

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kristin Tolbert  
Southcentral Foundation  
(907) 729-6317  
[ktolbert@scf.cc](mailto:ktolbert@scf.cc)  
SCF-PR-03-23-09

Kara Silverman  
Avon Foundation  
(212) 282-5666  
[Kara.silverman@avonfoundation.org](mailto:Kara.silverman@avonfoundation.org)

## **AVON FOUNDATION BREAST CARE FUND AWARDS GRANT FOR BREAST CANCER AWARENESS PROGRAM TO SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION**

### **Alaska Native-Managed Health Care Group Recognized With Support From National Program**

**(Anchorage, AK)** – The Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund has awarded a \$60,000 one-year grant to Southcentral Foundation (SCF) to increase awareness of the life-saving benefits of early detection of breast cancer. It is the ninth year that the program has received Avon Foundation funding to support its work on this important health issue, and in recognition of continuing excellence of Southcentral Foundation’s program.

“The Breast and Cervical Health Program at Southcentral Foundation looks forward to partnering in education with Anchorage-area Alaska Native women,” said SCF President/CEO Katherine Gottlieb, MBA. “In addition, this important program refers Alaska Native women to low-cost or free mammograms and clinical breast exams in their own communities.” This vital program will also serve women from the Municipality of Anchorage, Matanuska-Susitna Borough and over 70 rural villages of Southcentral Alaska.

Since October of 2000, the Breast and Cervical Health Program at SCF has reached more than 10,000 women with information about the importance of early detection of breast cancer, and has screened over 10,000 women for mammograms and clinical breast exams.

Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in women in the U.S. and the leading single cause of death overall in women between the ages of 40 and 55. Based upon 2005 data from the American Cancer Society, SCF anticipates 260 new cases of breast cancer will be detected in Alaska this year, and 50 lives will be lost. Nationwide, there is a new diagnosis every three minutes and a death from breast

cancer every fourteen minutes. While advances have been made in prevention, diagnosis, treatment and cure, early detection still affords the best opportunity for successful treatment. Programs such as SCF's Breast and Cervical Health Program help ensure that all women, including poor and medically underserved women, have access to early detection information and options.

For Alaska Native women specifically, breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer and the leading cause of cancer death. According to the Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics, Alaska Native people die of cancer at higher rates than any other Alaskans, and results of a study from the Office of Alaska Native Health Research of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium show an increased incidence of cancer in Alaska Natives over a 10-year period.

“One of the greatest barriers for Alaska Native women practicing good breast health care, especially in rural settings, is the lack of effective information about breast exams,” said Dr. Maria Freeman, a health care provider at SCF's Valley Native Primary Care Center.

Since 1993, the Avon Foundation for Women has awarded more than 1,000 grants to community-based breast health programs across the United States, including SCF's Breast and Cervical Health Program. These programs are dedicated to educating underserved women about breast cancer and linking them to early detection screening services.

### **The Avon Foundation for Women and Breast Cancer Crusade**

The Avon Foundation for Women, an accredited 501(c)(3) public charity, was founded in 1955 to improve the lives of women and their families. Now past the half century milestone, the Foundation brings this mission to life through the *Speak Out Against Domestic Violence* program and the *Avon Breast Cancer Crusade*, which raises funds and awareness to advance access to care and finding a cure for breast cancer, with a focus on the medically underserved. Since 1992 the *Avon Breast Cancer Crusade* has raised and awarded more than \$450 million worldwide for medical research; access to care; support services; screening and diagnostics; and education and awareness. The largest fundraising program in the U.S. is the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer series.

### **The Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund**

The Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund is administered by Cicitelli Associates Inc. to support community-based, non-profit breast health programs across the country. The Fund's National Advisory Board selected SCF's Breast and Cervical Health Program as one of 122 new grant recipients

nationwide in the 2006 cycle of Avon Foundation Breast Care Fund grants. These organizations were chosen based on their ability to effectively reach women, particularly minority, low-income, and older women, who are often medically underserved.

### **For more Information**

For more information on SCF's Breast and Cervical Health Program, please call Kate Landis at (907) 729-8891. For more information about breast cancer, contact the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org), or contact the National Cancer Institute at 1-800-4-CANCER or [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov).

To learn more about the Avon Foundation for Women, call 1-866-505-AVON or visit [www.avonfoundation.org](http://www.avonfoundation.org), where you can also access the free printable *Breast Health Resource Guide* in English and Spanish. For information or to register or support the *Avon Walk for Breast Cancer* events, visit [www.avonwalk.org](http://www.avonwalk.org) or call **1-800-510-WALK**.

###

Established in 1982, SCF's mission is to work together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services. The non-profit health care affiliate of CIRI, SCF has grown in its 26 years, from a single dental clinic to an internationally recognized, award-winning health care organization that employs more than 1,350 people and administers a budget of more than \$181 million annually to manage more than 60 health care programs and services.