

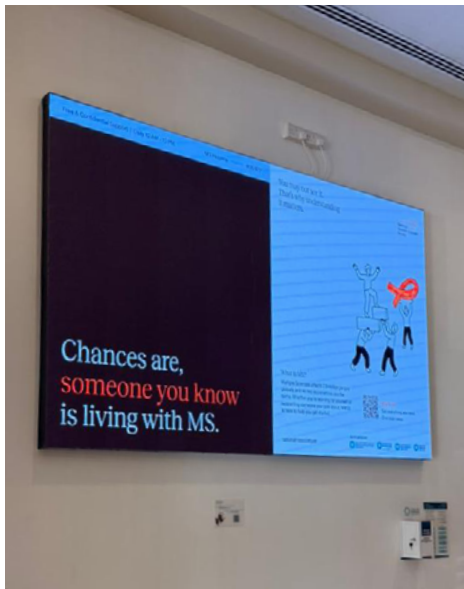
World MS Day 2026



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Introduction



1000+

Healthcare Professionals Trained

32+

Clinics & Hospitals Engaged

Each year on May 30, World MS Day is marked to raise awareness and show support for people living with MS. This year, under the theme “My MS Diagnosis: Navigating MS Together,” the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS) brought this message across the UAE for the fourth consecutive year, reaching people in clinics, workplaces, cafés, and homes.

The World MS Day campaign was built on three principles: to listen, to act, and to partner. By listening to people living with MS, their carers, and the professionals who support them, the campaign identified real needs and opportunities for change.

These insights informed practical resources for families and employers, while awareness activities brought MS conversations into everyday community settings. The campaign also marked one year of the National Coalition for MS, demonstrating how partnership can drive meaningful progress across shared strategic priorities.

This report captures that work and the commitment behind it: to ensure every person living with MS in the UAE is seen, supported, and met with dignity at every stage of their journey.



32

Cafés Across the UAE

47

Landmarks Lit Up

1.75M

Views on video campaign

A Message from the MS Community

We listened, and this is what we heard. Three members of the MS community who took part in this year's campaign answered the same three questions - on what moved them to join, what stayed with them, and what they want people to know.

Before I received the diagnosis, I was already going through a confusing and emotional time, trying to understand what was happening to my body. Taking part in this campaign felt like a way to express those early feelings of uncertainty and to say how much it matters to listen to people, support them, and believe them, even before there are clear answers.

The most meaningful part was realizing I was not as at peace with my diagnosis as I had thought. The experience helped me understand those feelings, and acknowledge them.

Be there for people who are diagnosed. But most importantly, give them the space to process it in the way that feels right for them, and to understand what they truly need.

DANIA





It doesn't take much for me to say yes to anything that raises awareness about MS. Supporting this community comes naturally to me - especially knowing there are still people living with MS who have not yet found their community, and others hearing about MS for the very first time. If sharing my story helps even one person feel less alone, it is always worth it.

The most meaningful part was revisiting the moment where it all began, and realizing how far I have come. It reminded me that although my body may not always feel strong, I am much stronger than I ever thought possible.

The strength you need is already within you. MS does not take that away - if anything, living with an invisible illness reveals just how resilient and capable you truly are.

RAYAN

I was motivated by the desire to be part of something that raises awareness and gives a voice to people living with MS. As a pharmacist, through my direct interaction with patients, I see how much it matters to increase understanding of this condition and I felt my participation could contribute, even in a small way.

The most meaningful part was the sense of connection to a wider community that truly understands and supports one another. It was inspiring to see so many people come together to share their stories and make a difference. It reinforced how valuable every contribution can be.

MS may be invisible to many. But with greater awareness, empathy, and support, we can make a real difference in the lives of those affected.

EMAN



Our thanks to Dania, Rayan, and Eman and to everyone who lent their voice to World MS Day this year.

Knowledge That Travels: Three Bilingual Guides

Recognizing that living with MS can affect different aspects of daily life, NMSS launched three new bilingual guides designed to address distinct needs within the community.

Available for free download on the website, the guides draw on lived experience and expert insight to provide practical, culturally relevant guidance.

Empowering Carers Guide

Behind many people living with MS is a family member or friend carrying part of the journey with them. This guide supports those carers with practical tools and a clear reminder that their own wellbeing matters too, helping them offer steady support without losing sight of themselves.

[READ GUIDE](#)



Conversation Guide

Few moments are as personal as deciding when, how, and with whom to share an MS diagnosis. This guide helps people find the words to have those conversations with confidence with family, friends, or colleagues on their own terms and at their own pace.

[READ GUIDE](#)



Human Resources Guide

Work is a central part of life, yet many employees living with MS face uncertainty about disclosure and support. Endorsed by The Butterfly - a leading organization specializing in inclusion and accessibility solutions - this guide equips employers and HR teams to respond with understanding, build inclusive policies, and create workplaces where people living with MS can continue to thrive.

[READ GUIDE](#)



Together, the guides extend support beyond the clinic and into the homes, relationships and workplaces where MS is truly lived.

