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CALLING ALL ANGELS
Raising Awareness of Ovarian Cancer One Party at a Time

Minneapolis, MN – The weekend of April 27-29, ovarian cancer awareness raising parties are being held all across Minnesota. The idea was conceived by Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance (MOCA) board president Lisa McLaughlin.

Ms. McLaughlin and her family hosted the first Calling All Angels event in 2004 in memory of Jane Franczyk, Ms. McLaughlin's step-mother who died from ovarian cancer at the age of 51. In the past three years, the Calling All Angels gala has raised close to \$75,000 to support MOCA.

This year, Ms. McLaughlin wanted to do something different to raise awareness and get more people involved. "Many people don't know the symptoms of ovarian cancer," she explains. "As a result, women are often diagnosed with an advanced stage of the disease. We are working to change that by hosting parties to get the word out to our friends, neighbors and co-workers."

More than a dozen parties will be held.

- The smallest is 10-15 women getting together in Chaska to remember their friend Deb Chartier who passed away just a few weeks ago at the age of 38.
- Fairview Medical Center in Hibbing is hosting an afternoon tea for 50 women.
- An ovarian cancer survivor from Maple Grove has invited 25 of her co-workers to a Sip & Dip party (cocktails and appetizers) on Friday and 20 of her neighbors for brunch on Sunday.
- "An Evening in Paris" dinner party is being prepared by Chef Paul Laubignat at a MOCA supporter's home in Mound. (Chef Laubignat, from Nancy's Landing in Waconia, has been featured on the Food Network.)
- In Darwin, another survivor is having a wine tasting party for 25 friends.

- A MOCA supporter in Wayzata has invited 75 of her neighbors for wine and cheese.
- The largest party is being hosted by Ms. McLaughlin. It's a "Sing for a Cure" Karaoke party at the Embassy Suites at 425 South Seventh Street in downtown Minneapolis. This event costs \$10 and is open to the public. There will be heavy appetizers and a cash bar. Guests are encouraged to donate a new or like new item for a unique, one-of-a-kind silent auction. Prizes will be awarded and partygoers will also have the chance to play the popular 'Heads or Tails' game. More than 100 people are expected.

In just seven years, MOCA has raised \$1.7 million for ovarian cancer research in Minnesota. The grants are awarded to advance research toward earlier detection, better treatment and a cure. The funding stays in the state so women who live here will be the first to benefit from any advances made.

For more information about MOCA and ovarian cancer, visit www.mnovarian.org. For more information about Calling All Angels events, call MOCA, 612/822-0500.

Founded in 1999 by a small group of ovarian cancer survivors, Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance funds research, raises awareness of the disease and provides support to women with ovarian cancer and their families.

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Facts about Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance (MOCA)

- Founded in 1999 by a group of ovarian cancer survivors
- MOCA's mission is to fund ovarian cancer research, raise awareness of the disease and provide support to women with ovarian cancer and their families.
- In just seven years, MOCA has awarded \$1.7 million for ovarian cancer research in Minnesota.

Symptoms of Ovarian Cancer

- Increased waist line
- Abdominal pain, pressure or bloating
- Abnormal changes in bowel or bladder patterns
- Persistent digestive problems
- Excessive fatigue/backache
- Abnormal post menopausal bleeding
- Pain during intercourse
- Weight gain or loss
- Change in appetite

How is Ovarian Cancer Detected?

If a woman suffers from any or all of the symptoms listed above consistently for 4-6 weeks, she should consult with a healthcare provider and ask for a combination of the following three things:

- Vaginal/rectal exam
- Transvaginal ultrasound
- CA125 blood test

Unlike the Pap smear which screens for cervical cancer and the mammogram for breast cancer, there is currently no consistently reliable test available to detect ovarian cancer in its early stages.

If ovarian cancer is suspected, consult a gynecologic oncologist.

Facts about Ovarian Cancer

- September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month.
- Ovarian cancer affects 1 in 57 women.
- It can occur at any age.
- When detected early and treated properly, more than 90% of the women diagnosed will survive longer than five years.
- Almost 70% of women with the disease are diagnosed in advanced stages when the chance of five-year rate is only about 25%.



General Ovarian Cancer Statistics

- Ovarian cancer is the deadliest of the gynecologic cancers. It is the fifth leading cause of cancer deaths among U.S. women.
- It is expected that more than 25,000 women will be diagnosed with the disease this year and an estimated 16,000 will die from it.

Risk Factors

- **Increasing age** – Although ovarian cancer can strike women at any age, 56% of women diagnosed with the disease are older than 65.

The incidence increases dramatically after the age of 50 and peaks between the ages of 55 and 65.

As a result, it is important for women to continue regular gynecologic exams, even after childbearing is complete.

- **Having a family or personal history of ovarian cancer, breast or colon cancer** – Approximately 5-10% of ovarian cancer cases are associated with hereditary risk. Women with personal or family histories of these types of cancer are more likely to develop ovarian cancer before age 50.
- **Not bearing children** – The risk of developing ovarian cancer is reduced with each subsequent pregnancy.

The vast majority of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer (90%) do not have a hereditary link to the disease.

Risk Reduction

At this time, it is impossible to completely eliminate a woman's risk for ovarian cancer, but experts have established that the following can **reduce** a woman's risk of ovarian cancer:

- **Oral contraceptives** – Regular use reduces the risk of ovarian cancer by 40-50% when taken for at least five years. Several clinical studies have reported that the effects last for years after pill use has ceased.
- **Pregnancy and breast-feeding**
- **Tubal ligation**
- **Hysterectomy**
- **Removal of the ovaries** (prophylactic oophorectomy) This procedure is usually suggested only for women at very high risk – those with two or more first-degree relatives with ovarian cancer or ovarian and breast cancer.