

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Ministry of Health Malaysia and Hospital Tuanku Jaafar to Establish A
New Pink Ribbon Centre For Breast Cancer Patients**

Seremban, 7th October 2023 – In a significant move towards closing the care gap and improving the survival rates among breast cancer patients, the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH), represented by Hospital Tuanku Jaafar (HTJ), is excited to announce the renewal of the collaborative work and plans to upgrade the Pink Ribbon Centre to a new space. The development of the new Pink Ribbon Centre will expand its capacity to be a one-stop centre, providing patient-centred care to newly diagnosed breast cancer patients through a highly competent, dedicated team comprising members from both the Ministry of Health and Cancer Research Malaysia (CRM).

Breast cancer, though increasingly curable, presents a daunting challenge for patients, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Despite subsidised treatments available at Ministry of Health hospitals, the financial burden of non-medical costs, and coming to terms with a cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming.

Dato' Dr. Imi Sairi Ab Hadi, MOH Lead Person in Hospital-Based Navigation, said, "Even though breast cancer is one of the most curable cancers, sadly, improvements in survival have made a greater impact among high-income patients compared to those with low income. Through the partnership with CRM, we hope to address this gap and serve more lower-income breast cancer patients through the Patient Navigation Programme."

To reaffirm their commitment to this vital cause, an official MOU-signing ceremony took place at HTJ. Dignitaries present included Yang Amat Mulia Tunku Ali Redhaudin ibni Tuanku Muhriz, Chairman of Cancer Research Malaysia; Dato' Dr. Harlina Bt. Abdul Rashid, Negeri Sembilan Health Director Darul Khusus; Dato' Dr. Zaleha Md Noor, Tuanku Jaafar Hospital Director; Dato' Dr. Imi Sairi Ab Hadi, MOH Lead Person in Hospital-Based Navigation; Dr. Mazwela bt Mohamad, Surgeon in Charge of PRC at HTJ; and Professor Datin Paduka Dr. Teo Soo Hwang, Chief Scientific Officer of Cancer Research Malaysia.

Dr. Zaleha said in her speech, "the establishment of the Pink Ribbon Center (PRC) at Hospital Tuanku Jaafar has led to a significant rise in the number of breast cancer patients, with an annual increase to 180 to 185 patients. This increase can be attributed to the awareness campaigns and discussions about PRC that have been conducted in health clinics since 2019. As a result, the PRC at our hospital now receives referral cases from all corners of Negeri Sembilan at an accelerated pace."

Chairman of CRMY Board of Trustees YAM Tunku Ali highlighted, “whilst our scientists have led important studies in Asian breast cancer patients which have enabled Malaysians to access new treatment options, we are also mindful that there is a very significant gap in breast cancer survival rates based on socio-economic status. As such, we are working with the Ministry of Health through research programmes such as our patient navigation programme, which is aimed at improving survival rates as well as quality of life, for lower income patients.”

Prof Teo emphasised, “Over the past few decades, breast cancer awareness campaigns have led to greater awareness and less fear of breast cancer in urban areas, but there remain challenges in lower income communities. Working together with the MOH, we have created a system that tracks patients and navigates them through the complex treatment journey. We are pleased to report that with the commitment and dedication of the doctors and nurses at the Ministry of Health and the navigators at CRMY, we have been able to create a new way to help patients overcome various obstacles, including limited awareness, delayed diagnoses, restricted access to quality care, and a reliance on alternative treatments.”

Separately, there were 2 other MOU-signing ceremonies held at Hospital Umum Sarawak (HUS) and Hospital Queen Elizabeth II (HQEII). The collaboration focuses on the Patient Navigation Programme at public hospitals in Kuching and Kota Kinabalu. The former was held on 2nd November 2022 between Dr. Ngian Hie Ung, Director of HUS, and Dr. Adibah Ali, Consultant Breast Surgeon in HUS, Dr. Imi, and Dr. Teo, while the latter was held on 28th October 2022 between Dato’ Dr. Rose Nani Mudin, Director of Sabah State Health Department, Dr. Siti Zubaidah Shariff, Consultant Breast Surgeon in HQEII, and Dr. Teo. With support from Yayasan PETRONAS, work is ongoing with the Health Ministry to expand the programme to more hospitals, and to expand the scope from hospital- based navigation to community navigation.