They reflect a holistic approach to care - one that recognizes that informed individuals, supported carers, and understanding employers are all part of a stronger community around every person living with MS.

National Coalition for MS: One Year Update

One year after its launch on World MS Day 2025, the UAE's first National Coalition for MS has moved from ambition to action.

Anchored in five strategic themes, the Coalition's first year delivered measurable progress.

The National Coalition for MS is a collaborative network led by NMSS that brings together key stakeholders across the MS ecosystem with the aim of accelerating the national agenda for MS through meaningful partnerships and coordinated actions.

In its inaugural phase, the National Coalition for MS focuses on five priorities for 2025-2026, Accessible Care, Equitable Opportunities, Capable Professionals, Aware Citizens and a Diverse Resource Pool each aligned with NMSS' strategic objectives, and addressed through targeted initiatives.

Priority 1 / Accessible Care

Launch of the Navigator Tool

[ACCESS NOW](#)

Recognizing that navigating support services can be complex, NMSS launched a **Navigator Tool** on World MS Day.

The tool is designed to help people living with MS and others seeking financial assistance for healthcare and related needs in the UAE to navigate available charities, understand eligibility criteria, and submit applications for the assistance they need.



First Phase of PNAT

The first phase of the **Patient Needs Assessment Tool (PNAT)** - a study mapping the needs of 192 people living with MS across the UAE that are part of a Patient Support Program was completed and submitted for review, laying an evidence base for more responsive, needs-led care.



KEY FINDINGS



STRONG MEDICATION ACCESS

The results indicate a strong perception of medication accessibility **85.34%** of patients confirmed that their prescribed medication is available at their pharmacy.

This reflects good supply chain reliability and effective distribution coverage within the healthcare setting.



COMMITMENT TO TREATMENT, DESPITE COST

Majority of patients (**66.48%**) would still prioritize treatment continuity, either by paying out-of-pocket (**11.73%**) or seeking alternative financing sources such as loans or fundraising (**54.75%**). This reflects a strong willingness to maintain therapy despite financial barriers.



THE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT OF MS

~43% mentioned that MS has impacted their mental health.



TREATMENT EMPOWERS DISEASE MANAGEMENT

82% mentioned that their treatment increased their ability to manage their disease.



FINANCIAL BURDEN LIMITS FOLLOW-UP CARE

Results indicated that the most significant barrier to follow-up care is cost-related, with treatment cost being the primary challenge (**~42%**).

Priority 2 / Capable Professionals

PureHealth completed five capacity-strengthening sessions for healthcare professionals across their network, held weekly to build clinicians' ability to understand, diagnose and, where appropriate, treat MS - with a consistent focus on patient-centered care.

In total, the program reached 1,085 healthcare professionals.



Priority 3 / Aware Citizens

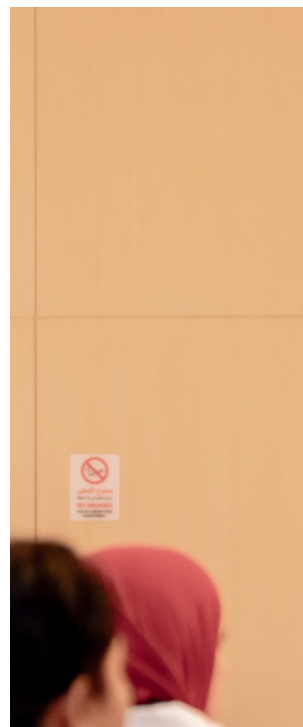
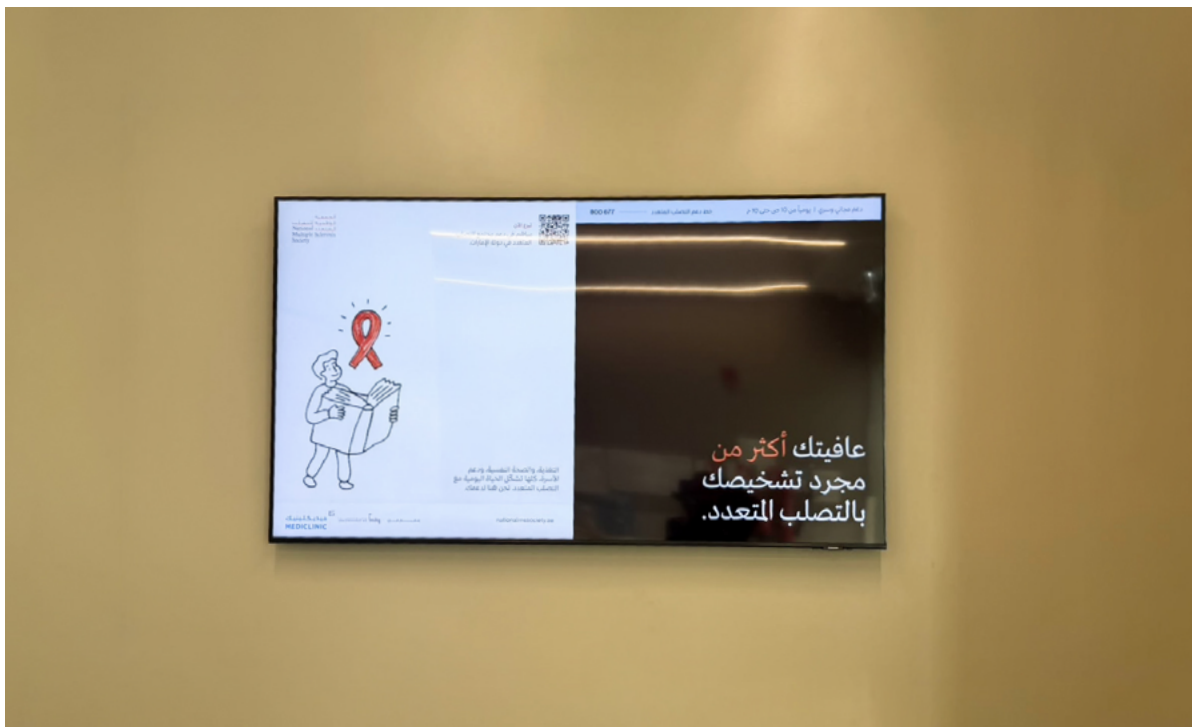
To carry MS awareness into trusted, everyday content, Sanofi committed towards bringing educational content to educate the MS community and wider public, bringing evidence-based wellbeing guidance to audiences far beyond the clinic.



