



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Don't Let Her Stand Alone

Men's support of early screening is vital in the fight against breast cancer.

KUALA LUMPUR, 30th March 2012 – One of the main fears of Malaysian women when diagnosed with breast cancer is the possibility of neglect and abandonment by the men in their lives. These fears often lead to a reluctance to attend regular breast cancer screenings which result in late stage diagnosis. In this case, ignorance is not bliss.

Breast cancer continues to be the most predominant cancer amongst women in Malaysia¹. One in 19 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer by the age of 85 and about 4,000 women are diagnosed each year, mostly between 35 – 60 years old². The key to prevention is early detection and local research has shown that Malaysian women are more likely to go for breast cancer screening if the men in their lives are supportive.

The MenCare Project, launched in 2006 by the National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO) and Pfizer (Malaysia) is a breakthrough project which revolves around the revolutionary initiative to involve men in increasing awareness of breast health and improving update of breast cancer screening services. MenCare seeks to engage men to provide support to the women in their lives and improve the chances of survival through early detection.

The MenCare Coffee Table Book is a milestone in the five years of continuous advocacy by MenCare and it illuminates every achievement of the project thus far. The creation of this book is meant to provide simpler and lighter reading, making the issues surrounding breast cancer more accessible. The book is a combination of

¹ Adapted from <http://www.thespec.com/news/local/article/545641>. Accessed 21 March 2012.

² Adapted from <http://cancer.org.my/learn-about-cancer/cancer-types/>. Accessed 21 March 2012.



inspirational anecdotes from survivors and their husbands, information on breast cancer screening as well as signs and symptoms to lookout for – it seeks to break down barriers of conversation about breast health between men and women.

Simultaneously, the MenCare blog (www.mencare-bc.blogspot.com) will be launched as a platform of online support for men and the women in their life and functions as a forum for men, women, youth and survivors to share their experiences, gain insight and inspiration as well as to form a community of MenCare advocates.

Speaking at the launch of the MenCare Coffee Table Book, a book that aims to educate and empower men on the importance of their role in breast cancer detection and treatment, Datuk Ramani Gurusamy of NCWO urged the Malaysian male community to be a part of this cause “There are no two ways about it. Men’s support of breast cancer screening for women is vital and crucial. We need to change our attitudes; breast cancer is no longer just about the victim. Here at the National Council of Women’s Organisations, we believe that women need to be further empowered through the support of their families, communities and friends.”

MenCare began in 2006 as a nationwide education and advocacy programme aimed at creating positive mindset among adult and young men to encourage the women in their lives to go for regular breast cancer screening. It grew from strength to strength to what is now a full fledged national advocacy movement to provide a policy framework for advocates such as corporations to support male employees to encourage the women in their lives to go for regular breast cancer screening.

“Our efforts have been wide and far-reaching: from the development of a training manual and handbook for care-givers to the MenCare Corporate programme, MenCare has sought to address every possible avenue to provide support to women and breast cancer.” continued Datuk Ramani.

Angel Choi, Country Manager of Pfizer Malaysia and Brunei emphasised the pertinence of MenCare in Malaysian society, “The launch of the coffee table book



and the blog signifies a new era of MenCare that encourages the ongoing and interactive advocacy of the importance of men's role in breast cancer. The book is meant to educate and inspire, but it is also our hope that the book and blog will serve as a way for men to share this worthy cause with other men. This is Pfizer's commitment towards Working Together For a Healthier World and we call upon corporate organisations to embrace this call to action by supporting MenCare just like pioneers IBM, Felda, National Union of Plantation Workers (NUPW), MCIS Zurich and many more".

Also at the event were the MenCare Advocates: Henry Golding, Kid Chan, Sharizan Borhan, Chan Fong and Hansen Lee who took the time to share their support for the cause. Each advocate as respected members of their field were there to highlight the urgency in educating the male community about breast cancer. The advocates also stressed the role of the men and how early detection can save lives.

Also attending the event, Dr. Vicknesh Welluppillai, Medical Director of Pfizer Malaysia spoke on the importance of changing men's attitudes regarding breast cancer, "We have all probably had our experiences with breast cancer – be it being told about someone's cancer plight, or as caregivers to our loved ones, perhaps even losing someone close to us. Breast cancer is one of the most devastating diseases which affected the entire family. It bears an overwhelming burden on women, and subsequently their husbands, children and families."

"Sadly, it remains a stigmatising disease, leaving many patients to face the uncertainties alone and without support. It is vital now, more than ever, that the patient's support network, especially men, are equipped with adequate knowledge about the disease, and how to help their female loved ones cope with breast cancer" he added.



About the National Council of Women's Organisation (NCWO)

The National Council of Women's Organisations Malaysia (NCWO) was officially established on 25th August 1963 to act as a consultative coordinating and advisory body to raise the status of women and their participation in national development. It has 125 affiliates, which act as independent and viable organizations pursuing their own programmes and they lend strength and solidarity to NCWO.

NCWO has been a catalyst for change in all areas of national activity. From equal pay to the position of women in marriage separation, divorce, to legal question of maintenance, custody of children, division of property in cases of divorce, to the appointment of women to assist in Departments of Islamic Affairs in the States, the NCWO has been the most effective, determined and vocal advocate for women in our nation.

Together with Pfizer, NCWO has collaborated to create MenCare, an advocacy programme which endeavours to encourage men to support breast cancer screening for the women in their lives. In an effort to promote healthy lifestyles and public awareness about breast cancer both remain deeply committed to the MenCare Initiative.

Vision of NCWO

"A just society free from discrimination in which women at all levels enjoy equality through the promotion of their human rights". (TBC by NWCO)

About Pfizer Malaysia

Pfizer Malaysia is committed towards Working Together for a Healthier World™. We apply our global resources and strive to set the standard for quality, safety and value of medicines to improve the health and well-being of Malaysians at every stage of life. Our diversified health care portfolio includes human biologic, small molecule



medicines and vaccines in Biopharmaceuticals, as well as a wide range of Nutritional products.

We also collaborate closely with public and private health care providers, and communities to support and expand access to reliable, affordable health care in Malaysia. Pfizer Malaysia began operations in 1964, and every day, some 500 colleagues throughout the country work to advance wellness and make a difference for all who rely on us.

Wyeth is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Pfizer Inc. The merger of Wyeth Malaysia and Pfizer Malaysia entities may be pending in various jurisdictions and integration is subject to completion of various local legal and regulatory obligations.

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