

**SMRC starts good health programme with Bil Afia**

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Dr Ogata and Dr Owen Jr flanked by Shefa Ali and al-Mohannadi at the launch of Bil Afia.



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Sidra Medical and Research Centre (SMRC) launched Bil Afia, a wellness-at-work programme for its employees, during Qatar's National Sport Day on Tuesday.

Bil Afia literally means "in good health" in Arabic and is usually said to a person who is eating or has just finished a meal.

A comprehensive programme that consists of initiatives to help Sidra employees improve general health and productivity, Bil Afia is intended to create a workplace culture focused on long-term well-being.

Sidra employees and their families also took part in a 5km walk along the Corniche and a healthy breakfast at Sheraton Doha. The programme was led by senior officials, including chief executive officer Dr William F Owen Jr, chief medical officer Dr Edward Ogata, communications project director Khalid al-Mohannadi and healthcare marketing head Shefa Ali.

Al-Mohannadi said the team at Sidra is serious about transforming the way people think about health and nutrition and Bil Afia is one step in that direction. "Our participation in Qatar's National Sport Day is an extension of our mission to nurture the health and wellness of women and children, regionally and globally."

The motto of Bil Afia is "Eat Well, Live Well, Be well". The name was selected as the programme will have a significant emphasis on nutrition. It will be supported by Sidra's clinical nutrition department, which will offer regular educational sessions, weekly nutrition and diet counselling sessions, and work in close co-ordination with the cafeteria to provide healthy food options for employees, among several other activities.

Shefa Ali described National Sport Day as an ideal opportunity to launch Bil Afia. "By choosing a local name for the programme, we will generate interest right from the start and sustain it," she said.

The programme dovetails with Sidra's mission as an academic medical centre that will provide the people of Qatar and the region with access to world-class healthcare and a healing environment to support health and well-being.

Currently under construction in Doha, Sidra will be a ground-breaking hospital, research and education institution, focusing on the health and well-being of women and children.

Sidra, a fully digital facility incorporating the most advanced information technology applications in clinical, research and business functions, will initially have around 400 beds with infrastructure to enable expansion to 550 beds in a subsequent phase.

Sidra, which represents the vision of chairperson HH Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, will not only provide world-class patient care but also help build Qatar's

scientific expertise and resources.

Funded by a \$7.9bn endowment from Qatar Foundation, one of the largest endowments of its kind in the world, Sidra's partners include Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar and Qatar Science and Technology Park.

"Sidra will have a unique working structure with inter-professional collaboration, providing the best holistic care for patients and an unparalleled learning environment for its medical professionals," al-Mohannadi explained.

It will combine the best in design, technology, operations and practices from medical centres around the world – to offer its employees an environment that is at once familiar and extraordinary, he added.

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