

## Press Release

\*For Immediate Release\*

Date: March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013

### Regional Collaboration to Fight Cancer

The Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) in partnership with the Sint. Maarten Ministry of Public Health Social Development And Labour - Collective Prevention Services, will be conducting the first regional Civil Society Cervical Cancer Advocacy Capacity Building Workshop at the Sonesta Great Bay Beach Resort & Casino in St. Maarten on March 21st and 22nd 2013 for members of various Caribbean Cancer Societies and Foundations. This workshop was made possible through the generous support of our partners: American Cancer Society, Health Action Partnership International (UK) and National Heart Fund (UK).

Cervical cancer is the second leading cause of death in the Caribbean with mortality rates higher than the developed countries such as the USA. Raising awareness of this cancer and advocating for steps to reduce the mortality rates is a priority concern of the HCC which has a key mandate to develop and strengthen the skills and organizational capacity of the various members involved in health throughout the Caribbean.

The primary objective of the Workshop will be to build advocacy capacity around cervical cancer prevention, control and treatment among Caribbean cancer NGOs in support of the "Regional Strategy and Plan of Action for Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control in Latin America and the Caribbean", approved by the 48th Directing Council of PAHO/WHO.

It is expected that the workshop attendees will have significantly strengthened cervical cancer advocacy capacity and take tangible steps towards the establishment of a Caribbean Cancer NGO 'Network'. Participants will leave better armed to support regional cancer advocacy campaigns and petitions as well as utilize the skills to influence cervical cancer activities in their home territories.

Professor Trevor Hassell

**President, Healthy Caribbean Coalition,**

on behalf of the Directors and members of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition

**For Additional Information, please contact**

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## **About Cancer of the Cervix**

Every year, over 500,000 women develop cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among women in the developing world, and the largest cancer killer among women in most developing countries. Annually, approximately 275,000 women die from the disease, about 88% of whom live in developing countries with 159,800 deaths in Asia, 53,000 in Africa, and 31,700 in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Caribbean is among the top four highest sub-regions in the world with respect to incidence of cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is the second leading cause of death among Caribbean women. Cervical cancer mortality rates in the Caribbean are several magnitudes higher than countries such as the USA. The vast majority of cervical cancer deaths are unnecessary. Cervical cancer can for the most part be prevented and if diagnosed early is effectively treatable.

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*The HCC was formed in 2008. It is a live network of non-governmental and civil society organisations from across the Caribbean Region that has a remit to address non-communicable disease (NCDs).*