

1 PURPOSE / OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this assessment was to identify and describe the **barriers and opportunities** in the continuum of care, for women living **outside of Panama City** and **indigenous women** in Panama.

- The study:
- DESCRIBES** ▶ **the perception women and health personnel** have about specific barriers and opportunities throughout the breast cancer continuum of care;
 - DISCUSSES** ▶ **access to breast health services** for women outside of Panama City (including indigenous groups);
 - ADDRESSES** ▶ **limitations in the availability of health services** for the detection of breast cancer for women in non-indigenous communities in the provinces of Los Santos, Chiriquí, Veraguas.

CONTRIBUTORS:

 **53** key stakeholders and

 **113** women were for this assessment

8 A total of eight **focus groups** were conducted:

- 1** in the province of Chiriquí with the participation of 16 patients;
- 3** sessions in the province of Herrera with a total of 21 patients;
- 2** in the province of Los Santos, 20 women;
- 2** in the province of Veraguas with 16 breast cancer survivors.

3 Three additional focus groups were conducted with **indigenous women**:

- 2** sessions with the participation of women from the Guna ethnicity (18 participants);
- 1** session with women from the Ngäbe ethnicity (15 participants).

2 BREAST CANCER IN PANAMA



Panama's population was estimated at 3.4 million people in 2010. The population of the **Panama City** Metropolitan area was approximately **1.5 million people**, with 880,691 residing in Panama City.

 In 2010, the incidence of breast cancer in Panama was **43.6 cases** per 100,000 women and a rate of **10 deaths** per 100,000 women.

 Breast cancer is the **primary type of cancer** among Panama women and the mortality rates had been **increasing**.



At the **secondary** level of Care in Panama City, there are only **two** Ministry of Health (MINSAs), centers and **5** Social Security Fund (CSS) clinics. For the tertiary level, there was the public health service and a CSS center, as well as the National Oncological Institute (ION).

The health care system comprised of three sectors: The **CSS** which is the largest health care provider, covering 85% of the population, the **MINSAs** and the **Private Sector** which covers approximately 16% of the population.



The **first** level of care in Panama City has **8** MINSAs health centers and **three** social security service (CSS) health centers.

In 2011, The Ministry of Health (MINSAs) created a **National Cancer Plan**, which included the establishment of training programs for a **comprehensive approach** to the continuum of breast health care, **detecting early** breast cancer, and **promoting breast cancer**.

