

## NBS Training of Rural Health Units from Four Provinces



The participants and guest speakers together with Dr. Gloria J. Balboa, CHD IV-B regional director (seated in the center) during the NBS Training held on September in Quezon City

Sixteen participants from the rural health units of Marinduque, Palawan, Occidental and Oriental Mindoro attended a two-day training on Newborn Screening on September 8 to 9, 2011 at the 88 Fernandina Suites Hotel, Cubao, Quezon City. The training aimed to orient health workers on NBS and their roles in the implementation of RA 9288 or the Newborn Screening Act of 2004, develop the standard skills in collecting blood samples, and gain the knowledge and skills necessary to implement effectively the NBS program in their respective health facility.

Dr. Billy Ignacio of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, Inc. discussed the content of the PhilHealth Circular No. 011-2011 on the New PhilHealth Case Rates on Selected Medical Cases and Surgical Procedures and the No Balance Billing Policy. The Newborn Care Package was increased to Php1,750.00 and the Newborn Hearing Screening Test was included in the package. Hermes Pascua, nurse coordinator of CHD Metro Manila, lectured on the five panels of metabolic disorders. Jenica Querido of CHD 4A assisted during the practicum on proper blood collection held at the Quirino Memorial Medical Center. Joanna Decano-Terrado, Project Development Officer of NSC-NIH assisted on the discussion of the administrative mechanics and answered queries during the open forum.

The Center for Health and Development-4B organized the training through the efforts of the regional coordinators, Dr. Teresa Castillo, Therese Du, and Fe Laarni Camayang. - *FL Camayang and J Decano-Terrado*

## Capability Building for Metro Manila's NBS Facilities

To ensure that more midwives and nurses are equipped with the basic knowledge and skills on the implementation of the Newborn Screening Program, the Center for Health Development – Metro Manila (CHD MM) conducted a series of Newborn Screening Orientations for the 3rd quarter of 2011. The activity consisted of a series of lectures and practicum on accomplishing the filter card and actual specimen collection.



Participants of the Newborn Screening Orientation on Aug. 25, 2011 at the CHD-MM Conference Room

A total of 153 participants from new newborn screening facilities participated in the lecture series conducted by the Newborn Screening Nurse Coordinators of the CHD-MM namely, Hermes E. Pascua, Mariz P. Ebuena, and Claire M. Alincastré. The partner health facilities that served as venues for the actual specimen collection were Mandaluyong City Medical Center, Quirino Memorial Medical Center, Pasig City General Hospital, and East Rembo Health Center & Lying-In.

Another training orientation is slated on October 20, 2011. For inquiries please contact the nurse coordinators at (02) 535-4521 or 0906-2435944, 0915-4605464, 0919-5522619. - *H Pascua*

## Rizal High School advocates NBS



Ofelia Oredina distributes NBS materials to mothers as part of the TLE department's outreach program.

The Rizal High School, through its Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) Department, collaborated with NSC-NIH for the inclusion of newborn screening in its outreach program on August 19, 2011 at Brgy. Caniogan, Pasig City. The activity aimed to educate the 30 pregnant participants on proper nursing, cooking healthy meals, and setting-up of small business. Further, using a holistic approach, the expectant mothers were equipped with knowledge on personality development, social, and spiritual aspect of life as an individual and as a family. The expectant mothers were also oriented on the importance of Newborn Screening and encouraged to have their babies screened. Ofelia Oredina, one of the TLE teachers, requested 100 pieces of NBS pink brochures from Welyn Viaña, the Program Manager of NSC-NIH which were given to the mothers. This was for the initial phase of the project from July to October 2011. - *J Decano-Terrado*

**NSC  
NIH**

For Regions IV, V & NCR  
National Institutes of Health, UP-Manila  
P.Gil Street, Ermita Manila  
Telephone: (02) 526-1725  
Fax: (02) 5269997  
nbsadmin\_ihq@gmail.com

## Long Term Follow-up: Challenges and Rewards

It is both a precious blessing and a unique challenge that I have been charged with the position of long-term follow-up nurse for NSC-Visayas. Long-term follow up signals a progressive move forward in the Newborn Screening Program, with increasing emphasis now being put on ensuring that babies who have been saved by newborn screening continue to grow healthy and develop normally. This can be accomplished by the regular monitoring of patients for treatment compliance and timely visits with their pediatric specialists.