Work continues across all five of the Coalition's strategic themes as partners build on a strong first year toward coordinated, long-term impact.



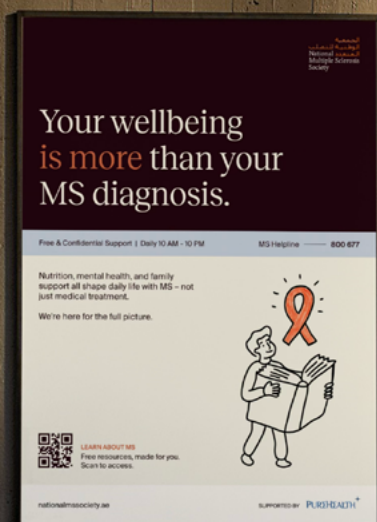
Raising Awareness Nationwide



Healthcare Professional (HCP) Awareness Campaign

NMSS collaborated with healthcare providers across the UAE to display awareness materials in more than 30 clinics and hospitals including SEHA clinics, M42 assets, NMC Hospitals, Harley Street Medical Centre and Burjeel Hospital Abu Dhabi.

Digital posters and flyers carried clear, educational information about MS into the very spaces where people already seek care. The campaign also introduced the MS Circular, a digestible resource on symptoms and available NMSS support, shared with staff and visitors across every participating site.



In The Heart Of Care: Healthcare Professionals Leading In The Community

Some of the most meaningful progress this year came from within the healthcare community itself. This World MS Day, two of the UAE's leading providers - PureHealth and Burjeel Hospital - stepped beyond the clinical encounter to connect directly with the MS community.

PureHealth, alongside NMSS, organized an interactive physiotherapy workshop session at Sheikh Shakhbout Medical City (SSMC) that brought together people living with MS, caregivers, and healthcare professionals for an interactive workshop on the important role of physiotherapy in managing MS.

Through engaging hands-on exercises led by Dr. Zamer Aftab, Senior Physiotherapist at SSMC, participants gained insights into how simple movements can make a meaningful difference. Beyond the practical guidance, the session reinforced the important message that small, consistent actions can help people living with MS maintain function, strength, support mobility and regain a greater sense of control in their daily lives.

NMSS also joined the World MS Day awareness booth at Sheikh Shakhbout Medical City alongside Dr. Ahmed Shatila, Chair of the Medical Advisory Committee - bringing direct, face-to-face MS awareness into one of the capital's major medical centers under the PureHealth network.

At Burjeel Hospital, the third MS Support Group Gathering brought patients, caregivers, healthcare professionals and advocacy partners together in one room, with NMSS also joining the gathering's social media competition judging panel. It was a space built not around diagnosis codes, but around people.

This marks an important milestone. **When healthcare professionals take ownership of awareness, education, and community connection as part of how they practice medicine, the MS agenda becomes a shared responsibility.** It signals an ecosystem where care extends beyond the consultation, where the people who diagnose MS also help carry the weight of living with it, and where progress no longer depends on any one entity. For someone navigating MS, this is what "navigating together" truly looks like - a network of professionals who see them as more than a chart, and who choose to show up for the community long after the appointment ends.

“I felt it was important to be part of the MS Talks session, organized by PureHealth and NMSS, as it provides a valuable platform to raise awareness and empower people living with Multiple Sclerosis through shared knowledge and support. As a physiotherapist, I believe these conversations are crucial in helping individuals better understand how exercise and rehabilitation can improve their quality of life.

Physiotherapy plays a key role in supporting people with MS, particularly in managing mobility challenges and fatigue through tailored interventions, including pacing techniques and structured activity planning to ensure sustainable long-term outcomes. Being part of this initiative allows us to highlight the impact of early and ongoing physiotherapy interventions and to encourage people with MS to seek proactive support in managing their condition.”



