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ETIQA AND ROSE FOUNDATION LAUNCH PHASE 2 OF ETIQA'S FREE CERVICAL SCREENING PROGRAMME AS PART OF EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE CERVICAL CANCER IN MALAYSIA

Kuala Lumpur – As part of efforts to eliminate cervical cancer in Malaysia, Etiqa and ROSE Foundation launched Phase 2 of Etiqa's Free Cervical Screening Programme today, in conjunction with World Health Day to be celebrated on 7 April 2021.

Etiqa's Free Cervical Screening Programme was first launched in July 2019 in partnership with ROSE Foundation to detect and treat women who screen positive for the human papillomavirus (HPV), the cause of cervical cancer. Despite being preventable, cervical cancer is the third most common cancer among women in Malaysia and the fourth most common cancer among women globally.

Phase 1 of the maiden programme which screened over 6,000 women from selected B40 communities in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak was completed successfully despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns.

In addition, the programme was extended to frontliners under the 'Frontliners Uniting Against Cervical Cancer' campaign where it screened approximately 1,500 nurses and police and army personnel helping to fight the pandemic in Malaysia. Over the last year, the selected beneficiaries were screened in more than 40 locations across 9 states. More than 100 community volunteers were trained to educate and offer the HPV self-swab test.

Due to the success of Etiqa's 'Free Cervical Screening Programme' and 'Frontliners Uniting Against Cervical Cancer' campaigns, ROSE Foundation and Etiqa have entered into a second year of collaboration with the aim to screen another 6,000 eligible women nationwide.

The three components of Program ROSE are self-sampling, HPV DNA testing and the use of a mobile e-platform. Women are provided with a personal test kit which allows them to carry out the HPV test themselves. Their samples are then sent to ROSE Laboratory for HPV testing. Results of the HPV test are communicated to the women via mobile phone and those with a positive test result are linked to a government hospital for appropriate follow-up. The unique feature of the programme is that this is not merely a self-screening test but with the use of digital technology, all women who test positive for HPV DNA are linked to care and receive appropriate management. Unlike a conventional Pap smear which involves a yearly pelvic examination, Program ROSE offers women the dignified choice of using a self-swab; a quick, convenient and effective approach to enable molecular tests to be undertaken, followed by prompt delivery of results.

Malaysia's adoption in August 2020 of the World Health Organization's *Global Strategy to Accelerate the Elimination of Cervical Cancer as a Public Health Problem*, represents a milestone in the fight against cervical cancer. The WHO strategy emphasizes the need for the integrated implementation of services within communities, ensuring equity in access to screening and treatment and financial protection for all women. It outlines the three pillars of cervical cancer elimination: HPV vaccination, cervical screening and treatment, and concrete targets to be achieved by the year 2030.

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In her speech today, Dato' Professor Dr. Adeeba binti Kamarulzaman, Chair of ROSE Foundation and Infectious Diseases Specialist at the University of Malaya, highlighted Malaysia's commitment to the WHO cervical cancer elimination targets. "The mission of ROSE Foundation, which is to serve the under-screened and under-privileged population, is aligned with this year's World Health Day theme of 'Building a fairer and healthier world'. Cervical cancer is another example of inequity where 80% of the global incidence of cervical cancer happens in lower middle-income countries."

Dr. Adeeba also said that the 'Frontliners Uniting Against Cervical Cancer' campaign has been deemed a public health success. In November 2020, the campaign was awarded an 'International Neighbour of Choice' (INOC) grant by Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD). The INOC grant is MSD's charitable programme designed to support outstanding work by non-profit organizations whose mission is to improve the quality of life of people and the environment in communities. And in March 2021, the 'Frontliners' campaign was awarded the 'This is Public Health (TIPH)' award by the Global Network for Academic Public Health.

In his speech, Datuk R. Karunakaran, Chairman of Etiqa Group, said, "On the eve of World Health Day, it's important to highlight that cervical cancer is the third most common cancer among Malaysian women, but the only cancer that can be eliminated with proper prevention intervention. Thus, I am pleased to announce that following the success of Phase 1 of Etiqa's Free Cervical Screening Programme with ROSE Foundation, Etiqa will be embarking on Phase 2 of the programme. Etiqa together with ROSE Foundation will continue to support free cervical screening for 6,000 B40 women. We hope to reach more communities and promote self-care intervention for women's reproductive health and rights."

Siti Nita Zuhra Mohd Nazri, Chief Bancassurance Officer of Etiqa, said, "Etiqa is dedicated to serving our community as we are to serving our customers. Our organizational culture is making things 'Fast & Easy' which is also reflected in our philosophy in services to the community through Etiqa's Free Cervical Screening Programme with ROSE Foundation, which is just as 'Fast & Easy'." She added, "In wanting to make the world a better place, Etiqa is proud to play an instrumental role in helping the country in its battle with Covid-19. Since the start of the pandemic, our frontliners have worked tirelessly to protect and secure Malaysians from the outbreak, and we are pleased to be able to assist in ensuring that they are now able to take care of their own health with the free screening Etiqa is providing."

The programme today concluded with a short forum also attended by Datuk R. Karunakaran titled "Frontliners Uniting Against Cervical Cancer" featuring Dato' Professor Dr. Adeeba Kamarulzaman, Chair of ROSE Foundation and Infectious Diseases Specialist, University of Malaya; Puan Siti Nita Zuhra Mohd Nazri, Chief Bancassurance Officer, Etiqa; Datin Seri Dato' Asmawati Ahmad, former Head of Corporate Communications, Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM) and ROSE Ambassador; and Kolonel (Dr) Che Hasnura binti Che Hassan, Obstetrics & Gynaecology Specialist from Hospital Angkatan Tentera Tuanku Mizan. The forum was moderated by Puan Nadiah Hanim Abdul Latif.

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ROSE Foundation and Etiqa came together to launch phase 2 Free Cervical Screening Programme in conjunction with World Health Day 2021. From left to right: Datin Seri Dato' Asmawati Ahmad, Kolonel (Dr) Che Hasnura binti Che Hassan, Professor Dr Woo Yin Ling, Puan Siti Nita Zuhra, Datuk R Karunakaran and Dato' Professor Dr Adeeba Kamarulzaman.



Active discussion on the joint effort towards a Cervical Cancer Free Malaysia featuring speakers from various expertise. From left to right: Professor Dr Woo Yin Ling, Datin Seri Dato' Asmawati Ahmad, Dato'

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Professor Dr Adeeba Kamarulzaman, Puan Nadiyah Hanim Abdul Latif (moderator), Puan Siti Nita Zuhra dan Kolonel (Dr) Che Hasnura binti Che Hassan.

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About Etiqa

Etiqa is a true multi-channel distributor of Insurance and Takaful products via its 10,000 agency force, 46 branches and 17 offices, over 490 bancassurance network (via Maybank branches, third-party banks, as well as co-operatives and brokers) through its presence in Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Indonesia.

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About ROSE Foundation

The ROSE Foundation is a non-profit organization established in 2019 with the vision of cervical cancer elimination in Malaysia. The foundation's mission is to deliver cervical screening to women in Malaysia using the unique and innovative Program ROSE approach primarily focusing on the under-screened and under-privileged population.

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