



**HEALTHIER, LONGER,  
BETTER LIVES**

MALAYSIA'S  
**HEALTHIEST  
WORKPLACE**

**AIA Vitality**

## Media Release

### **One year later: Malaysian Workforce Experience High Productivity Loss and Work-Related Stress**

*Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality 2018 survey findings reveal that absence and presenteeism continue to affect organisation's bottom line*

- Organisations lose a total of 73.1 days per employee due to absence and presenteeism, costing each employer RM2.27 million per month.
- Mental health issues are on the rise with 50.2% of employees having at least one dimension of work-related stress.
- 98% of employees have a higher AIA Vitality Age than actual age and are functioning with a body and mental state that is older than their actual years.

**KUALA LUMPUR, 26 November 2018** – Leading provider of life and health insurance, AIA Bhd. today revealed the results of the Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality 2018 survey. The findings demonstrate that Malaysia continues to be affected by productivity loss in the workplace that is attributed to significant absence\* and presenteeism\*\* in its workforce. The results also highlighted the increasing prevalence of mental health issues in the workplace with 50.2% of employees having reported at least one dimension of work-related stress.

A total of 117 organisations of different sizes and sectors participated this year, representing a combined workforce of 11,551 employees. This has more than doubled the number of participants from last year's inaugural survey, indicating Corporate Malaysia's growing interest to find out where they stand, as well as their commitment to providing better workplaces to attract and retain people. Since its launch, the survey results have brought to the fore the issue of high productivity loss, as well as other behaviours and factors like lack of sleep, stress, poor eating, physical inactivity as well as overall mental health and wellbeing.

Among the many survey revelations, mental health remains one of the biggest but least talked about issue in the workplace. Often, mental health is largely ignored and undetected due to stigma and a lack of understanding. Other issues such as stress, organisational culture, leadership and bullying can also impact the mental health and wellbeing of the staff which in turn negatively impacts the productivity and performance of the organisation. The 2018 findings reveal that 50.2% of employees have at least one dimension of work-related stress, with 18.2% attributing their stress to financial concerns.

Other key findings for Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality 2018 survey are:

- 45.9% of employees are at risk with their physical activities falling below 150 minutes per week.
- 16.6% of employees are obese.
- 85% of employees are reported to have one or more musculoskeletal conditions.
- 91.7% of employees surveyed do not have a balanced diet.
- 54.4% of Malaysians get less than seven (7) hours of sleep per night, whereas 11% said that they have poor sleep followed by 2% having very poor sleep.
- 32% of employees are reported to have one or more chronic diseases (high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, or stroke).
- 56% of employees feel that their line managers care about their health and wellbeing.
- 90% of employers/organisations offer at least one intervention – only 13% of employees are aware of any intervention offered by their employers and for those who are aware, 59% participate in at least one intervention.
- 98% of Malaysians have an AIA Vitality Age that is higher than their actual age.

Speaking at the Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace Summit 2018, AIA Bhd.'s Chief Executive Officer Anusha Thavarajah said: "We launched Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality as the first step towards creating awareness and promoting workplace wellness to help Malaysia's workforce live healthier, longer, and better lives. We are proud to lead the discussion on this topic for the second year running, and truly hope that these insights and strategies from the survey will help corporates understand, strategise and implement interventions which can affect positive behavioural change among their employees.

As the leading provider of employee benefits schemes in Malaysia, AIA has a first-hand view of the impact that an unhealthy workforce has on employers. Through this initiative, AIA continues to play a role that moves beyond just protecting and insuring people, but evolving into one that helps people to stay healthy."

"This year, we especially wanted to tackle a difficult topic – mental health. With work place stress being one of the main workforce risks, we felt that it was important for us to spur conversations on this controversial subject. There is a clear need for Corporate Malaysia to build a culture within our organisations that provide a safe workplace environment that encourages disclosure and healing without judgment. It

is our hope that this initiative we have embarked is only just the beginning of a healthier workplace and work culture for all Malaysians,” Anusha added.

The Malaysia’s Healthiest Workplace survey is an independent survey commissioned by AIA and delivered in partnership with research agency RAND Europe, and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia as the study’s local academic advisor. Modelled after the Britain’s Healthiest Workplace, a highly successful study which has been carried out in the UK since 2013, it is currently the only comprehensive science-backed workplace survey ever conducted in Malaysia.

The survey is offered free of charge to Malaysian companies with a minimum 20 staff force, and in return for participating, the companies will receive a detailed organisational health report which helps them understand the risk factor amongst their employees, as well as the effectiveness of their health and wellness interventions.

The results of the 2018 survey were revealed at the Malaysia’s Healthiest Workplace Summit held in Kuala Lumpur earlier today, where key analysis, insights and emerging trends were presented by industry experts to some 350 guests and members of the media.