ZAMER AFTAB

Senior Physiotherapist Rehabilitation
Sheikh Shakhbout Medical City (SSMC)

“It is a privilege to collaborate with the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS) in advancing awareness and advocacy for people living with multiple sclerosis. Since 2023, our partnership with NMSS has enabled meaningful engagement through public awareness campaigns, educational initiatives, media outreach, and community-focused programs.

NMSS has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to elevating the voice of the MS community, promoting understanding of the disease, and fostering an environment of inclusion and support. Through our joint efforts, we have been able to expand the reach of key messages surrounding early diagnosis, access to specialized care, patient empowerment, and improved quality of life for individuals affected by MS. We are proud to support NMSS in its mission and look forward to continuing our shared efforts to strengthen awareness, advocacy, and patient-centered care across the region.”



DR. HALPRASHANTH D.S

Consultant Neurologist & Multiple Sclerosis Specialist
Burjeel Hospital





Community Engagement: The ‘Navigating MS Together’ Webinar

Living well with MS is about far more than managing a diagnosis. The condition touches the whole of a person’s life, their energy, their relationships, the food on their plate and the movement in their day.



75+

Registered Participants

Increasingly, evidence shows that how someone eats, moves, rests and tends to their mental health can meaningfully shape their experience of MS.

That is what made Navigating MS Together: Exploring Evidence-Based Approaches to Healthy Living so meaningful. The online session brought together experts across mental health, nutrition and physical wellness to share practical, evidence-based guidance for living well with MS. Speakers included Dr. Maha Al Ali on mental health, Farah Hilou on nutrition, and Tracy Assad on physical wellness - each offering tools people could carry into their own lives.

Attendees were able to listen, ask questions, and connect, turning expert knowledge into something personal and shared.

Where People Gather: Nationwide Café Activation

560

Scans

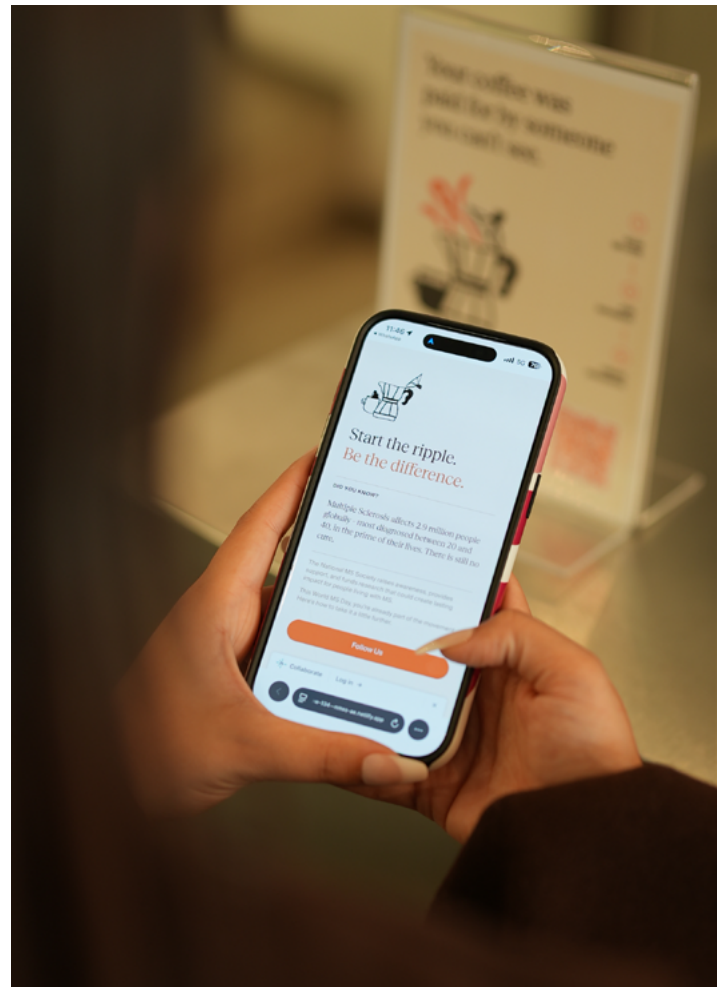
235

Coffees

To meet people where life naturally happens, NMSS launched its third nationwide café activation under the theme “Carry It Forward” - bringing MS awareness to the everyday spaces where communities gather, while supporting local and homegrown businesses.

Across all six emirates, 32 participating cafés joined the campaign, turning coffee runs and quiet corners into moments of conversation and connection.

[Full List and Locations](#)



The Waiting Room: A Moment That Unites Us

Almost everyone sat in a waiting room. For people living with MS, it is often where everything changed, the threshold between life before and life after a diagnosis, and a space that remains pivotal long after that first appointment.

1.75M

Video views in less than
one month

This year, NMSS released The Waiting Room, a video built around that universal moment. Featuring two people living with MS, Rayan Daaboul and Dania Rashid at very different points in their journeys, the video draws a quiet, powerful line between every person who has ever waited for news, MS or otherwise, and the community that forms on the other side of it.