Herein lies the challenge of long-term follow up: getting parents and caregivers empowered enough to want to pursue continued treatment of their children despite the financial and geographic difficulties. There is also the problem of hard-to-locate patients because of inaccessible or invalid contact numbers and addresses and migration. Nevertheless, with the dedication and cooperation of the NSC follow-up team, DOH representatives, and local health care workers, most of these patients are eventually located. Getting parents to comply with treatment, however, is another enormous challenge. In this instance, the importance of proper health education is given as early as the prenatal period.

In spite of the difficulties, the rewards are incomparable. There is that invaluable feeling of satisfaction when mothers say that they are thankful that through newborn screening, their children have been spared from the terrors of their disease and have otherwise been allowed the chance to live normal and healthy lives. - *YC Demegillo*

**NSC  
Visayas**

For Visayas  
West Visayas State University  
Medical Center  
E. Lopez St., Jaro, Iloilo City  
Telefax: (033) 329-3744  
Email: [wvsumc\\_nsc@info.com.ph](mailto:wvsumc_nsc@info.com.ph)



## ACTIVITIES

### Networking

NSC-Visayas partners with different professional associations in the hope of gaining increased professional support for the program. On July 28, 2011, a Newborn Screening Update was sponsored by the Perinatal Association of the Philippines and NSC-Visayas.

The said event was attended by health care workers working closely with pregnant women and those who had just given birth. The health care workers were in the best position to advocate newborn screening at the earliest possible time, hence, the importance of newborn screening was emphasized to them during the seminar.



### Facility Visits

NSC Visayas regularly conducts visits to health facilities throughout the Visayas regions to discuss coverage and implementation issues. On September 9, 2011, NSF visits were conducted in Bacolod City.



## Program Implementation Review

To strengthen the partnership of NSC Visayas and CHDs, both agencies within the Visayas region conduct regular program implementation reviews (PIR) to evaluate the current status of the NBS program and formulate new strategies to better implement and promote the success of the program. The recent PIR was held on August 4, 2011 at CHD 6.

## Knowledge and Skills Enhancement Programs

Skills Enhancement Programs are regularly conducted by NSC Visayas to increase the knowledge and skills of health care workers in the frontline of delivering the newborn screening service.

The most recent training was held on August 24, 2011 at the West Visayas State University Medical Center. - *D Buensalido/ YC Demegillo*

For Mindanao  
Southern Philippines Medical Center  
J.P. Laurel Avenue, Davao City  
Telephone: (082) 226-4595 / 224-0337  
Telefax (082) 227-4152  
[nscmindanao@gmail.com](mailto:nscmindanao@gmail.com)

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## DOH-CHD Caraga's Holds Annual Newborn Screening Consultative Meeting in Butuan City

The DOH CHD-Caraga conducted its Annual Newborn Screening Consultative Meeting of Hospital and Rural Health Unit Coordinators on July 21, 2011 at the Almont Hotel Inland Resort, Butuan City. The activity was attended by 102 participants composed of municipal health officers, provincial coordinators, chief of hospitals, medical technologists, and nurses from the five provinces of Caraga.

CHD-Caraga's Assistant Regional Director, Dr. Cesar Cassion gave an inspiring message and a challenge to the participants. Zandro D. Etic of Philhealth Caraga discussed the Newborn Care Package followed by the presentation of the Regional Situationer and the NBS Program Updates by Nanette F. Montilla, NBS nurse coordinator.

Issues on newborn screening implementation were discussed. Sharing of strategies to increase coverage was also done by the participants. At the end of the meeting, the group reached the following agreements: (1) The following training should only be among the regular staff of the facility; (2) The facility should enroll with MCP and NCP before the end of 2011 and aim for at least 85% coverage; (3) A quarterly report should be presented to CHD, which should conduct orientation/training among the youth leaders/SK for them to be involved in the NBS advocacies in their respective barangays; and (4) Participants will meet again by the first quarter of 2012 to evaluate the plans made. - *N. Montilla*



NSFs' NBS Coordinators and Health Officers from Davao Oriental and Davao del Norte Provinces

## Cluster Meeting of NSFs from Davao Region

For the third quarter of 2011, NSC-Mindanao gathered selected NSFs from Region 11 in two separate newborn screening cluster meetings: July 21, 2011 at the Davao Regional Hospital, Tagum City and September 13, 2011 at the Southern Philippines Medical Center, Davao City. For both meetings, the two resource speakers were Drs. Conchita Abarquez and Eleonor Du, who provided a review on the five disorders in the NBS Panel. This was followed by the presentation on the group's performance by facility and region, coverage status of NSFs, acceptability of samples sent, and follow-up of confirmed cases.