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Renewal on Memorandum of Understanding(MOU) on collaboration in Patient Navigation Program(PNP) between Cancer Research Malaysia(CRMY) and Hospital Tuanku Ja'afar Seremban (HTJS). The MOU signing was witnessed by YAM Tunku Ali Redhaudin Ibni Tuanku Muhriz, Chairman of CRMY (in the middle). Signatory from CRMY: Professor Datin Paduka Dr. Teo Soo-Hwang & Ms Yap Fui Fong. Signatory from HTJS: Dato' Dr Zaleha binti Md Noor & Dato' Dr Harlina Abdul Rashi.



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About Cancer Research Malaysia

Established in 2000, Cancer Research Malaysia (CRMY) is the country's first and only independent and non-profit cancer research organisation. Funded entirely by donations and research grants, it conducts cancer research to find better ways to improve survival, focusing on Asians. In the breast cancer research programme, CRMY has led the first and most comprehensive study building a risk-stratified approach for screening in Asian women, which allows more efficient and equitable screening and prevention to Asian women at higher risk of breast cancer. In addition, CRMY has led the largest study of genomic profiles of Asian breast cancers, which provides critical insights into treatment and survival in Asian women. This has led directly to the development of the first investigator-led clinical trial to test new therapies in Asian breast cancer patients. Since 2014, CRMY has established a nurse and community-led programme which has transformed the survival of underserved Malaysian breast cancer patients.

For more information, please visit website at www.cancerresearch.my

Cancer Research Malaysia's work is entirely supported by grants and donations. For those interested to support the work of Cancer Research Malaysia, donations can be made to CRMY at www.cancerresearch.my/donate

About Patient Navigation Programme

Advances in early detection and treatment have enabled most breast cancer patients in high-income countries to survive the disease. However, in many low and middle-income countries, inadequate healthcare services and the stigma associated with cancer lead women to delay seeking medical attention or turn to alternative medicines that do not offer a cure. Recognising this problem, efforts were taken by Hospital Tengku Ampuan Rahimah, Klang and CRMY to initiate a pilot Patient Navigation Programme in 2015. The Patient Navigation Programme was integrated into the current breast cancer patient management at Pink Ribbon Centre, HTAR. The initiative ensured a timely movement of patients through a complex cancer care continuum by bringing together a public hospital system and charity partners to solve problems for breast cancer patients in Malaysia. With this initial success, the Health Ministry plans to develop a national policy on navigation and expand the scope to other cancers.

Get the latest updates on how we're saving lives through impactful research at <https://cancerresearchmalaysia.wordpress.com/>

About Yayasan PETRONAS

Yayasan PETRONAS is the Social Impact arm of PETRONAS. Its mission is to deliver positive and sustainable impact on the well-being of society across the nation through its focus areas in Education, Community Well-being and Development and the Environment.

To know more, visit www.yayasanpetronas.com.my

About Yayasan Sime Darby

Yayasan Sime Darby is a foundation that supports charitable initiatives in five (5) key areas, which were namely, education, environment, community & health, sports, and arts & culture. Yayasan Sime Darby dedicates itself to promoting the human quest for learning, knowledge, meaning, goodwill and understanding.

Cancer Research Malaysia has been conducting research to continue advancing prevention and treatment of cancer, raising public awareness towards its early detection and action in Malaysia, as well as advocating in the fight against cancer in Southeast Asia and beyond, which Yayasan Sime Darby has been providing sponsorship for the organization since 2012.

To know more, visit <http://www.yayasansimedarby.com/>