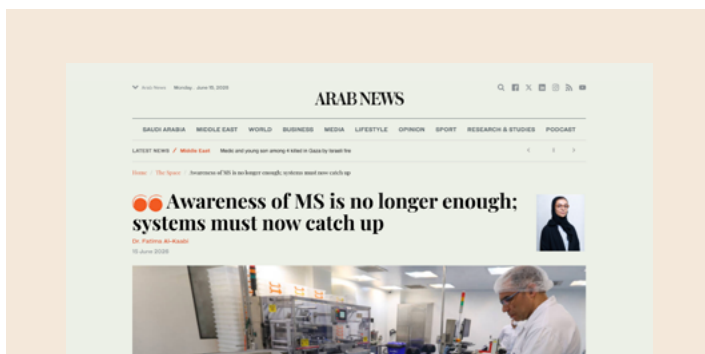
It is a story about the loneliness of waiting, and the relief of discovering you were never truly alone. In doing so, it speaks directly to the heart of this year's global theme, "My MS Diagnosis: Navigating MS Together."



Media and Public Reception

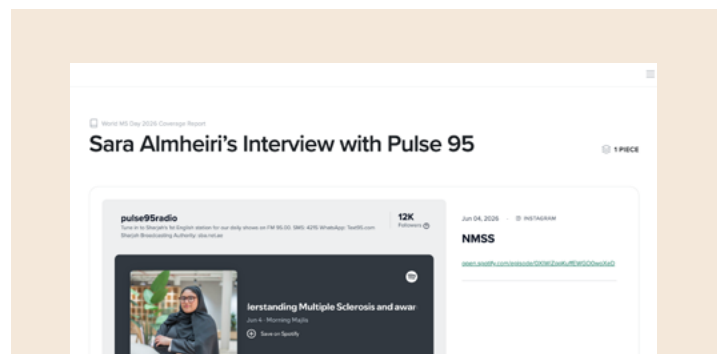
ARAB NEWS

In an opinion editorial for Arab News, Vice Chair of NMSS, Dr Fatima Al Kaabi examined the progress made in raising awareness of MS in the UAE and the importance of translating that awareness into stronger systems for care, research, and data collection.



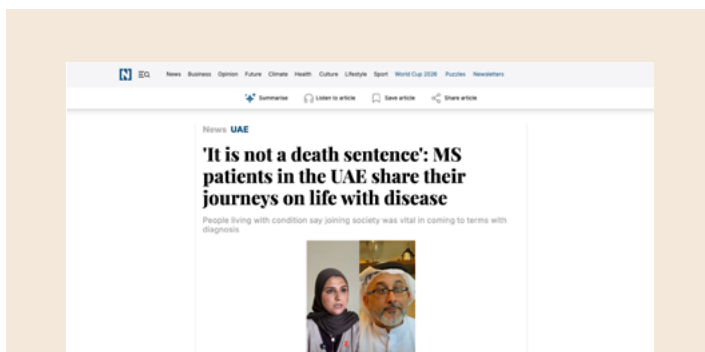
MORNING MAJLIS

Programs and Community Outreach Sr Specialist Sara Almheiri joined Pulse 95 Radio helping carry the MS awareness message to audiences across the Northern Emirates.



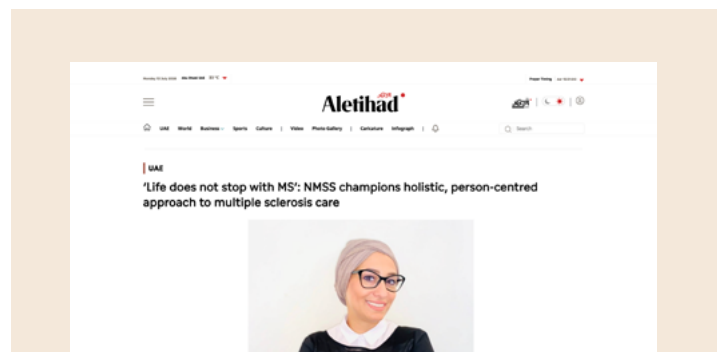
THE NATIONAL

The National gave a platform to people living with MS in the UAE to tell their own stories of diagnosis, community and the lives they continue to lead under a message that captured its spirit: "It is not a death sentence."



ALETIHAD NEWS

Research and Advocacy Manager Yasmin Mitwally made the case for person-centered MS care that reaches beyond the clinic through the three new guides, earlier diagnosis, and a clear reminder that "Life does not stop with MS."



100+

Pieces of coverage

118M

Media reach

7.9M

Social media impressions

On The Global Stage: Endorsements & Participation



79th World Health Assembly, Geneva

NMSS was represented at the 79th World Health Assembly in Geneva, attending the official WHO side event “Delivering on Brain Health: Implementing IGAP and the Political Declaration on NCDs.” NMSS’s presence reflected its commitment to representing the UAE MS community within international health and policy conversations.

One of the recurring themes was the growing recognition of brain health as a public health priority. The conversations brought together governments, patient organizations, experts and advocates around a shared objective of ensuring neurological health remains firmly on the international health agenda.

