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**Michael Douglas, Honored Film Star and Throat Cancer Survivor,
Encourages Public to Attend Free Local Screenings During
Oral, Head & Neck Cancer Awareness Week**

Free Screenings Scheduled at (INSERT INSTITUTION NAME) on (INSERT DATE(S) OF SCREENING)

NEW YORK, NY, APRIL 6, 2011 – Academy Award-winning actor and producer Michael Douglas, who is recovering from a battle with throat cancer, is urging Americans to get screened for cancer during the 14th annual Oral, Head & Neck Cancer Awareness Week (OHANCAW), being held nationwide May 8-14 . **(INSERT INSTITUTION NAME)** is one of more than 200 sites worldwide that will be offering free oral, head and neck cancer screenings during OHANCAW, which is sponsored by the Head and Neck Cancer Alliance (HNCA).

- The free cancer screening will be held at **[INSERT LOCATION]** from **[INSERT TIME]** to **[INSERT TIME]** on **[INSERT DATE(S) OF SCREENING]**.
- For more information, please call **[INSERT LOCATION]** at **[INSERT LOCAL NUMBER]**.

According to the American Cancer Society, head and neck cancers represent the sixth most common form of cancer in the U.S., with more than 50,000 cases diagnosed annually and over 12,000 deaths.

Mr. Douglas, a screen legend who won Academy Awards as Best Actor for his role in the movie *Wall Street* and as producer of 1975's Best Picture *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, was diagnosed with advanced stage IV throat cancer in August, 2010. Following several weeks of aggressive radiation and chemotherapy, it was announced in January 2011 that the popular movie and TV star had a "complete response" to treatment in that his tumor is no longer detectable by physical examination or medical imaging. Although he must have monthly check-ups because there is a chance of tumor recurrence, Mr. Douglas is confident of complete recovery.

“My experience has taught me the importance of early detection and diagnosis to successful treatment and a positive outcome,” said Mr. Douglas. “I applaud the Head and Neck Cancer Alliance for raising awareness of oral, head and neck cancer and opening the door to free cancer screenings at local facilities throughout our country during OHANCAW. The screening is quick, painless and free, so I am encouraging everyone to take advantage of this opportunity that could save your life. Do it for your family.”

“When oral, head and neck cancers are diagnosed early, these potentially deadly diseases can be more easily treated without significant complications, and the chances of survival increase,” said Jatin P. Shah, M.D., Ph.D, a world leader in head and neck cancer surgery who is Professor of Surgery at Weill Medical College of Cornell University, Chief of the Head and Neck Service and Leader of the Head and Neck Disease Management Team at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, and a member of the HNCA Board. “Many Americans do not recognize the symptoms of these cancers, which underscores the importance of everyone getting screened properly, not just those at high risk such as tobacco and alcohol users.”

About Oral, Head and Neck Cancer

Oral, head and neck cancer refers to a variety of cancers that develop in the head and neck region, such as the oral cavity (mouth), the pharynx (throat), paranasal sinuses and nasal cavity, the larynx (voice box), thyroid and salivary glands, the skin of the face and neck, and the lymph nodes in the neck.

Common warning signs are:

- ✓ Red or white patch in the mouth that lasts more than two weeks
- ✓ Change in voice or hoarseness that lasts more than two weeks
- ✓ Sore throat that does not subside
- ✓ Pain or swelling in the mouth or neck that does not subside
- ✓ Lump in the neck

Other warning signs that occur during later stages of the disease include:

- ✓ Ear pain
- ✓ Difficulty speaking or swallowing
- ✓ Difficulty breathing

The most effective prevention strategy continues to be the cessation of behaviors such as smoking, use of chewing tobacco and excessive alcohol consumption. Eighty-five percent of head and neck cancers are related to tobacco use. Research has linked the increase of oral cancer incidence in young adults, a population traditionally at low risk, to the rise of human papillomavirus (HPV), a cancer-causing virus that can be transmitted through oral sex.

About Oral, Head & Neck Cancer Awareness Week

Oral, Head & Neck Cancer Awareness Week (OHANCAW), coordinated by the Head and Neck Cancer Alliance, is a week annually dedicated to educating the public about these potentially life-threatening but highly treatable cancers, and to promoting prevention, screening and early detection.

Given the great demand for head and neck cancer screening opportunities and to honor the tradition of holding screenings in April, HNCA is excited to extend its screening promotions from April through May, 2011. Although the climax of the promotions will be held during the 2011 OHANCAW, May 8-14, HNCA is encouraging all supporters to pick a week during April or May that works best for their group to host a free screening event. For the past four years, Bristol-Myers Squibb and Lilly have provided funding for the free screenings as part of the companies' support of OHANCAW. For more information, please visit the OHANCAW website at www.OHANCAW.com.

About the Head and Neck Cancer Alliance

The Head and Neck Cancer Alliance (HNCA) was established in 2008 to create a coalition in the fight against head and neck cancer. Formerly the Yul Brynner Head and Neck Cancer Foundation, HNCA expands on existing strengths to enhance the overall effort in prevention, detection, treatment and rehabilitation. Our mission focuses on six key areas:

- ✓ Public awareness
- ✓ Professional engagement
- ✓ Research
- ✓ Advocacy
- ✓ Survivorship
- ✓ Resources development

HNCA seeks to enable an organized and strategic alliance of all stakeholders to dramatically shift the stage of discovery of head and neck cancers through united and collaborative efforts in prevention, early detection and research. Its mission involves:

- ✓ Providing support to head and neck cancer patients throughout the year
- ✓ Supporting ongoing research in head and neck oncology
- ✓ Educating children and adults in the disease process, treatment and prevention of head and neck cancer



Ten Minutes That Could Save Your Life

[INSERT INSTITUTION NAME] to Offer Free Screenings During Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Week, **[INSERT DATES]**

By: **[INSERT LOCAL PHYSICIAN'S NAME, TITLE, INSTITUTION]**

Just because you can't feel it, doesn't mean it isn't there. Just ask the more than 50,000 Americans who were diagnosed with cancers of the head and neck last year. Unfortunately, many Americans do not recognize the symptoms of these life-threatening diseases, which include cancers of the oral cavity, larynx and pharynx, and by the time they are diagnosed, for some, it's too late.

