

# Novartis Philippines launches PIK3CA Testing Program for Breast Cancer

May 10, 2022



Stakeholder officials signed the formal agreement to implement the Novartis PIK3CA Testing Program for advanced Breast Cancer patients. Photo shows (from left): Ms. Vanessa Ongsue, Vice President for Medical Services of Hi- Precision Diagnostics, Mr. Joel Chong, Oncology General Manager of Novartis Healthcare Philippines and Dr. Josephine Contreras -Tolentino, Chief, Section of Medical Oncology of The Medical City.



Stakeholders declared their commitment to promote awareness on the importance of PIK3CA testing and to facilitate testing for advanced breast cancer patients. Photo shows (from left): Ms. Christine Fajardo, Patient Engagement Head of Novartis Healthcare Philippines; Dr. Jerome Gonzaga, Medical Advisor for Solid Tumors of Novartis Healthcare Philippines; Ms. Vanessa Ongsue, Vice President for Medical Services of Hi-Precision Diagnostics; Mr. Joel Chong, Oncology General Manager of Novartis Healthcare Philippines; Dr. Josephine Contreras -Tolentino, Chief, Section of Medical Oncology of The Medical City; and Dr. Shari Daffodil Francisco, Oncology Medical Director of Novartis Healthcare Philippines.

10 May 2022, Philippines – Novartis launched its PIK3CA Testing Program at Shangri-La Fort in Taguig City on 30 April 2022. Titled “Mutation Matters in Breast Cancer: PI3K-ing the Right Test”, the event aimed to highlight the burden of breast cancer in the Philippines and the central role that PIK3CA mutation plays in breast cancer progression.

Present during the event were Dr. Josephine Contreras -Tolentino, Chief, Section of Medical Oncology and Consultant Director of the Chemotherapy Unit of The Medical City; Ms. Vanessa Ongsue, Vice President for Medical Services of Hi-Precision Diagnostics; Mr. Joel Chong, Oncology General Manager of Novartis Healthcare Philippines; Ms. Leilani Soriano, Manager of The Medical City Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology Laboratory; Dr. Shari Daffodil Francisco, Oncology Medical Director of Novartis Healthcare Philippines; Dr. Jerome Gonzaga, Medical Advisor for Solid Tumors of Novartis Healthcare Philippines; and Ms. Christine Fajardo, Patient Engagement Head of Novartis Healthcare Philippines.

Officials of the partner stakeholders signed the formal agreement to implement the testing program and declared their commitment to promote awareness on the importance of PIK3CA testing and to facilitate testing for patients.

“There is a new target in breast cancer, the PIK3CA mutation. Advanced laboratory testing enables doctors to predict which medicines work better and which do not for specific patients. As such, doctors and patients are

able to make educated decisions. Moreover, patients save money by not taking a drug that may not work for them,” said Mr. Chong.

“Around 40% of breast cancer patients with hormone receptor positive, human epidermal growth factor receptor-2 negative tumors can harbor and test positive for PIK3CA mutation. Their outcomes may improve if they are treated with targeted therapy. I, together with other medical oncologists, will continue to educate and guide our patients so that they can make informed decision that is best for them,” said Dr. Tolentino.

Given the low awareness on the harmful effects of PIK3CA mutation, Novartis launched the testing program to educate the public on the clinical importance of early identification of PIK3CA mutation and encourage breast cancer patients and medical oncologists to consider PIK3CA testing. During the event, experts called on patients with advanced breast cancer to get tested to improve treatment outcomes.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among Filipino women, and the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the country, next to lung and liver cancer<sup>1</sup>. PIK3CA is the most commonly mutated gene in hormone receptor positive, human epidermal growth factor receptor-2 negative (HR+/HER2-) breast cancer; approximately 40% of patients living with HR+/HER2- breast cancer have this mutation. PIK3CA mutations are associated with tumor growth, resistance to endocrine treatment and a poor overall prognosis<sup>2</sup>.

For inquiries regarding the PIK3CA Testing Program, contact Hi-Precision Diagnostics at (0908) 873-8370 / (0908) 880-2807 or email at [sales.endorsement@hi-precision.com.ph](mailto:sales.endorsement@hi-precision.com.ph); or The Medical City at (02) 898-1000 local 3175 or 6415, (0961) 858-6606, or email at [moleculardx@themedicalcity.com](mailto:moleculardx@themedicalcity.com).

<sup>1</sup> [World Health Organization \(WHO\). GLOBOCAN 2020 \(IARC\), Population Fact Sheets](https://gco.iarc.fr/today/data/factsheets/populations/608-philippines-fact-sheets.pdf)  
<https://gco.iarc.fr/today/data/factsheets/populations/608-philippines-fact-sheets.pdf> Accessed March 10, 2021

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.novartis.com/news/media-releases/fda-approves-novartis-piqray-first-and-only-treatmentspecifically-patients-pik3ca-mutation-hrher2-advanced-breast-cance>

## About Novartis

Novartis is reimagining medicine to improve and extend people's lives. As a leading global medicines company, it uses innovative science and digital technologies to create transformative treatments in areas of great medical need. In its quest to find new medicines, Novartis consistently ranks among the world's top companies investing in research and development. Novartis products reach nearly 800 million people globally and is continuously finding innovative ways to expand access to latest treatments. About 108,000 people of more than 140 nationalities work at Novartis around the world. Find out more at [www.novartis.com](http://www.novartis.com).

## About Hi- Precision Diagnostics

Hi-Precision Diagnostics (HPD) is the leading provider of quality and affordable diagnostic health care services. It is also one of the country's largest medical laboratory that offers a variety of clinical services from routine laboratory tests, imaging, multi-specialty doctors' clinics, and can perform laboratory tests that are not readily available in the country.

## About The Medical City

The Medical City has established itself for decades as a leader in providing exceptional, high-quality healthcare to the people it serves. The Philippines' largest healthcare network is made up of one flagship complex, four provincial hospitals, and more than 50 clinics across Metro Manila and select regions. TMC Main now sees about 50,000 inpatients and 500,000 outpatients per year.

The institution's aggressive national and international expansion strategy indicates a dedication to bringing its unique, world-class brand of health care directly to the areas where its patients live.

#### Philippine Society of Medical Oncology

Founded in 1969, The Philippine Society of Medical Oncology (PSMO) is a professional non-profit organization of board-certified Medical Oncologists whose mission is to improve the science and ethical, holistic practice of cancer care in the Philippines. It aspires to be a globally known association of competent and compassionate medical oncologists who are inspired and devoted to integrating a multidisciplinary approach to the best care for Filipino cancer patients.

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