For the MS community, participation in these discussions matters. It helps ensure that the experiences, challenges, and priorities of people living with MS are reflected in broader conversations on brain health, noncommunicable diseases, and health systems planning.

8th Emirates Multiple Sclerosis Forum, Dubai

NMSS endorsed and participated in the 8th Emirates Multiple Sclerosis Forum, strengthening engagement with healthcare professionals and raising awareness of the Society’s role in MS support, advocacy and collaboration.

NMSS delivered a dedicated session on the importance of lived experience - showing how, through health literacy, research and advocacy, organizations create value well beyond the clinical setting.

Awareness Booth - Wahda Mall, Abu Dhabi

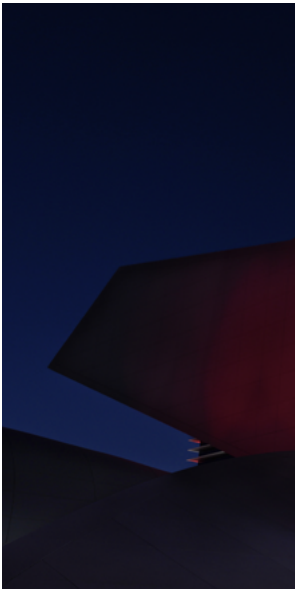
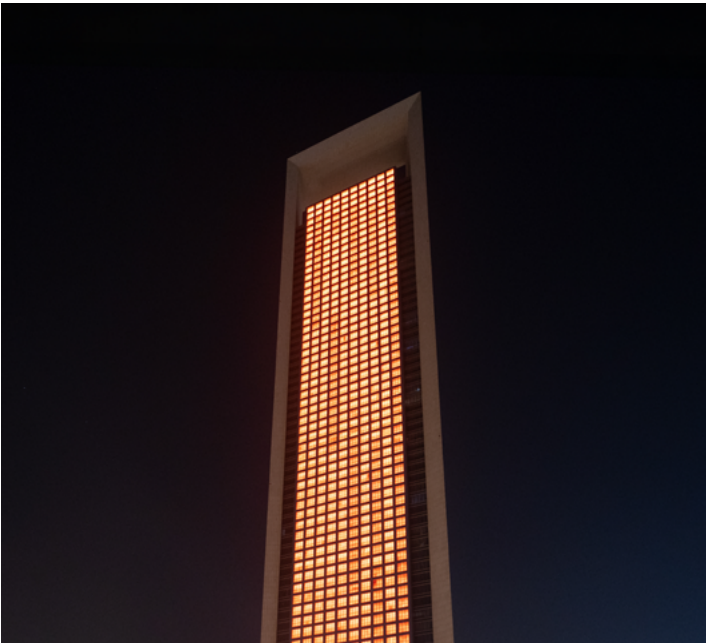
120+

Visitors

An interactive awareness booth provided a space for the public to learn more about MS and engage in open conversations about living with the condition. The initiative was endorsed by NMSS, organized by Focus Gulf, and sponsored by Roche, Novartis, and Merck.

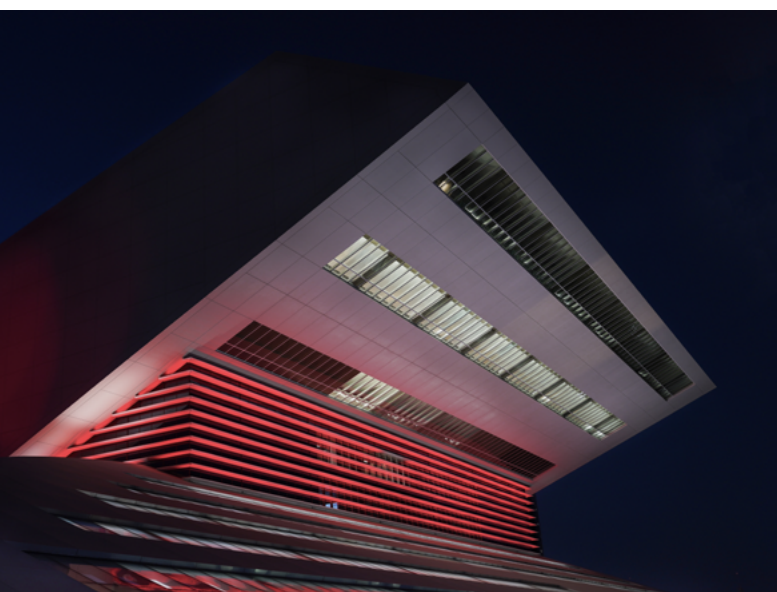
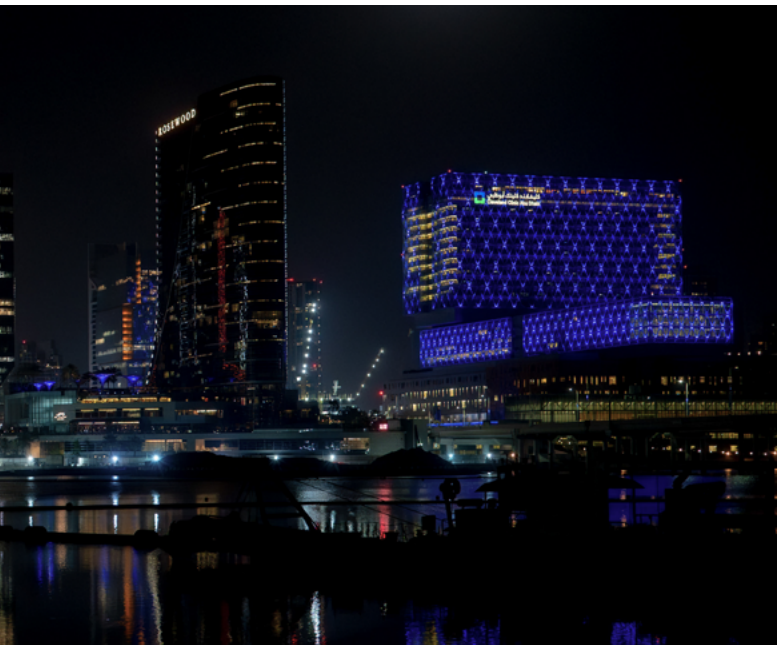
Dr. Ahmed Shatila hosted throughout the day, answering questions and sharing insight with visitors.

