

# Novartis, Philippine Press Institute, ICanServe Foundation partner on media workshop to enhance breast cancer knowledge

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Media plays an important role in promoting public awareness on good health practices and disease prevention.

Recognizing the key role of media in health literacy promotion, Novartis Healthcare Philippines, Philippine Press Institute (PPI), and ICanServe Foundation have signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) to organize a workshop that aims to help local journalists gain a deeper understanding of breast cancer. The MOA is supported by the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP) and the Alliance and Partnerships for Patient Innovations & Solutions (APPIS).



Recognizing the key role of media in health literacy promotion, Novartis Healthcare Philippines, Philippine Press Institute (PPI), and ICanServe Foundation have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to organize a workshop that aims to help local journalists gain a deeper understanding of breast cancer. Photo shows (from left) Ms. Christine Fajardo, Communications & Engagement Head, Novartis Healthcare Philippines & Asia Aspiring Innovative Medicines; Mr. Ariel Sebellino, Executive Director, PPI; Mr. Joel Chong, President, Novartis Healthcare Philippines; Ms. Kara Magsanoc-Alikpala, Founding President of ICanServe Foundation and Vice President for Internal Affairs of Cancer Coalition Philippines; and Mr. Teodoro Padilla, Executive Director, Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP).

“We are privileged to partner with the Philippine Press Institute and ICanServe Foundation in organizing this

workshop. The support of media is particularly important in increasing awareness on breast cancer, the most common type of cancer in Filipino women.<sup>1</sup> Through their learnings from this workshop, our local journalists can help improve health literacy among the general public and facilitate early diagnosis and prompt treatment of breast cancer. There is hope for women diagnosed with breast cancer. They need to know that enhanced quality of life and overall survival are possible,” said Mr. Joel Chong, President, Novartis Healthcare Philippines.

“Media must go beyond reporting just the statistics and give a human face to their stories. By keeping people and communities informed, this will also empower breast cancer patients and survivors,” said PPI chairman Rolando Estabillo.

“Some journalists think that reporting on cancer can be boring and depressing. Twenty-six years ago, I was one of them, but I have changed my mind since. Any delay in the delivery of health services to cancer patients can mean progression of disease or death. We can’t be timid as journalists. When we skirt around the real issues because we don’t want to offend, we squander the chance to save lives. I urge our local journalists to consider health, especially cancer, headline material. You have a chance to save lives, please use it,” said Ms. Kara Magsanoc-Alikpala, Founding President of ICanServe Foundation, Vice President for Internal Affairs of Cancer Coalition Philippines, and Founding Member of Philippine Alliance of Patient Organizations (PAPO).

“Fifty-three percent of breast cancer cases in the country are diagnosed in their advanced stages, while only 2 to 3 percent of cases are diagnosed in stage 1.<sup>2</sup> With the help of media, we seek to increase public awareness on breast cancer and consequently promote early detection and prompt treatment. Through this initiative, we aim to help improve breast cancer survivorship and enhance the patient journey,” said Christine Fajardo, Communications & Engagement Head of Novartis Healthcare Philippines & Asia Aspiring Innovative Medicines.

“Increased awareness and health literacy is essential in the fight against noncommunicable diseases such as breast cancer. This is where media can make a difference by empowering individuals with knowledge to enable them to make healthier choices and adopt healthy behaviors. This has been our advocacy in support of the Government in promoting accurate information, and the health of the general public,” said Mr. Teodoro Padilla, Executive Director, PHAP.

Entitled “Health Reporting on Breast Cancer in the Philippines,” the two half-day virtual workshop scheduled on June 21-22, 2023 will be attended by journalists who are PPI members. The workshop aims to deepen local journalists’ understanding about the disease, the burden of breast cancer, and related terminologies and policies; inform them about new medicines available to breast cancer patients and their families; and link them with government and medical experts so they can write accurate and comprehensive stories about breast cancer.



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## References:

1. 2015 Philippine Cancer Facts and Estimates
2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6385717>

## About Philippine Press Institute (PPI)

A non-stock, non-profit private organization, PPI is the national association of newspapers and considered the oldest professional media organization in the country, its principal mandate is to defend press freedom and promote ethical standards for the professional development of the Filipino journalist.

## About ICanServe Foundation

The ICanServeFoundation is an advocacy group founded in 1999 by four breast cancer survivors led by journalist Kara Magsanoc-Alikpala. Co-founding ICanServe were Crisann Celdran, Becky Fuentes and Bet Lazatin. The four friends saw the need to provide a circle of support for women who were newly diagnosed, women on cancer treatments and women in remission navigating through their “new normal” life. They also saw the need to provide women with information.

ICanServe provides hope and help to women with breast cancer. It promotes and conducts early breast cancer detection programs in local communities providing sustained access to accurate diagnosis, timely treatments and patient navigation. Its network of cancer survivors lights the path for women with cancer towards total healing.

## About Novartis

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