*\*Absence: Not being at work due to health-related reasons*

*\*\*Presenteeism: Being at work when unwell*

## **Malaysia’s Survey Findings**

### **THE RISE OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AMONG WORKFORCE REDUCE PRODUCTIVITY**

According to the findings of the Malaysia’s Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality 2018 survey, employers lost an average of **73.1 days** of working hours per employee due to ill-health related absence and presenteeism.

Absence refers to employees’ absence from work due to health problems while presenteeism means employees are present at work but are constrained by health problems to carry out their daily activities. Additionally, the loss of working days increased from an average of 67.2 days from last year (2017) which translates into an estimated cost of **RM2.27 million** lost per organisation per month.

Malaysian employees have also become increasingly affected by mental issues over the years which can lead to staff absences and turnover which in turn negatively impact the productivity and performance of the company. If not addressed, both employers and employees are at the losing end with the performances of employees

and employers affected. The findings demonstrate that **50.2%** of employees have at least one dimension of work-related stress.

## **POOR HABITS ARE ON THE RISE**

Malaysian employees are seen to have poor habits as the number of smokers have increased in comparison to other markets (namely Australia, Hong Kong and Thailand) – 11.1% of employees are currently smokers, compared to the average of 7.5% in other markets.

They are recorded as being most at risk for nutrition with **91.7% not eating a balanced diet** that includes fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Additionally, **16.6%** of Malaysian employees surveyed are obese. Stress, binge eating, or being overwhelmed at work can be contributing factors to the rise of these poor habits. Last but not least, employees are found to be less likely to make healthy changes if they perceived themselves to be in good health. **13%** of employees have four or more risk factors however **62% of employees believe that they are in good health.**

## **IMPROVED LIFE AND WORK CHOICES REFLECT EMPLOYEE'S MOTIVATION**

Malaysia has improved in certain areas – it has the highest numbers of employees who show motivation in changing their physical activities and weight. Additionally, more than half of the employees agreed that leadership in the workforce is positive. The survey indicated that **56%** of Malaysians feel that their line managers care about their health and wellbeing.

Find more information on Malaysia's Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality at [www.healthiestworkplace.aia.com](http://www.healthiestworkplace.aia.com)

**- END -**

### **About AIA Bhd.**

AIA Bhd. is a leading insurer in Malaysia, where we have been privileged to do business since 1948. We offer a suite of financial solutions including Protection, Health, Personal Accident, Employee Benefits, General Insurance, Mortgage, Retirement and Family Takaful products to meet our customers' protection and financial security needs at every life stage. Through our wide and diverse distribution footprint which comprises a 14,000 strong Life Planner force, our exclusive bank partner's branches nationwide as well as corporate sales teams and brokers, we give our customers the choice of deciding how, when and where they connect with us.

Part of the AIA Group, the largest independent publicly listed pan-Asian life insurance group, AIA Bhd. has the financial strength, experience, service centre network and a well-trained team of more than 2,000 staff to serve our 3.5 million customers nationwide. As at 30 June 2018, AIA Bhd.'s total asset worth was RM51 billion, with a paid-up capital of RM1,451 million.

### **About AIA**

AIA Group Limited and its subsidiaries (collectively "AIA" or the "Group") comprise the largest independent publicly listed pan-Asian life insurance group. It has a presence in 18 markets in Asia-Pacific – wholly-owned branches and subsidiaries in Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, China, Korea, the Philippines, Australia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Vietnam, New Zealand, Macau, Brunei, Cambodia, a 97 per cent subsidiary in Sri Lanka, a 49 per cent joint venture in India and a representative office in Myanmar.

The business that is now AIA was first established in Shanghai almost a century ago in 1919. It is a market leader in the Asia-Pacific region (ex-Japan) based on life insurance premiums and holds leading positions across the majority of its markets. It had total assets of US\$221 billion as of 30 June 2018.

AIA meets the long-term savings and protection needs of individuals by offering a range of products and services including life insurance, accident and health insurance and savings plans. The Group also provides employee benefits, credit life and pension services to corporate clients. Through an extensive network of agents, partners and employees across Asia-Pacific, AIA serves the holders of 32 million individual policies and over 16 million participating members of group insurance schemes.

AIA Group Limited is listed on the Main Board of The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited under the stock code "1299" with American Depositary Receipts (Level 1) traded on the over-the-counter market (ticker symbol: "AAGIY").

### **About AIA Vitality**

AIA Vitality is Asia's first and only comprehensive science-backed health programme. It provides members with the knowledge, tools and motivation to bring about long-term positive behavioural changes to lead a healthier life.

AIA Vitality members are incentivised to actively engage in health and wellness activities by offering them a range of benefits including extra insurance benefits on selected insurance and Takaful plans as well as savings and discounts from AIA Vitality partners.

Learn more about AIA Vitality at [www.aiavitality.com.my](http://www.aiavitality.com.my)

### **About the Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality**

Learn more about Healthiest Workplace by AIA Vitality at [www.healthiestworkplace.aia.com](http://www.healthiestworkplace.aia.com)

### **About the RAND Corporation**

The RAND Corporation is a research organization that develops solutions to public policy challenges to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier and more prosperous.