The first cluster meeting was participated in by more than 35 government and private NSFs from Davao del Norte and Oriental. Also in attendance were Dr. Resuldo Malintad, Provincial Health Officer of Davao Oriental and Dr. Eleanor H. Salva, Provincial Health Officer of Davao Del Norte. Among the major issues raised in this meeting were NSFs's performance, inclusion of government hospitals as G6PD confirmatory centers, access to NBS trainings, and the availability of updated NBS manual of operations.

The second cluster meeting, on the other hand, was participated in by 57 NSFs, which were mostly lying-ins and maternity clinics in Davao City. The major issues raised in this meeting were financial assistance for indigent patients, delayed NSF certificate, access to NBS training, proper sample collection, and recalling and follow up of patients. - *S Guilaran*

## Better Understanding, Better Care: Reaching out to Parents with Affected Children

On July 9, 2011, NSC-M held the Parents Forum on G6PD Deficiency at the Mahogany Room, Southern Philippines Medical Center. More than 40 parents and families with G6PD Deficient babies and children from Davao City participated in the forum. Dr. Conchita Abarquez led the discussion on the disorder from the medical perspective while Ana Theresa Basilio inspired the group with her experiences from the family's and patient's point of view.

Another similar activity was held in Bukidnon. The City Health Office of Malaybalay, headed by Dr. Melrose Rose Deticio, NBS Medical Coordinator and ably assisted by Alma Jean Orupa RN, conducted a Lay Forum on G6PD Deficiency and Congenital Hypothyroidism on August 15, 2011 at Haus Malibu, Malaybalay, Bukidnon. The activity was attended by 108



Participants with Dr. Conchita Abarquez (center), Ana Theresa Basilio (standing extreme left) and Sheila Guilaran (standing extreme right)

parents and health staff. Lectures on G6PD Deficiency and Congenital Hypothyroidism were given by Dr. Conchita Abarquez and Dr. Eleonor Du, respectively.

With the overwhelming positive response from parents at both activities, NSC-M, with other NSFs, will continue to provide fora and orientations to educate parents and health workers. These activities have a common goal – to improve the quality of life of affected children so that they could lead normal lives. - *S Guilaran*

## DOH-CHD Zamboanga Peninsula Holds Two-day NBS Orientation

The DOH-CHDZP held a two-day Orientation/Training on Newborn Screening Program on July 5 and 6, 2011 at the Grand Astoria Hotel, Zamboanga City. It brought together 32 participants from different RHUs and private hospitals in the Zamboanga Peninsula.

Dr. Joshua Brillantes, Chief of Local Health Support Division, DOH-CHDZP, welcomed the participants. The resource speakers were Dr. Jeffrey Masiungan, Neonatologist from Zamboanga City Medical Center (ZCMC); Dr. Augusto Manolo Alpichi, Licensing Officer of Licensing Regulation Enforcement Division, DOH-CHDZP; and Dr. Maryann Torregoza, a pathologist from ZCMC.

After the lectures, a Heel-Prick practicum was held at ZCMC. - *AJ Calibot*

**NSC  
Central Luzon**

For Regions I, II, III & CAR  
Angeles University Foundation Medical Center  
MacArthur Highway, Barangay Salapungan,  
Angeles City  
[nsc@aufmc.org](mailto:nsc@aufmc.org)

## Cordillera Continues to Save Newborns through Newborn Screening

In 2010, the Cordillera Administrative Region screened 53% of its total newborn population. The high compliance with newborn screening in the Cordilleras is attributed to the community's understanding of NBS importance and to the team work displayed by every sector to effectively make newborn screening accessible to the people.

This year, nine hospitals were chosen as 'Best Performing Newborn Screening Facility in CAR for 2010' in the implementation of the Newborn Screening Act.

Awarded during the 6<sup>th</sup> Cordillera Annual Health Decision Maker's Forum at Prince Plaza, Baguio City were Bucay Municipal Hospital (Abra) represented by Dr. Loribee Ann Sevilla, Apayao Provincial Hospital (Apayao) represented by Dr. Laarni Cagurangan, Notre Dame De Chartress Hospital (Baguio City) represented by Sister Jonalou Mucyo, St. Louis Hospital of the Sacred Heart (Baguio City) represented by Remedios Banta, Atok District Hospital (Benguet) represented by Dr. Nora Ruiz, Mayoyao District Hospital (Ifugao) represented by Dr. Angeline Bautista, Western Kalinga District Hospital (Kalinga) represented by Dr. Reynaldo Aranca, Paracelis District Hospital (Mt. Province) represented by Eduardo Balocnit, and St. Theodore's Hospital (Mt. Province) represented by Dr. Venencio Natividad.

