

Sun Life Financial Asia Releases New Diabetes in Asia Report

More than 60% of diabetics live in Asia; Community-based approach needed to create opportunities for change

HONG KONG, April 5, 2019 – A coordinated, community-based approach is essential to hold back the rising tide of diabetes in Asia, according to a new report from Sun Life Financial Asia (TSX: SLF) (NYSE: SLF), in light of World Health Day 2019.

Over 422 million adults worldwide are living with diabetes, with Asian countries now accounting for more than 60% of cases worldwide. Past research from Sun Life has found that while awareness of diabetes causes and methods of prevention is on the rise, many individuals are still unwilling to take action to combat the disease.

The new report *Diabetes in Asia: Empowering communities to lead healthier lives* focuses on Hong Kong, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia, and shines a light on the importance of engaging communities in these countries to counter this fast growing health problem.

A dangerous convergence of factors – urbanisation, higher levels of physical inactivity, pollution, smoking and unhealthy diets – has created a mounting health crisis. At a global level, it is estimated that diabetes will cost \$1.7 trillion USD in lost GDP between 2011 and 2030. \$800 billion of that sum will be accounted for by low- to middle-income countries.

“Diabetes is a leading health challenge for Asia this century and it’s damaging the quality of life of people across the region. We believe that the only way to hold back the rising tide of diabetes is to work with local communities to create opportunities for change,” says Claude Accum, President of Sun Life Financial Asia. “Communities can be powerful agents for educating, engaging and empowering families and individuals to make healthier lifestyle choices.”

“The epidemic of Type II diabetes in Asia has far-reaching implications for our overall health, as diabetes can cause diseases of the heart, blood vessels, kidneys, eyes, limbs, and even influences our cancer risk and mental health.” says Dr. Loraine Oman-Ganes, Corporate Chief Medical Director for Sun Life Financial. “Type II diabetes is caused by a complex mix of genetic and environmental factors, but that does not mean that diabetes is our destiny. We have the power to positively influence our own health. Simple lifestyle changes such as regular exercise and healthy diet can transform outcomes in type II diabetes, and even prevent it.”

World Health Day 2019 sheds light on life without affordable healthcare coverage. More information about World Health Day 2019 is available [here](#).

Key Statistics:

- **422 million** adults worldwide living with diabetes.
- **Over 1 million** deaths worldwide from Type II diabetes in 2017.
- **\$1.7 trillion** lost global GDP from 2011 to 2030, including direct and indirect costs of diabetes.
- **60%** of world’s diabetic population live in Asia

- Urban populations are estimated to **more than double by 2050** in South-east Asia.
- **80%** of the population in South-east Asia do not eat five portions of fruits and vegetables a day.
- **64%** of respondents to Sun Life Asia survey believe a lack of physical activity or exercise is a contributing factor for diabetes, yet **only 32%** are willing to exercise with a diabetic family member.



About Sun Life Financial

Sun Life Financial is a leading international financial services organization providing insurance, wealth and asset management solutions to individual and corporate Clients. Sun Life Financial has operations in a number of markets worldwide, including Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Japan, Indonesia, India, China, Australia, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia and Bermuda. As of December 31, 2018, Sun Life Financial had total assets under management of CDN\$951 billion. For more information please visit www.sunlife.com.

Sun Life Financial Inc. trades on the Toronto (TSX), New York (NYSE) and Philippine (PSE) stock exchanges under the ticker symbol SLF.

Note to editors: All figures in Canadian dollars

Media Relations Contact:

Sarah James, Head of Communications, Sun Life Financial Asia
Phone +852 2918 3828
Mobile +852 6021 5797
sarah.james@sunlife.com