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For Immediate Release
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Officials and Physicians Launch Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month with Giant Teal Ribbon of Support on City Hall Plaza

*Coalition outlines month-long public awareness campaign aimed at early
detection and prevention*

BOSTON -- OvarianCancerAwareness.org – a coalition of six organizations dedicated to educating the public about a disease that takes the life of over 15,000 American women each year -- today launched Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. The official kick-off included an overview of the month-long public awareness campaign and the unveiling of a 20' x 40' teal ribbon drawing on City Hall Plaza (by the Good 2 Go group RAW Art, of Lynn, MA) symbolizing hope and solidarity in fighting ovarian cancer.

“This is a disease for which education and awareness is critical to survival,” said State Representative Peter Koutoujian, Chairman of the House Committee on Public Health. “For this reason, the distribution of information about ovarian cancer is a significant responsibility for the medical community, public officials and society as a whole.”

Koutoujian was joined at the podium by Dr. Ursula Matulonis, Dana-Farber/Brigham & Women’s Cancer Center, Gynecologic Oncology Program; Dr. A. K. Goodman, Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center, Gillette Center for Women's Cancer and representatives from the 6-member coalition that includes: MA Chapter of the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition (NOCC); The M. Patricia Cronin Foundation to Fight Ovarian Cancer; Ovarian Cancer Education Awareness Network (OCEAN); Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center; Dana-Farber/Brigham & Women's Cancer Center; and Ovations for the Cure.

Throughout the nation, the month of September is dedicated to the massive dissemination of information alerting women to the symptoms and warning signs of ovarian cancer. Each year, more than 15,000 women die from ovarian cancer -- a disease with subtle symptoms that are hard to detect and can spread quickly.

The Massachusetts campaign will raise awareness through grassroots outreach along with a series of television, radio, transit and print advertisement (in English and Spanish) that will encourage women to visit a website created specifically to generate greater awareness about detection and prevention of ovarian cancer,



www.OvarianCancerAwareness.org. The web site will continue to offer lifesaving information about the subtle warning signs of ovarian cancer and the value of early detection. It also provides background on each of the organizations that continue to work together to generate greater awareness of this often-fatal disease.

“The prevalence and seriousness of ovarian cancer demands a public reaction that is equally as formidable,” said Barbara O'Brien, MA Chapter of the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition. “We must use the awesome power of communication – and the collective concern of every citizen -- to fight this disease.”

This is the sixth consecutive year that the Coalition has launched its campaign to increase awareness about the life threatening disease. This year marks the involvement of two new coalition members: Dana-Farber/Brigham & Women's Cancer Center; and Ovations for the Cure.

In its early stages, symptoms of ovarian cancer are subtle and are often confused with other ailments. Symptoms include: bloating, a feeling of fullness in the pelvic or abdominal region, gas, frequent or urgent urination in absence of an infection, nausea, indigestion, constipation, diarrhea, menstrual disorders, pain during intercourse, fatigue, unexplained weight gain or weight loss and/or backaches. Women who experience these symptoms for more than two weeks should see their doctor. Recent research suggests that together, the three symptoms of swollen abdomen, a bloated feeling and urinary urgency may be associated with ovarian cancer.

Women are considered at an increased risk for ovarian cancer if they have: a family history of breast, ovarian, or colon cancer on either the maternal or paternal side of their family, problems with fertility, have never been pregnant, or have an ovarian cyst after menopause. Women who have reproductive cancers in their family history should ask their physician about a test to determine whether they are genetically predisposed. Early detection of ovarian cancer is difficult because symptoms generally do not become apparent until the disease is in an advanced stage. A Pap test does not detect ovarian cancer. However, if the cancer is detected at the earliest stage, women have a 90% survival rate of 5 years.

For more information about Ovarian Cancer, visit ovarianconcerawareness.org.