Lighting Up The Emirates



As in years past, the campaign reached into the country's most visible public spaces. Landmarks and community spaces across the UAE were illuminated in orange — the global color of MS awareness — as beacons of solidarity and a call for greater understanding.

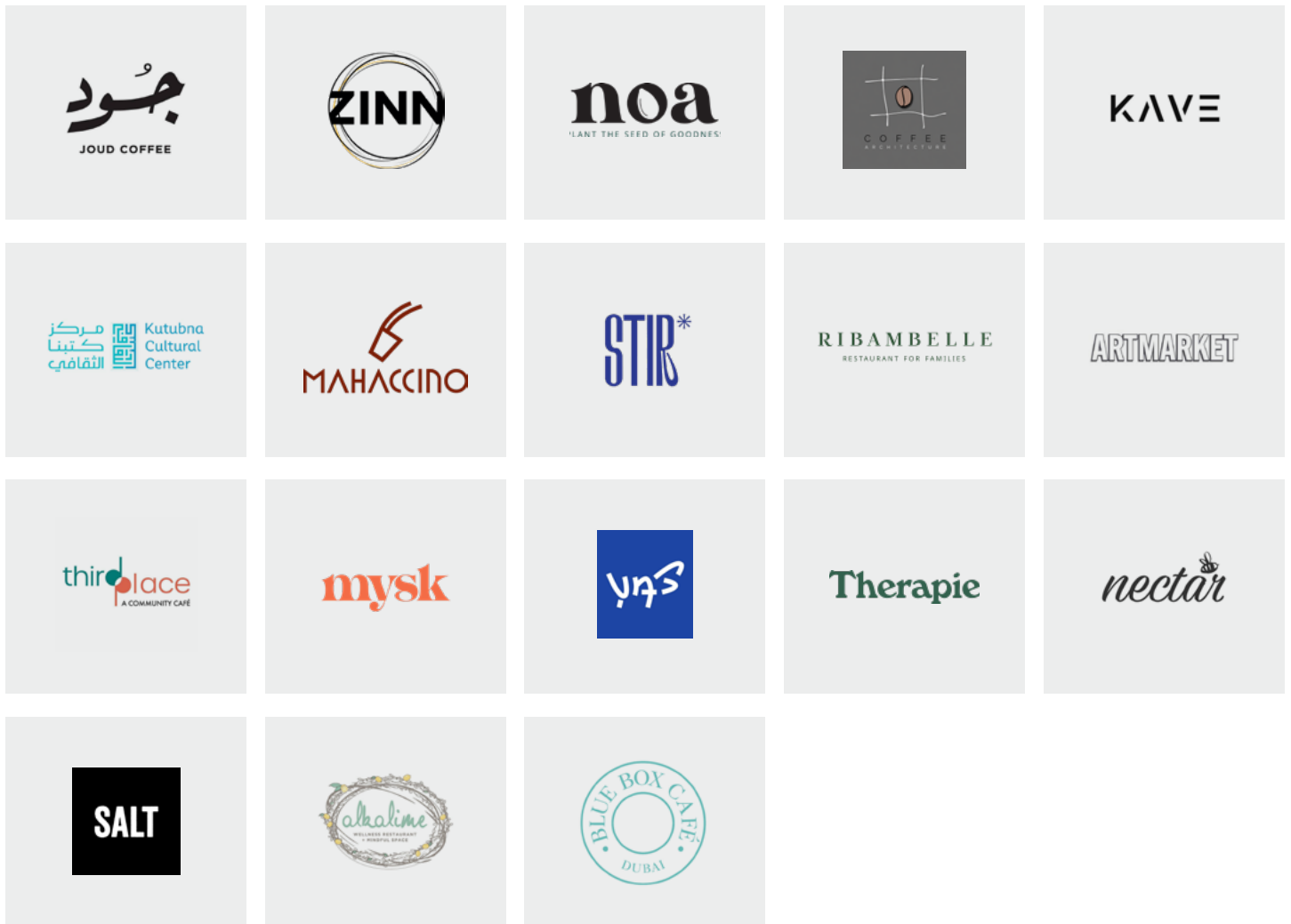
Participating spaces included Abu Dhabi Landmarks ADNOC, Al Ain Municipality, Abu Dhabi Municipality, Al Dhafra Municipality, KIZAD, Liwa Sign, Mubadala Tower and ADGM - facilitated by the Abu Dhabi Media Office as well as Al Jazeera Al Hamra, Dubai Frame, House of Wisdom, Mohammed Bin Rashid Library, Rixos Bab Al Bar, Manar Mall and 30 Majalis across Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and the Western Region.



