

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Piramal Swasthya announces launch of D.E.S.H. – A Community Based Cancer Screening Program for early detection of Oral, Breast and Cervical Cancer in Assam**

- Aims to reduce the impact of oral, breast and cervical cancer burden in the state through early screening & detection, thereby reducing late-stage diagnosis and mortality
- Key components of the model include Community outreach, education & mobilisation, screening for cancer, referral and mobility for treatment at cancer hospital, continuous tracking and follow-up
- Programme covers a population of 15 lakhs in rural remote villages of Kamrup district
- Collaboration with Dr. B. Barooah Cancer Institute for referral and treatment of positive cases
- Appropriate technology-based programme ensuring end-to-end coverage with continuous tracking, referral and follow-up

**Guwahati, November 13, 2017:** Piramal Swasthya, an initiative under the aegis of Piramal Foundation (the philanthropic arm of the Piramal Group), today announced the launch of its community-based cancer screening programme – D.E.S.H. - to detect early and reduce the mortality due to cancer. It is expected to reduce the impact of cancer burden in Assam through early detection of oral, breast and cervical cancers in rural areas.

Dr. Swati Piramal, Vice Chairperson, Piramal Group, who has been closely involved in the project, inaugurated D.E.S.H in Guwahati, by flagging off a state-of-the-art Mobile Cancer Screening Unit.

#### **Need for Programme in Assam:**

Cancer is one of the leading causes of mortality and morbidity worldwide. In India, Cancer burden is high and is projected to increase over one-and-a-half times in the next 20 years. Within India, Assam has the highest proportional mortality ratio due to cancer. Kamrup is the district with the 4th highest incidence of cancer-afflicted persons in India, according to the population-based cancer registry report (2012-14). States in the North-eastern region, due to a multitude of reasons, have few effective cancer screening programmes and very few cancer care centers

#### **D.E.S.H. – Detect Early, Save Her/Him:**

Piramal Swasthya has launched its community-based screening programme – D.E.S.H. for oral, breast and cervical cancers in Kamrup. The programme components include creating community awareness, screening for the cancer of oral cavity, breast and cervix through mobile cancer screening units, mobility for the patients detected positive to a treatment centre and tracking and follow-up.

Equipped with the best equipment, including a mammography unit and staffed by doctors, nurses and radiographers, the Mobile Cancer Screening Unit will screen the local population for oral, breast and cervical cancer every Monday to Thursday. On Fridays and Saturdays, another vehicle will be used to ferry those who screened positive to Guwahati's Dr. B. Borooah Cancer Institute.

#### **Unique features:**

- Community-based mobile cancer screening unit
- Counselling session for those who were detected positive

- Provision of transport for these patients to Cancer Institute.
- Safe and secure Electronic Medical Record for every patient with a unique beneficiary ID for monitoring and tracking
- Referral and follow-up of positive patients, thereby ensuring complete end-to-end cover
- Patients to be enrolled with the existing Atal Amrit Yojana insurance programme

Speaking about the initiative, **Dr. Swati Piramal, Vice-Chairperson, Piramal Group**, said, *“Piramal Swasthya aims to transform India’s health ecosystem through high impact solutions, partnerships and thought leadership. Cancer awareness and screening is of utmost importance as it ensures early detection, thereby increasing the chances of survival and reduction in treatment costs. The North-Eastern states of India are reported to have the highest incidence of cancer, with Kamrup district being ranked the fourth-highest. There are very few cancer care centres or programmes in Assam to cater to such patients. The difficult climatic conditions, coupled with poor infrastructure, leads to reporting of only advanced cases with a higher morbidity and mortality.”*

*“Piramal Swasthya has realised a need for community-based cancer screening programme in Assam to prevent, screen, diagnose and treat oral, breast and cervical cancers in rural areas. We believe that our programme will have significant impact in helping to reduce cancer-related mortality in Assam. After successful implementation in Kamrup, this programme can be scaled across the state and the North East region as well.”*

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#### **About Piramal Foundation:**

Piramal Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the Piramal Group. It develops innovative solutions to resolve issues that are critical roadblocks towards unlocking India's economic potential. The Group's core values of Knowledge, Action Care and Impact guide the organisation in carrying out its responsibilities towards society. It believes that considerable positive change can occur when we collaborate with like-minded partners and nurture projects that are scalable, ensuring a long-term impact. In line with the Strategic Development Goals, we are focused on universal primary education, empowering women, reducing child mortality rates, improving maternal health and improving access to safe drinking water.

The Foundation currently works across 21 states and has impacted over 89 million lives, mostly in partnership with state governments. It has developed innovative approaches and programmes in every vertical and has built strong partnerships with governments, technology partners and international organisations, including with Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, Harvard Graduate School of Education and World Diabetes Foundation. The projects are implemented through Piramal Swasthya, Piramal Sarvajal and Piramal Foundation of Education Leadership.

#### **About Piramal Swasthya:**

Piramal Swasthya endeavours to bridge the last mile gap in primary healthcare service delivery through its innovative solutions. It is one of the largest implementer of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) programmes in India and has a presence across 13 states with a 3,600+ strong workforce that comprises 450+ Doctors and specialists. The existing collaboration with various corporates and public sector organisations is increasing the reach and deepening the traction within communities, thereby impacting beneficiaries on a large scale. Such collaborations enable Piramal Swasthya to complement and supplement the government’s healthcare delivery efforts while empowering communities. The team believes in the highest standards of ethical conduct in dealing with partners, stakeholders and influencers. The solutions provided mitigate issues of accessibility, availability and

affordability in remote areas, and also serve as a platform through which IT-enabled quality healthcare services can be rendered and customised to fulfil specific needs of the society.

**For more information:**

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