

## Hadassah University Medical Centers

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It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I am writing this letter on behalf of **B'shvilaych\_ Women's Well Health Center.**

I have known Sara Siemiatycki for about three years now, and from the time she first told me about her plans to establish a comprehensive women's health center in Jerusalem, I was very excited about the idea. It was not only Sara's enthusiasm which got me excited – though her commitment and devotion to the matter are truly inspirational, it is the mere project that she proposes, simple as it may sound, which I find truly exciting. Women, especially mothers, and even more so working mothers often don't find the necessary time for themselves and their health care needs. I am familiar with this fact as a working mother myself, and through my work as a breast surgeon among the women of Jerusalem for the last 3 ½ years.

I have known Dr. Flescher for a similar length of time, and have always admired her for her professionalism, thoroughness, and knowledge. A specialist in women's health, Dr. Flescher's field of expertise covers a wide range of medical disciplines, which she skillfully brings together for the benefit of her patients. Hers is truly a comprehensive approach to women's health. She is always up to date on the latest research, but never forgets that it is a whole person she is treating.

The proposed center is indeed defined as a comprehensive wellness center, but allow me to first consider it from my perspective – that of a breast surgeon:

With breast cancer being the most common cancer among women in Israel, the importance of early diagnosis cannot be over emphasized – early diagnosis not only implies easier treatments and less aggressive surgery, it is often truly and simply a matter of life and death. Early diagnosis of breast cancer requires routine check ups and mammograms. In Israel a National mammography

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screening program is in place, by which women are actively invited for routine mammograms. However, in order for such a program to be effective, it is not enough to send letters – women need to make the effort and show up for the scheduled test. In Jerusalem the response rate to the screening mammography program is among the lowest in the country – under 50%. This number is clearly visible in my clinical day to day practice: several times a year I encounter women, of all ages, who present with very advanced breast cancer, sometimes incurable – simply because of ignorance and lack of proper primary medical care. It is not unusual to find such a woman to have other undetected and untreated conditions such as anemia and hypothyroidism etc.

Jerusalem women need to be better educated about the importance of breast examinations, routine mammograms, follow ups, and need better health services to be available to them. Sure, they'll find the time if they are not feeling well – but then will only see the physician for a cough or some spotting – and have only her major symptom attended to. A comprehensive center, on the other hand, will look at the woman as a whole– has she had her mammogram? Is she up to date on her PAP? Been checked for anemia lately?

By offering all these services, as well as health education, such a center has the potential to impact greatly on the state of women's health in Jerusalem, and I am looking forward to the day when such a center is up and running.

Any help you may give Mrs. Siemiatycki in making this vitally important plan become reality will be greatly appreciated by the women of Jerusalem.

Sincerely,

Tanir M. Allweis, MD  
Breast Surgeon