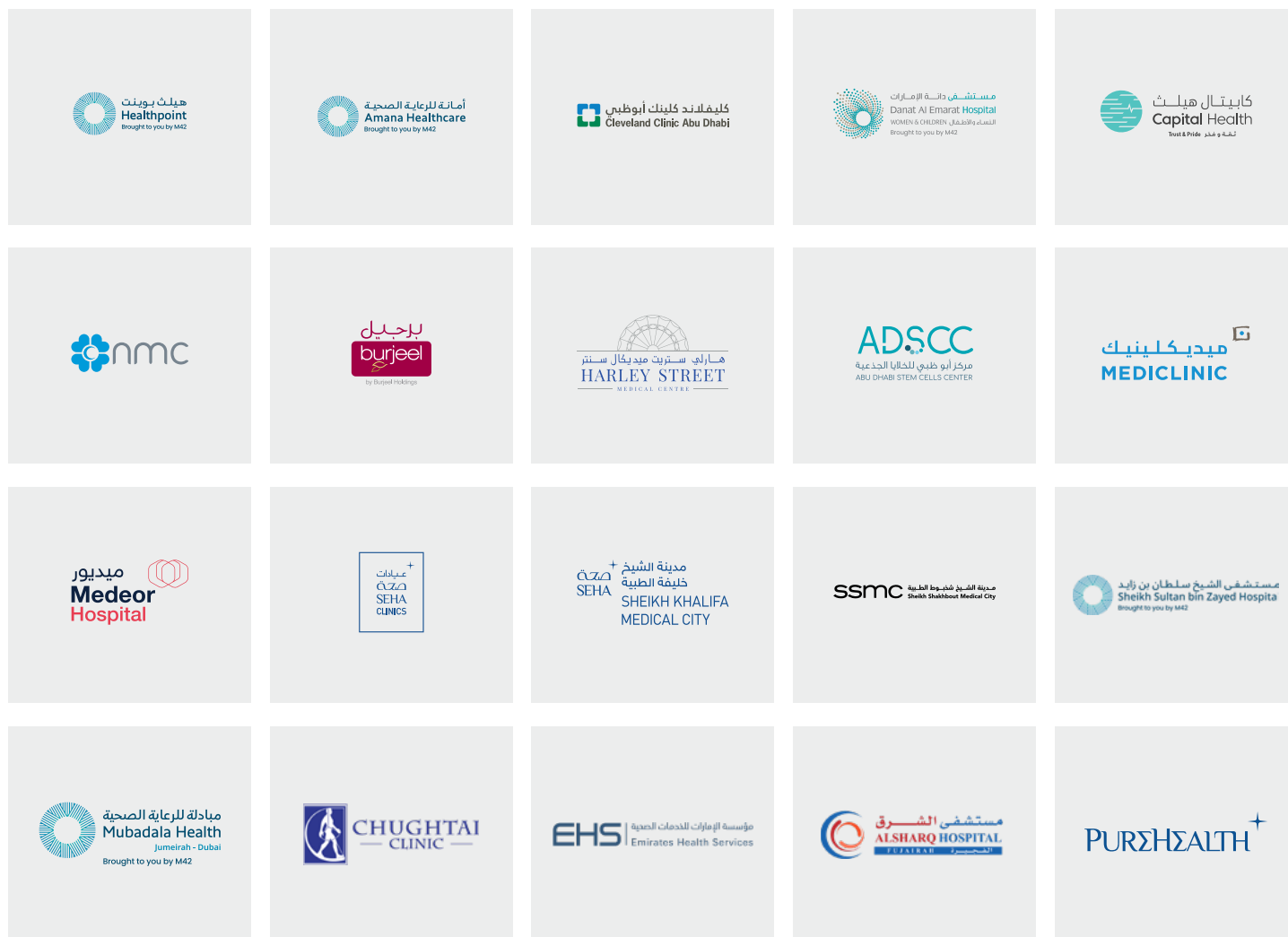
Thank You To Our Partners

Thank you to our valued partners. Your participation was instrumental to the success of this year's campaign, and your commitment fuels our mission. We look forward to another year of impactful collaboration.

PARTNERING CAFES



PARTICIPATING CLINICS & HOSPITALS



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

