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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Whitman Proclaims October As Breast Cancer Awareness Month

--Wear a Pink Ribbon to Show Your Awareness and Support --

Governor Christie Whitman joined the American Cancer Society in its nationwide fight against breast cancer by signing a proclamation declaring this October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month in New Jersey.

"We are here today to declare, once again, that far too many women are losing their lives to breast cancer," said Gov. Whitman. "Those of us who have seen friends and family members battle cancer know that one case of cancer is too many."

"Obviously, we are fighting the battle on many fronts, but we won't stop until we've won," said Gov. Whitman, in further support of a commitment that has been exemplified throughout her administration.

Earlier this year, Gov. Whitman declared Mother's Day on May 4th as "Mother's Day Mammogram Awareness Day" to emphasize that early detection increases the chances for successful treatment. The Governor also serves as honorary chair of the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer program, which will hold its annual walk-a-thon on Sunday, October 17.

Gov. Whitman has also taken other key steps in the fight against breast cancer, including:

- Dedicating Tobacco Settlement Money - \$1.5 million from last year's tobacco settlement is being dedicated to the expansion of breast cancer screening and outreach for minority women.
- Creating the New Jersey Breast Cancer Research Fund - Instituted in 1995, the fund is administered by the NJ Commission on Cancer Research, and supports innovative research projects, training fellowships, and more. Nearly \$900,000 has been raised for research through the state income tax check-off; proceeds of the "Conquer Cancer" license plates available from the Department of Motor Vehicle also go to the Commission.
- Establishing the New Jersey Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Initiative (NJBCCCI) - Working to educate women about the importance of early detection, the NJBCCCI initiative has provided more than 14,000 women with free mammograms since its creation in 1996.

The war against breast cancer is being waged on other fronts in New Jersey, as well. New Jersey health and science professionals are also in the race for the cure. The state's pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies are developing 14 new and promising drugs for breast cancer, more than any other state in the country. And more than 30 of the state's hospitals are offering women an opportunity to participate in the new National Cancer Institute breast cancer prevention trial named STAR.

The American Cancer Society estimates that one in eight women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer sometime in her life. In fact, every year, breast cancer is detected in about 6,000 women in New Jersey, and takes the lives of about 1,500 women in the state. According to the State Cancer Registry published in March 1998, overall cancer rates in New Jersey dropped 18 percent for males and 10 percent for females from 1992 to 1995.