DOH Assistant Secretary Dr. Enrique Tayag awarded the best performing NSFs. He was assisted by CAR Regional Director Myrna Cabotaje and CAR Regional Assistant Director Judith Allaga.

At present, 68 Newborn Screening Facilities in the region are supporting the screening of all newborns for heritable metabolic disorders that can lead to mental retardation and death. - *J Rillorta*

## Region 1 Ignites LGU Support to the Newborn Screening Program

In compliance with the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9288, otherwise known as the Newborn Screening Act of 2004 which states, "adequate and sustained NBS services such as information, education, communication, screening, recall and follow-up should be provided in all LGU Health Facilities," the Center for Health Development Region 1 spearheaded a series of Newborn Screening Training intended for local government facilities, particularly rural health units.



Christian Monieno, NSC-CL Project Development Officer, discusses the number of screened from different categories of health facilities performing newborn screening in 2010.

On September 1-2 and 6-7, 2011, Newborn Screening Training Programs were conducted for various LGU representatives from Ilocos Sur and La Union, respectively. The objectives were to reintroduce the Newborn Screening Program, present the highlights of RA 9288, equip the healthcare providers with the skills necessary for sample collection, and update the participants on the NBS statistics of their covered region.

The afternoon sessions included an actual heel prick return demonstration which allowed the participants to better understand the process of sample collection for newborn screening.

The participants expressed positive response, especially the Provincial Health Office of La Union as they spearheaded a "Strategic Planning and Consultative Meeting on Newborn Screening" a week after the training. - *C. Monieno*



## NEWBORN SCREENING AWARDS 2011



The Newborn Screening Reference Center and the Department of Health will hold this year's Newborn Screening Awards at Traders Hotel Manila on October 03, 2011. The awards ceremony is aimed at recognizing accomplishment, innovation and dedication of newborn screening facilities, individuals, organizations and local government units to save babies from mental retardation and death.

Twelve (12) organizations will receive Special Award for their commendable contribution to the Newborn Screening Program in the form of various initiatives; 232 Achievers Award for screening 90% and above of the health facilities' annual live birth in either 2009 or 2010; and 165 will be awarded Exemplary for screening 90% and above of the facilities' annual live births for two consecutive years or for years 2009 and 2010.

