

Novartis supports ICanServe Foundation in developing breast self-examination video

May 07, 2021

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Called “Kamay Gabay: Sariling Salat sa Suso”, the four-and-a-half-minute video is narrated in Tagalog by ICanServe spokesperson and breast cancer survivor Ms. Bibeth Orteza. It was uploaded on the ICanServe Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/icanserve/>) on March 8, 2021 as the foundation joined the celebration of International Women's Day. ICanServe is an advocacy group that promotes and conducts early breast cancer detection programs in local communities providing sustained access to accurate diagnosis, timely treatments and patient navigation.

“Novartis is privileged to support ICanServe in developing an informative video tutorial on how and when to do BSE. Regular BSE can be an important way to find a breast cancer early, when it’s more likely to be treated successfully. While no single test can detect all breast cancers early, performing breast self-exam in combination with a mammogram can increase the odds of early detection,” said Ms. Janet Yap, Oncology General Manager, Novartis Healthcare Philippines, Inc.

“Unlike other cancers, breast cancer can be screened and diagnosed early. Performing BSE regularly makes women aware of their breasts and they will be the first to notice any notable changes. It is important to perform BSE especially during the pandemic when many women are afraid of going to the hospitals whether they be non-breast cancer patients going for a routine screening, cancer patients on treatment or cancer survivors on their regular checkup,” said Ms. Kara Magsanoc-Alikpala, Founding President, ICanServe Foundation.

Herself a breast cancer survivor, Ms. Alikpala urged Filipino women to take charge of their health and encourage others to do so. “Once you discover a suspicious lump in your breast, see a doctor immediately. The earlier breast cancer is diagnosed, the easier it is to treat and treatment is more affordable. Saving mothers and daughters, the heartbeat and unifying factor of any home, is like saving a family.”

Breast cancer has now overtaken lung cancer as the world’s mostly commonly-diagnosed cancer, according to statistics released by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) in December 2020. “This is an alarming development especially for a cancer that is preventable and curable especially if diagnosed early. We must encourage Filipino women to be proactive in caring for their breast health,” Ms. Alikpala stressed. She called on Filipino women to perform monthly BSE beginning age 20, see a doctor for a yearly clinical breast exam (CBE) beginning age 30, and have an annual mammogram starting age 40.

Ms. Alikpala appealed to government and all concerned stakeholders to invest in the prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer in order to reduce sickness and deaths caused by the disease. “We must move faster, be more aggressive and get in front of this disease that is outsmarting us. We cannot always play catch up; otherwise, we lose too many lives that may have had the potential to build and dream big for this country’s future.”



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