

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Deputy Prime Minister Launches ‘Etiqa Free Cervical Screening Programme with ROSE Foundation’ for 6,000 Women in B40 Communities Nationwide

Kuala Lumpur, July 28, 2019 – The nationwide ‘Etiqa Free Cervical Screening Programme with ROSE Foundation’ got off to a resounding start today when **YAB Dato’ Seri Dr. Wan Azizah Dr. Wan Ismail, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia**, officiated the launch in her own constituency of Pandan.

The programme, costing more than RM1.2 million, will screen a total of 6,000 women, aged 30 to 49, from selected B40 communities in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak over the course of one year. Funded by Etiqa and implemented in collaboration with ROSE Foundation, ROSE which stands for **R**emoving **O**bstacles to Cervical **S**creening, offers an innovative solution to detecting pre-cancer causing HPV viruses in women.

Under ROSE, women are given a personal kit that they can use themselves to privately and painlessly obtain a sample from their cervix. This is then put through a highly accurate HPV test in the laboratory. The results are sent to the women’s own mobile phones. Women with the virus who have subsequently developed pre-cancer lesions can then be treated before it progresses into cervical cancer.

According to **Datuk R. Karunakaran, Chairman of Maybank Ageas Holdings Berhad**, the parent company of Etiqa General Insurance Berhad, Etiqa Life Insurance Berhad, Etiqa General Takaful Berhad and Etiqa Family Takaful Berhad, the initiative is part of Etiqa’s corporate social responsibility commitment towards healthy living, under its Etiqa Cares flagship programme.

He said, “As a leading local insurance and takaful operator, Etiqa has always been dedicated to serving our community as we are to serving our customers, and we are proud to play an active role in supporting the Government’s vision of seeing more women aware of the perils of cervical cancer, and taking steps towards getting themselves screened.”

Datuk Karunakaran also stressed that ROSE resonated strongly with Etiqa’s own corporate culture that upholds ‘Fast & Easy’ experiences.

He elaborated, “Speed and simplicity are very important, especially to those from the B40 category. Low disease awareness and the constant struggle to earn a living often deter them from undergoing health screening.

“Partnering ROSE Foundation as its very first corporate partner, will help to bring the screening service to B40 women in their own communities.”

The inaugural screening roadshow today was organised in collaboration with *Pusat Khidmat Rakyat Parlimen Pandan*. Over 200 women came forward to be screened, thereby becoming the first to benefit from the programme.

According to **Professor Dr Woo Yin Ling, Medical Technical Advisor to the ROSE Foundation**, cervical cancer is among the top three most common cancers for Malaysian women. But it is also one of the most preventable and treatable cancers, provided the disease is detected and treated early.

She lamented that nearly 80 per cent of cervical cancer cases in Malaysia are diagnosed in their late stages, which results in majority of women dying from the disease. She stressed that regular cervical screening can prevent this tragic loss of life, and can help eliminate the cancer altogether.

Professor Woo, who is also Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist at University Malaya Medical Centre, remarked, “Pap smears have been a barrier to screening as many women find them embarrassing and uncomfortable.

“This is why we are happy that the Ministry of Health Malaysia and the Ministry of Women, Family & Community Development are now moving towards self-sampled HPV testing, instead.”

She added, “With ROSE, women need only as few as two tests per lifetime as opposed to 15 PAP smears.

“However, ROSE is more than just a test; it is about putting the women first and helping them navigate the system.”

Professor Woo explained that many women cannot afford to spend hours in the clinic for a preventive test. Those who receive positive results become fearful and are unsure of how to find their way around the hospital, nor would they know how to make an appointment or even show up.

“ROSE helps women overcome their fear of ‘getting lost in the system’ and ensure they get treated successfully at hospitals, be it for pre-cancer lesions or cervical cancer.”

Professor Woo remarked that the ROSE Foundation welcomes opportunities to collaborate with caring companies, government agencies, non-governmental organisations and community groups to screen as many women as possible.

She concluded, “We would be responding to the government’s call to aid underserved communities through public-private partnerships in the spirit of universal healthcare for all.

“We will also be part of a global movement, led by the World Health Organisation, of working together towards the elimination of cervical cancer.

The Etiqa Free Cervical Screening Programme With Rose Foundation will head for Miri, Sarawak in August, and Bakri, Johor in September. More roadshows are being organised.

For screening dates and venues, please call 019-231 1038.

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.

About ROSE Foundation

The ROSE Foundation is a non-profit organisation 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 ROSE approach primarily focusing on the under-screened population.

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