SPECIAL AWARDS	WELL-FAMILY MIDWIFE CLINIC – HELEN DELA CRUZ WORLD CITI MEDICAL CENTER	Region 4B
Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao RURAL HEALTH UNIT—WAO		MEDICAL MISSION GROUP HOSPITAL AND HEALTH SERVICES COOPERATIVE OF ORIENTAL MINDORO
Region 4A	Region 1	Region 5
BETHANY HOSPITAL, INC. - SAN FERNANDO MUNICIPAL HEALTH OFFICE –LOS BAÑOS MUNICIPAL HEALTH OFFICE –BATANGAS	BETHANY HOSPITAL, INC. - SAN FERNANDO LORMA MEDICAL CENTER PANGASINAN DOCTORS HOSPITAL	AQUINAS UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL FOUNDATION, INC TABACO COLLEGE HOSPITAL
Region 5	Region 2	Region 6
AQUINAS UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL FOUNDATION, INC. CITY HEALTH OFFICE—LEGAZPI CITY	CLINICA DE LEON NUEVA VIZCAYA PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL ST. PAUL HOSPITAL – TUGUEGARAO	PROVINCIAL HEALTH OFFICE—CAPIZ
Region 6	Region 3	Region 7
CAPIZ DISTRICT HOSPITAL	ANGELES MEDICAL CENTER, INC. AUF-MEDICAL CENTER BALAGTAS DOCTORS' HOSPITAL BATANAN ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL DIVINE WORD HOSPITAL-HAGONOY E.D. LIM MATERNITY AND GENERAL HOSPITAL GRACE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL FOUNDATION, INC. ISAAC AND CATALINA MEDICAL CENTER JESONS MEDICAL CENTER MARIA AURORA COMMUNITY HOSPITAL MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA MEDICAL CENTER PREMIERE MEDICAL CENTER RAMOS GENERAL HOSPITAL SAN CARLOS CITY HOSPITAL V. L. MAKABALI MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, INC. WOMEN'S HOSPITAL	CEBU PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT Cebu CITY HEALTH OFFICE—BAIS CITY
Region 7	Region 4A	Region 8
CEBU PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT Cebu CITY HEALTH OFFICE—BAIS CITY	AMIGA CARE LYING-IN CLINIC BALIBAGO POLYCLINIC AND HOSPITAL INC. BATANGAS HEALTH CARE HOSPITAL (JESUS OF NAZARETH) BIÑAN DOCTORS HOSPITAL, INC. C.P. REYES HOSPITAL CAVITE MEDICAL CENTER CELU'S MATERNITY CLINIC DANIEL O. MERCADO MEDICAL CENTER EMILIO AGUIALDO COLLEGE MEDICAL CENTER CAVITE EVANGELISTA MEDICAL SPECIALTY HOSPITAL FAMILY CARE HOSPITAL GOLDEN GATE GENERAL HOSPITAL H VILL HOSPITAL HOLY QUEEN MATERNITY LYING-IN AND MEDICAL CLINIC JAHNNA MATERNITY AND LYING-IN CLINIC LAGUNA DOCTORS HOSPITAL LIPA MEDIX MEDICAL CENTER LOS BAÑOS DOCTORS HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER LUCENA UNITED DOCTORS HOSPITAL MARIKINA VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER MARIA LOURDES MATERNITY HOSPITAL MARUKINA VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER MARTINEZ MEMORIAL HOSPITAL MARY CHILES GENERAL HOSPITAL MEDICAL CENTER MANILA MEDICAL CENTER MUNTINLUPA, INC. METROPOLITAN MEDICAL CENTER MOTHER REGINA HOSPITAL NOVALICHES GENERAL HOSPITAL OLIVAREZ GENERAL HOSPITAL OUR LADY OF LOURDES HOSPITAL – MANILA OUR LADY OF PEACE HOSPITAL PASCUAL GENERAL HOSPITAL SAN LORENZO RUIZ WOMEN'S HOSPITAL SEAMEN'S HOSPITAL ST. CHRISTIANA MATERNITY AND LYING-IN CLINIC ST. LUKE'S MEDICAL CENTER ST. VICTOR HOSPITAL THE MEDICAL CITY UHB- PARANAQUE DOCTORS HOSPITAL UNITED DOCTORS MEDICAL CENTER UNIVERSITY OF PERPETUAL HELP RIZAL MEDICAL CENTER-LAS PIÑAS VALENZUELA CITY EMERGENCY HOSPITAL WELL-FAMILY MIDWIFE CLINIC – CATTLEYA WELL-FAMILY MIDWIFE CLINIC – GERTRUDES LUDERICO	MARY JOHNSTON HOSPITAL, INC. MEDICAL CENTER PARAÑAQUE NODADO GENERAL HOSPITAL - NOVALICHES OUR MOTHER OF PIAT (BIÑAS) MEDICAL, MATERNITY, AND LYING-IN CLINIC PAMPLONA MEDICAL CLINIC PASIG MEDICAL AND MATERNITY HOSPITAL FOUNDATION SAN LORENZO HOSPITAL - Q.C. SAN RAMON HOSPITAL ST. JUDE HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER "TRINITY WOMAN AND CHILD - THE BIRTH PLACE" TROY MEDICAL AND LYING-IN CLINIC UERM MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER HOSPITAL UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS HOSPITAL VALENZUELA MEDICAL CENTER WELL-FAMILY MIDWIFE CLINIC - ANGEL CHRIS WELL-FAMILY MIDWIFE CLINIC - CARINGAL-PASCUA XAV AND FRAN MEDICAL AND LYING-IN CLINIC
Region 8	Region 9	Region 10
ALABANG MEDICAL CLINIC ALABANG MEDICAL CLINIC - TALON BRANCH AMISOLA MATERNITY HOSPITAL BANGKAL LYING-IN CLINIC BERNARDINO GENERAL HOSPITAL I CARDINAL SANTOS MEDICAL CENTER CRUZ-RABE MATERNITY AND GENERAL HOSPITAL PAMPANGA MEDICAL CENTER DR. ALONZO-DELOS REYES MEDICAL AND LYING-IN CLINIC DR. FE DEL MUNDO MEM MEDICAL CENTER FOUNDATION DR. JESUS C. DELGADO MEMORIAL HOSPITAL DR. VICTOR R. POTENCIANO MEDICAL CENTER F.Y. MANALO MEDICAL FOUNDATION, INC. GUADALUPE LYING-IN CLINIC CAPAGAO BARANGAY HEALTH STATION CAPIZ EMMANUEL HOSPITAL DON RAMON TUGBANG MEDICAL CENTER, INC. DON SALVADOR BENEDICTO MEMORIAL DISTRICT HOSPITAL GREAT SAVIOUR INTERNATIONAL HOSPITAL, INC. ILOILO DOCTORS HOSPITAL GRACE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL FOUNDATION, INC. ISABELA DISTRICT HOSPITAL JUSTICE CALIXTO O. ZALDIVAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL LORENZO D. ZAYCO DISTRICT HOSPITAL MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA MEDICAL CENTER PREMIERE MEDICAL CENTER SAINT GABRIEL HOSPITAL SAN CARLOS CITY HOSPITAL ST. ANTHONY COLLEGE HOSPITAL ST. PAUL'S HOSPITAL OF ILOILO, INC. ST. THERESE – MTC COLLEGES HOSPITAL TERESITA L. JALANDONI PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL THE DOCTOR'S HOSPITAL INC. WEST VISAYAS STATE UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER	CITY HEALTH OFFICE—MALAYBALAY CITY	
Metro Manila	Region 11	Region 12
MARIKINA CITY MUNICIPALITY OF PATEROS PASIG CITY GENERAL HOSPITAL	AMOSUP SEAMEN'S HOSPITAL - CEBU CAMP LAPULAPU STATION HOSPITAL CEBU NORTH GENERAL HOSPITAL CEBU PUERICULTURE CENTER AND MATERNITY HOUSE, INC. CEBU VEZ GENERAL HOSPITAL CHONG HUA HOSPITAL RAMIRO COMMUNITY HOSPITAL	AGLIPAY DISTRICT HOSPITAL BALLESTEROS MATERNITY AND LYING-IN CLINIC CALUYAN MEDICAL SPECIALISTS HOSPITAL DE VERA'S GENERAL HOSPITAL AND REHABILITATION CENTER HOLY INFANT CLINIC
EXEMPLARY	Region 12	Caraga
Cordillera Administrative Region DOLORS MEDICARE AND COMMUNITY HOSPITAL NOTRE DAME DE CHARTRES HOSPITAL	SANTO TOMAS GENERAL HOSPITAL SOUTHERN LUZON HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER ST. DOMINIC MEDICAL CENTER ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST MEDICAL CENTER, INC. ST. CRUZ LAGUNA POLYMEDIC, INC. ST. ROSA HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER TAYABAS COMMUNITY HOSPITAL, INC. UPLB HEALTH SERVICE	BUTUAN DOCTORS HOSPITAL

