existing health-care systems to create an integrated, cohesive and flexible framework for improving the delivery and implementation of services designed to reduce morbidity and mortality due to breast cancer in countries with limited health-care resources. The Guidelines create a framework for change.

The process of guideline development creates a hub for linkages and alliances among the clinical community, health-care policymakers, advocacy groups and NGOs, and the public-health sciences research community.

The BHGI hub for organizational linkages serves to catalyse international collaboration that fosters the development of pilot research and demonstration projects to support breast cancer early detection, diagnosis and treatment, public and health-care provider education, public-health research, and special technology development to improve breast health care in LMCs with three key groups:

- Clinicians and governmental health-care agencies
- Advocacy and non-governmental organizations, non-profit and for-profit organizations
- Public health researchers

## Breast cancer by the numbers

Although statistics can't tell the entire story about the impact of breast cancer among women, they are a factor driving the need to improve detection and treatment. The breast cancer crisis facing the world is enormous. Alarming global cancer statistics underscore the urgency. Cancer already claims twice as many lives as AIDS worldwide. More than seven million people die of cancer each year and

over 11 million new cases are diagnosed. That's more than AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria put together.

According to research gathered by the Breast Health Global Initiative:

- Breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer in the world today due to its high incidence and relatively good prognosis. An estimated 4.4 million women are alive today in whom breast cancer was diagnosed within the last five years.
- However, breast cancer is the most common cause of cancer-related deaths among women worldwide.
- More than 1.1 million women worldwide are newly diagnosed with breast cancer annually. This represents about 10% of all new cancer cases and 23% of all female cancers.
- With more than 410,000 deaths each year, breast cancer accounts for about 14% of all female cancer deaths and 1.6% of all female deaths worldwide.
- Incidence rates are climbing by as much as 5% annually in low-resource countries.

**BHGI chairman and director:** Benjamin O. Anderson, MD

- Joint Member, Public Health Sciences Division Epidemiology Program, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center
- Professor of Surgery and Director, Breast Health Center, University of Washington Medical Center, Seattle

**BHGI steering committee chairman:** Gabriel N Hortobágyi, MD, FACP

- Professor and chairman, Department of Breast Medical Oncology; Nellie B Connally Chair in Breast Cancer; Director of the Breast Cancer Research Program, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas, President of American Society of Clinical Oncology-ASCO, 2006-2007

## **Benefactor Organizations**

### **Founding organizations**

Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

Susan G. Komen for the Cure

### **Global Summit Host Organization**

American Society of Clinical Oncology-ASCO

Global Summit on International Breast Health-Implementation, Budapest, Hungary, October 2007

### **Sustaining scientific organization partner**

Office of International Affairs, National Cancer Institute

### **Sustaining corporate partner**

Pfizer

### **Scientific organization partners**

American Cancer Society

Lance Armstrong Foundation

### **Corporate partners**

AstraZeneca

Bristol-Myers Squibb

Ethicon Endo-Surgery

GE Healthcare

Novartis Oncology

F Hoffmann-La Roche

### **Collaborating organizations**

American Society for Breast Disease

Office on Women's Health, DHHS

Pan American Health Organization

Oncology Nursing Society

Office of Research on Women's Health, NIH

## **Participating organizations**

World Health Organization

Breast Surgery International

International Union Against Cancer

International Network for Cancer Treatment and Research

International Atomic Energy Agency of the United Nations

International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care

International Society of Breast Pathology

World Society for Breast Health

Middle East Cancer Consortium

### **Further information**

Visit [www.fhcrc.org/science/phs/bhgi](http://www.fhcrc.org/science/phs/bhgi) or email Leslie Sullivan, Senior Program Manager