Oral, head and neck cancers claim approximately 12,000 lives per year. However, there is hope; if diagnosed early, these cancers can be more easily treated without significant complications, and the chances of survival greatly increase.

Who should get tested?

Every adult. Tobacco and alcohol users traditionally have been considered the populations at greatest risk for these cancers. However, oral cancer cases are on the rise in younger adults who do not smoke, and recent research indicates this development is due partly to the increase of the human papillomavirus (HPV) virus, a cancer-causing infection that can be transmitted by oral sex. HPV-related oral cancers are more difficult to detect because these cancers usually occur on the back of the tongue or on the tonsils, providing even more reason to get screened regularly.

What are the potential warning signs of oral cancers?

The signs and symptoms of oral cancer often go unnoticed. However, there are a few visible signs associated with these cancers that require immediate attention, including:

- Red or white patches in the mouth that last more than two weeks
- Change in voice or hoarseness that lasts more than two weeks
- Sore throat that does not subside
- Pain or swelling in the mouth or neck that does not subside
- Lump in the neck
- Ear pain
- Difficulty speaking or swallowing
- Difficulty breathing

If you have any of the above warning signs, do not wait for the free screenings. Seek medical attention immediately.

How can I get screened locally?

[INSERT INSTITUTION NAME] will offer free oral cancer screenings in observance of the 14th annual Oral, Head, and Neck Cancer Awareness Week (OHANCAW) on **[INSERT SCREENING DATES]**. The screening is painless and only takes about 10 minutes. If you'll be out-of-town on those dates, free screenings will be offered at more than 200 participating institutions worldwide as part of OHANCAW, which is scheduled for the week of May 8 –14. Visit www.OHANCAW.com for the full list of participating sites and for more information. OHANCAW is sponsored nationally by the Head and Neck Cancer Alliance.

Why should I get screened?

If the above stats weren't reason enough, know that the screening is quick, painless and free, and it's right around the corner. Given the current state of the economy and rising health care costs, take advantage of the opportunity to benefit from this preventive health measure at no charge by taking 10 minutes to do something that could save your life. Early diagnosis and treatment improves outcomes and chances of survival, particularly for individuals with HPV-related oral cancers. Please contact us at **[INSERT CONTACT INFORMATION]** to sign up for your free oral cancer screening today.



www.OHANCAW.com

What is OHANCAW? Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Week (OHANCAW) is a weeklong series of events that aim to educate the public about these potentially life-threatening but eminently treatable cancers and to promote prevention, screening and early detection. OHANCAW is highlighted by the free screenings and related activities held at participating medical centers across the country. The screenings are quick, painless, and designed to advance early diagnosis, which can lead to better outcomes. OHANCAW is sponsored by the Head and Neck Cancer Alliance (HNCA).

When is OHANCAW? The 14th annual Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Week is May 8 –14, 2011. Given the great demand for head and neck cancer screening opportunities and to honor the tradition of holding screenings in April, HNCA is excited to extend its screening promotions from April through May, 2011. Although the climax of the promotions will be held during the week of May 8-14, HNCA is encouraging all supporters to pick a week during April or May that works best for their group to host a free screening event.

Oral Cancer Facts Oral cancer is cancer that arises in the head or neck region, including the nasal cavity, sinuses, lips, mouth, thyroid glands, salivary glands, throat or larynx (voice box). According to the American Cancer Society, it is the sixth most common form of cancer in the United States, with 50,000 cases diagnosed annually and over 12,000 deaths.

Signs and Symptoms Most oral cancers arise on the lips, tongue or the floor of the mouth. They also may occur inside your cheeks, on your gums or on the roof of your mouth.

Some signs and symptoms include:

- A sore in your mouth that doesn't heal or that increases in size
- Persistent pain in your mouth
- Lumps or white, red or dark patches inside your mouth
- Thickening of your cheek
- Difficulty chewing or swallowing or moving your tongue
- Difficulty moving your jaw, or swelling or pain in your jaw
- Soreness in your throat or feeling that something is caught in your throat
- Pain around your teeth, or loosening of your teeth
- Numbness of your tongue or elsewhere in your mouth
- Changes in your voice
- A lump in your neck
- Bad breath

Risk Factors Tobacco (including smokeless tobacco) and alcohol use are the most important risk factors for oral, head and neck cancers, particularly those of the tongue, mouth, throat and voice box. Eighty-five percent of head and neck cancers are linked to tobacco use. People who use both tobacco and alcohol are at greater risk for developing these cancers than people who use either tobacco or alcohol alone. (Source: National Cancer Institute).

Anyone can develop thyroid cancers, although a family history or exposure to radiation is often a factor. Salivary gland cancers do not seem to be associated with any particular cause.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and Oral Cancer Research has attributed the increase of oral cancer incidence in young adults, a group traditionally at low risk, to the rise of the human-papillomavirus (HPV), a cancer-causing virus that can be transmitted through oral sex. Though oral cancers associated with the papillomavirus are still relatively rare, they typically are found near the base of the tonsils and the back of the tongue, areas that are often difficult to see during visual screenings until the cancer is in a late stage. Today, 20 percent, or almost 10,000 cases each year, might be attributable to a strain of HPV.