ACHIEVERS	PLT COLLEGE INC., LUIS A. TIAM MEDICAL HOSPITAL VETERANS REGIONAL HOSPITAL	VICENTE GUSTILO DISTRICT HOSPITAL	
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Editorial Staff	Comments and questions may be sent to:
Editor: Riza Concordia N. Suarez	Newborn Screening Reference Center National Institutes of Health, University of the Philippines Manila, 625 Pedro Gil St., Ermita, Manila 1000
Layout Artist: Vina G. Mendoza	
Adviser: Carmencita D. Padilla, MD, MAHPS	
Contributors: Perly Bermudez, Dominic Buensalido, April Joy Calibot, Fe Laarni Camayang, Yugie Caroline Demegillo, Ma. Truda Dizon-Escoreal, Sheila Mae Guilaran, Jasper Jover, Amerah Matuan, Vina Mendoza, Anna Leah Millares, Christian Monieno, Nanette Montilla, Hermes Pasqua, Jorcelyn Rillorta, Riza Suarez, Joanna Decano-Terrado	
Circulation: Susan Jalad, Virginia Surat, Patricia Marquez, Felix Alipasa	
	or email us at: <a href="mailto:info@newbornscreening.ph">info@newbornscreening.ph</a>
	Website: <a href="http://www.newbornscreening.ph">www.newbornscreening.ph</a>

## A Workshop on Galactosemia for Newborn Screening Centers



As part of Quality Assurance activities, the Newborn Screening Reference Center (NSRC) successfully conducted a three-day workshop on Galatosemia (GAL) for Newborn Screening Centers (NSCs) on September 19-21, 2011.

