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THE CANCER INSTITUTE OF NEW JERSEY REPORTS ON LATEST RESEARCH, TREATMENT AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES IN RECOGNITION OF GYNECOLOGIC CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

*Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Susan Bass Levin Urges all NJ Women to
Schedule Regular Gynecologic Examinations*

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J.- SEPTEMBER 8, 2003 - In recognition of September as Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month, The Cancer Institute of New Jersey today held an informational session on the latest in women's reproductive cancer research, and the importance of prevention and early detection.

According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 25,400 women in the United States will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer and 14,300 women will die of the disease this year. Ovarian cancer causes more deaths than any other type of gynecologic cancer and accounts for nearly 5% of all cancer deaths among women. Ovarian cancer is very hard to diagnose and is often detected at a very late stage, making it important to be aware of potential risk factors and symptoms of the disease.

"It is our hope that current research efforts will ultimately lead to the development of a screening test for the early detection of ovarian cancer, similar to the mammogram for breast cancer, the pap smear for cervical cancer and the colonoscopy for colon cancer," stated Lorna Rodriguez, M.D., Ph.D., Chief of Gynecologic Oncology, CINJ and Associate Professor of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

"CINJ is dedicated to improving the prevention, detection, treatment and care of patients with cancer, through the transformation of laboratory discoveries into clinical practice. Thanks to the Fannie E. Rippel Foundation and their \$1 million gift to CINJ, the largest ever given by the foundation, we are able to pursue cutting edge research in women's reproductive cancers," Dr. Rodriguez continued.

"In the fight against cancer, only one thing is more successful than early detection -- and that's prevention," said Governor James E. McGreevey. "The research underway at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey makes us a national leader in both."

At today's event, Susan Bass Levin, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, recounted her successful recovery from surgery for early stage ovarian cancer, and urged all women to schedule regular gynecologic examinations with their doctors. The procedure was performed on July 7 at the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick.

Commissioner Levin's operation was a complete success and there is no evidence that the cancer spread. Research has shown that post-surgery treatments are beneficial. Therefore, as a precaution, Commissioner Levin has almost completed such treatments as part of her surgical follow-up at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey in New Brunswick. The situation was detected early, as part of Commissioner Levin's regular health care regimen.

"I am grateful to the medical team at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey and UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School for the excellent care I received and continue to receive during this process," said Commissioner Levin. "The success of my procedure underscores the importance of regular doctor visits. I strongly urge all NJ women to consult regularly with their physicians to ensure the best possible care."

"Commissioner Levin's diligence in pursuing routine physicals led to the early detection of her cancer and has been instrumental in her recovery," said Darlene G. Gibbon, M.D., Clinical Director of Gynecologic Oncology, CINJ and Assistant Professor of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. "I can not stress enough the importance of early detection through routine check-ups and regular doctor visits."

"September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month," Levin noted. "Take the opportunity today to set up an appointment with your physician for a regular gynecologic examination. I can tell you first hand that the key to successful treatment is early detection."

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