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NATIONWIDE CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED BY SILVER STAR AND MSD TO HELP PEOPLE WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES STAY HEALTHY DURING RAMADAN

Muslims observing the holy month of Ramadan may be at risk of low blood sugar

Westminster, London, 5th June 2013: Leading diabetes charity Silver Star launches its nationwide campaign to help people living with type 2 diabetes manage their condition during Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting, today. Organised with support from MSD, Silver Star's campaign kicks off with a reception at the House of Commons, featuring the Rt. Hon Keith Vaz, MP, Dr Jonathan Valabhji, National Clinical Director for Obesity and Diabetes, and Dr Wasim Hanif, Diabetes Clinical Lead at the University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust.

The 'Staying Healthy During Ramadan' campaign will take education about the risks associated with type 2 diabetes and fasting to the heart of eight Muslim communities across the UK. A series of regional educational events will be held at mosques and hosted by local doctors throughout the month of June. These educational sessions will focus on providing the congregation with essential facts about fasting for people living with type 2 diabetes and Silver Star nurses will be on hand to provide blood glucose tests for the congregation.

Dr Wasim Hanif, Diabetes Clinical Lead at the University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, comments: "Many people of South Asian descent have an increased risk of suffering from type 2 diabetes¹ and a high proportion of South Asian people are Muslim.² Fasting during Ramadan can affect blood sugar levels as neither food nor drink is consumed between pre-sunrise and sunset over a 30 day period in July and early August. Long gaps between eating mean that the risk of experiencing low blood glucose levels is increased."

Hypoglycaemia – or low blood sugar – occurs when the level of glucose in the blood drops too low, below the "normal" level of 4mmol/l.³ Symptoms of low blood sugar can include blurred vision, anxiety and a loss of concentration. Severely low blood sugar can result in loss of consciousness and seizures.⁴

The Rt. Hon. Keith Vaz, MP, who is Founder Patron of Silver Star and Vice Chair All Party Parliamentary Diabetes Group, comments: "The 'Staying Healthy During Ramadan' campaign aims to highlight the need for Muslim patients who want to fast during Ramadan to discuss their plans with their doctor or nurse before observing the fast. We want to ensure that people with type 2 diabetes

who are planning to observe Ramadan in this way are aware of the medical facts associated with fasting and living with type 2 diabetes.”

Jonathan Valabhji, National Clinical Director for Obesity and Diabetes, adds, “Diabetes is one of the biggest health challenges we face today in the UK and the majority of the 2.6 million people diagnosed, live with type 2 diabetes¹ - people of South Asian descent are six times more likely to develop type 2 diabetes compared with the overall UK population.¹ I applaud Silver Star’s efforts to provide practical support and information to those people with both type 1 and type 2 diabetes, who may be planning to fast this summer.”

People with type 2 diabetes are encouraged to discuss the management of their condition with a healthcare professional at least one month before Ramadan so that a medical assessment can be made and possible changes to medication or lifestyle can be discussed. There are different management options available for people with type 2 diabetes who decide to fast during Ramadan.

Educational events:

City	Mosque	Date
Leicester	MKSI Community Centre 17a Duxbury Road Leicester LE5 3LR	Friday 7 th June 2013
Birmingham	Faizul Qur'an Jamia Masjid 213-217 Lozells Road Lozells Birmingham B19 1RJ	
Bradford	Islamic Cultural and Educational Association 101 Thornbury Road Bradford BD3 8SA	Friday 14 th June 2013
Rotherham	Jamia Masjid Ahl-e-Sunnat al Jamaat Barelvi and Muslim Community Centre Wellgate 64 Gerard Road Wellgate Rotherham South Yorkshire S60 2PW	
Manchester	Manchester Central Mosque 20 Upper Park Road Manchester M14 5RU	Friday 21 st June 2013
Cardiff	Masjid-e-Zawiyah / South Wales Islamic Centre 1 Alice Street Bute Town Cardiff CF10 5LB	
London	East London Mosque & London Muslim Centre 46-92 Whitechapel Road	Friday 28 th June 2013

	London E1 1JX	
	Harrow Central Mosque 34 Station Rd Harrow Middlesex HA1 2SQ	

If you, or a colleague, would be interested in attending one of the educational events, or would like to speak to a healthcare professional spokesperson about the campaign, please contact Red Door Communications via email (msddiabetes@rdcomms.com) or telephone (020 8392 8040).

Ramadan begins on Tuesday 9th July in the UK, subject to sighting of the moon, and lasts for 30 days.

MSD has worked with Silver Star to launch this national campaign. MSD has funded for the logistics and venue of the parliamentary launch meeting, the provision of blood glucose testing vans and Silver Star nurses at each of the regional education events and educational leaflets for patients on Staying Healthy during Ramadan.

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Notes to Editors

About Silver Star

Launched in January 2007, Silver Star is a registered charity campaigning to provide diabetes awareness. The Charity runs Mobile Diabetes Units (MDU) that carry out important diabetes testing and promote culturally sensitive healthcare, with particular regard to the high prevalence of diabetes in the major towns and cities of Britain. The Units travel to local community centres, schools, work places and other organisations. The Mobile Diabetes Assessment Units have testing equipment, beds, washing facilities and an entrance for disabled people.

For more information, please go to www.silverstaruk.org.

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For more information visit www.msd-uk.com. MSD is a trade name of Merck & Co., Inc., with headquarters in Whitehouse Station, N.J., U.S.A.

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References:

¹ Diabetes UK. Diabetes in the UK 2012: Key statistics on diabetes. April 2012

² Communities and Local Government, Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities, available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1203896.pdf> Accessed May 2013

³ Diabetes UK. What is diabetes? <http://www.diabetes.org.uk/Guide-to-diabetes/complications/hypoglycaemia/> Accessed May 2013

⁴ Mayo Clinic. Diabetic Hypoglycaemia. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/diabetic-hypoglycaemia/DS01166>. Updated 5 November 2010. Accessed May 2013