The first two days of the workshop reviewed and enhanced the Galactosemia laboratory processes. Held at NSC-CL, Angeles Pampanga, the workshop was conducted by Charity M. Jomanto, NSRC QA Officer. On the last day of the workshop, Dr. Mary Anne Chiong, Chair of the Galactosemia Experts Committee, gave a lecture on Galactosemia at Alvir Hall, UP-Manila. It was followed by a review on the new GAL algorithm and an open forum.

Unit heads, laboratory managers and medical technologists from the different NSCs participated during the first two days of the workshop while the follow-up nurses and members of the GAL experts committee joined the lecture and discussion on the new algorithm on the third day.



## 9th Newborn Screening Convention: Improving Newborn Screening Practices and Outcomes

The Newborn Screening Society of the Philippines, Inc. (NSSPI), in collaboration with the Philippine Pediatric Society - Northern Luzon Chapter, will hold the 9th Newborn Screening Convention on 04 October 2011 at the Hotel Ariana, Bauang, La Union.

The Convention aims to provide continuing education to newborn screening stakeholders and health professionals involved in newborn screening. A total of nine topics will be covered in the program which includes: Status of the National Comprehensive Newborn Screening System, Proposed Guidelines for Follow-up, Screening for Retinopathy of Prematurity, Newborn Hearing Screening in the Philippines, Updates on Philhealth Newborn Care Package, Maple Syrup Urine Disease (MSUD) and the Importance of Newborn Screening, Diets for PKU and MSUD, Expanded Newborn Screening among Filipino Newborns, and Role of Genetic Counselors in the Newborn Screening Program. These topics, along with six challenging cases on newborn screening, will be discussed by renowned speakers. - *V Mendoza*

## NEWBORN SCREENING AWARENESS WEEK NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

<b>NEWBORN SCREENING AWARDS</b> October 3, 2011, Traders Hotel Manila Organizers: DOH, NSRC, NSCs and CHD-MM	<b>NEWBORN SCREENING CONVENTION</b> October 4, 2011, Hotel Ariana La Union Organizers: NSSPI and PPS - Northern Luzon Chapter
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Newborn Screening Reference Center  
National Institutes of Health  
University of the Philippines Manila  
Pedro Gil St., Ermita, Manila 1000



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# newborn screening

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## NBS Advocate: Finding Ways to Save Lives



Clarita Alarin (seated first from right) with the other members of the Holy Redeemer Circle, Our Mother of Perpetual Help

Clarita Malazarte Alarin is an advocate of newborn screening (NBS) in Butuan City. Through her efforts, 38 pregnant members of her community have received NBS gift certificates for 2010 and 2011. How did this happen?

When she retired, Alarin wanted to continue serving her people. So she became an active member of the Holy Redeemer Circle in her parish. In one of her walks, she saw an NBS billboard, which led her to visit the regional DOH office in Caraga. On March 12, 2010, after attending the Center for Health Development conference in Butuan City, Alarin believed that this program was for her. She knew that NBS is essential for saving lives.

She raised funds by soliciting money from her friends. Alarin coordinated with the "Gagmayng Kristohanung Katlingban" (GKK), a basic ecclesial community in the locality, to make NBS possible for indigent pregnant community members through gift certificates. The gift certificates were used to have newborn babies screened. Because of Alarin, the community members were convinced that NBS is critical for

preventing mental retardation and early death among newborns.

Alarin did not know when she started advocating NBS that her own grandson would benefit from it. On November 27, 2010, her grandson was born at the Butuan Puericulture Center. Within two days the baby was screened and found to be initially positive for Congenital Hypothyroidism (CH). At two weeks, her grandson was confirmed positive for CH and was immediately managed by his pediatric endocrinologist. Today, because of NBS the baby is growing to be a healthy child.

It was then that she understood her actions; it was divine intervention that led her to campaign for newborn screening. It became clear to her that what she was doing was critically important to newborns and their families. With her knowledge, resourcefulness, and willingness to help others, Alarin is more than proud to be an advocate of NBS. Today, she is a provider of hope, not only to her grandson, but to all other families and babies that will benefit from NBS. - *P Bermudez*

**Proclamation No. 540 declares the first week of October each year as  
"National Newborn Screening Week"**