



## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

### **The Call for Men To Act**

Advocating for Male Support of Breast Cancer Screening for Women (2008-2010)

**Petaling Jaya, 7 October, 2010** - Pfizer (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd and the National Council of Women's Organisations (NCWO) once again combined forces to launch the MenCare Corporate Programme, a critical component of the MenCare initiative which aims at advocating for MenCare policies to be incorporated in the government, corporate and community agencies.

The NCWO MenCare Initiative, a collaboration between Pfizer and NCWO, is an advocacy programme which endeavour to encourage men to support breast cancer screening for the women in their lives, with the ultimate goal of reducing morbidity and mortality associated with breast cancer.

The MenCare Initiative has been successful over the past five years - its first phase in 2006 concentrated on production of a training manual and handbook for service providers to engage men to be more aware about breast health and breast disease and in the second phase, MenCare 2007, regional workshops were held to increase the mass of MenCare advocates throughout the country.

Within the third phase which focuses on advocacy work, the MenCare Corporate Programme aims to help incorporate MenCare Policies in the corporate sector to educate and empower men to support the women in their lives and encouraging them to go for breast cancer screening. This Corporate Outreach Programme is conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development which is lending its full support to engage and gain the support of the husbands, fathers and other members of the male community to increase the awareness and uptake of screening of breast cancer amongst women.

Dato' Ramani Gurusamy, Deputy President of NCWO, speaking on behalf of NCWO President Tan Sri Dato' Sharifah Hapsah Syed Shadabudin, said of MenCare, "Awareness, understanding

and support from the senior personnel of government agencies, corporations and the community to take action to introduce and integrate policies, regulations, resources and programmes for male support of breast screening services for early detection goes a long way for a better quality of life for Malaysian women and a better chance for women fighting the disease. NCWO is pleased to partner Pfizer Malaysia in the MenCare project and we will not rest on our laurels but to continue to push for working towards a better quality of life for Malaysian women, while engaging Malaysian men.”

Dato’ Ramani explained further that the MenCare Advocacy Programme is a 3-year endeavor to enlist male staff in key positions in the government, corporate and community sectors to consider policies and regulations in the work place that promote male support of breast cancer screening and treatment. Incorporation of MenCare Policies would suggest specific breast cancer screening benefits as part of the medical/health insurance package offered by the employers within the workplace, a formal procedure that allows time-off for male staff to provide support for women for breast cancer screening and promotion of breast cancer awareness for both sexes.

The partners were announced by YB Senator Dato’ Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, Minister of Women, Family and Community Development as pioneers in the MenCare Corporate Programme 2010. These are Pfizer Malaysia, Felda, IBM Malaysia, the National Union of Plantation Workers (NUPW) and MCIS Zurich, who each received a MenCare Corporate Kit providing guidance for the implementation of MenCare activities and policies in their respective organizations.

According to GLOBOCAN 2008, an International Agency for Research on Cancer, there were 4,485 new cases of breast cancer reported in Malaysia in 2008. The continuous increase in breast cancer cases is alarming and early detection is crucial to prevent any untimely death related to breast cancer. However in Malaysia early detection of breast cancer is still low with only 46.9% of women reported having some form of breast cancer examination and among the rural women, the rates are even lower.

The staggering incidence of breast cancer cases in Malaysia leads to the need to increase the awareness of breast cancer, its prevention, diagnosis and treatment. Research shows that women are more likely to go for screening and get diagnosed and treated for breast cancer if the men in their lives are supportive, an important factor as early diagnosis and treatment leads to improved recovery and survival rate.

Recognising the importance of male support for breast cancer, NCWO in partnership with Pfizer Malaysia has championed the cause to reach out to the male community and seek their involvement to encourage the women in their lives to go for breast cancer screening, and supporting them during diagnosis and treatment.

“Pfizer Malaysia has been a dedicated MenCare partner from its inception in 2006. Our collaboration with NCWO is a reflection of our corporate mission ‘Working Together for a Healthier World’. Through the MenCare Project we reached out to thousands of men and women via workshops, testimonials and other awareness programmes. We know that MenCare has produced both positive and meaningful results for many individuals. We are pleased and privileged to move forward with NCWO in the third phase of this project. The MenCare Corporate Programme is an important platform that demonstrates employers are committed to the health and wellbeing of their staff, and we hope for more companies to participate in the coming months, so that MenCare will become a movement in its own right and a concept that is adopted across all corporate, government and non-government bodies,” said Angel Choi, Managing Director for Pfizer Malaysia/Brunei.

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#### About the National Council of Women’s Organisations (NCWO)

NCWO is one of Malaysia’s leading advocates of women’s rights in the sustainable development and advancement of society. The council’s mission is to unite women's organizations and cooperate with national, regional and international organizations in order to:

- Respect, protect and fulfill women's rights
- Promote the development and advancement of women at all levels
- Advocate and monitor the full participation, inclusion and representation of women in decision making
- Ensure that women have equitable access to and are equal agents and beneficiaries of development

#### About Pfizer:

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.

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