

NSC-NIH Facilitates Exposure Training

To keep up with the fast pace of advances in technology, the Newborn Screening Laboratory Information Management System (NLIMS) got all set for an upgrade, pushing Newborn Screening Centers (NSCs) in the forefront of health innovation.

Newborn Screening Center-National Institutes of Health (NSC-NIH) led the upgrade early this year and is currently on its parallel testing. The new system is expected to go live in July.

To facilitate the implementation of the NLIMS to other NSCs and to give the participants a background on the new and enhanced features of Neometrics, the data management system used by NSC-NIH, Mr. Meiler Manguait and Natus conducted a webinar at NSC-NIH UP Ayala Technohub on June 19.

Immediately afterward, on June 20-21, the Neometrics Upgrade Exposure was conducted to allow participants to learn more about the improvements in the system with hands-on training. Laboratory managers, team captains, IT personnel, follow-up nurses, and data encoders from the different NSCs joined the training. *MTEscoreal*

CHD-MM and DZMM Team Up to Strengthen NBS Advocacy



Hermes Pascua, NBS Coordinator for CHD-MM explains to expectant mothers the importance of newborn screening during the Buntis Congress held at SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City on May 19.

This time, we team up with Kapamilyas!

The Center for Health Development–Metro Manila (CHD-MM) teamed up with DZMM Radyo Patrol 630 for the 10th Buntis Congress at the Megatrade Hall, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City, May 19.

The Buntis Congress is a yearly event aimed to educate pregnant women about maternal health and the health of their babies.

During the event, Hermes E. Pascua, NBS Nurse Coordinator for Metro Manila, presented newborn screening as one of the topics.

Pascua reminded the would-be mothers of the importance of NBS and afterward gave away free newborn screenings cards to 40 discussion participants through a raffle, courtesy of CHD-MM and the

Newborn Screening Center–National Institutes of Health.

The event is part of CHD-MM's plan to strengthen NBS advocacy through partnerships with different organizations that also care for maternal and infant health. *Calincastr*

LGU Assemblies Step Up NBS Campaign

In one side of Metro Manila, Quezon City General Hospital has put up a newborn screening (NBS) committee and created a policy to institutionalize program implementation. Meanwhile, Mandaluyong City Medical Center has started processing the procurement of NBS kits for its almost 2,000 annual newborns.

These are just a few examples of local government hospitals and city health offices that have started strengthening their programs according to the Newborn Screening Act of 2004 (RA 9288). Thanks to LGU Assemblies and Exposure Trips by the Center for Health Development–Metro Manila (CHD-MM), together with the Newborn Screening Center-National Institutes of Health (NSC-NIH), more are following suit.

Caloocan City now monitors its private lying-ins that have been identified as contributors to the number of inactive newborn screening facilities (NCFs).

Muntinlupa City Health Office has also been working on its Local NBS Committee that will oversee the implementation of the program at the city level. The Committee is working on its NBS ordinance for a strong and sustainable implementation of the NBS program.

CHD-MM recognizes the LGUs as vital partners for the successful implementation of RA 9288 and looks forward to more programs involving local health representatives. *HPascua*



Newborn Screening Program, Province of Batangas

The need for every newborn Batagueño to be examined for the presence of the five congenital abnormalities through newborn screening (NBS) has finally come into the limelight when the Provincial Government of Batangas, led by Governor Vilma Santos-Recto, declared that health is one of its top priorities.



Participants and the NBS Regional Coordinators, Jenica Querido (standing 3rd from left) and Ms. Malou Malana (standing 5th from left), during the NBS Training held on June 21-22 at Makiling Highlands Resort

When Santos-Recto was still a Mayor in Lipa City, NBS was also included in the city budget to serve indigent patients. Screening, confirmatory testing and management of patients were included as part of the sustainable program on NBS in the City.

In the Province of Batangas, NBS started in November 2007 when an NBS coordinator was assigned to conduct a province-wide orientation on the program and carry out an actual blood sample collection. The Newborn Screening Society of the Philippines, Inc. (NSSPI) and the Provincial Health Office (PHO) partnered for the event.

In 2008, the Provincial Government through the PHO allotted P2.2 million for NBS kits to be given free to all 31 municipalities. From ten babies per municipality per month allocation, it increased to 15 babies per municipality per month in 2009. And in 2010 and 2011, the NBS Program got P4.4 and P5.5 million in allocation, respectively.

In an effort to identify the deserving patients for the free NBS examination, the Provincial Government made a checklist with these criteria: (1) the mother must have completed four antenatal visits, (2) she must be attended by a skilled birth attendant, (3) she must deliver at a designated birthing facility, (4) she is a non-PhilHealth card holder, (5) she has been a resident of Batangas for at least 6 months, and (6) she belongs to the class C or D category.

Meanwhile, to provide better service to patients, the PHO also conducted a series of orientation and workshops for health personnel in hospitals and rural health units, barangay health workers, and local government officials including those at the barangay level.

In recognition of the valiant efforts of Batangas and to further intensify the program in the province, the Center for Health Development–Region 4-A recently scheduled five NBS Trainings for Nurses and Midwives for the different hospitals in the municipalities of Batangas.

The training series kicked off on June 21–22 at Makiling Highlands Resort, getting together 24 participants to comprise the first batch. Meanwhile, the second batch had 33 participants during the June 28–29 training at Monte Vista Resort in Calamba, Laguna. The practicum on sample collection was held at Dr. J. P. Rizal Memorial District Hospital.

CHD-Region 4-A presented the overview of NBS, the five disorders and the implementation of NBS, and the coverage of Batangas province and its municipalities.

The next sets of trainings will be held on July 5–6, 12–13, and 26–27. *ALAbrenica, JQuerido*



The participants go through sample collection practicum as part of the NBS Training Program for Batangas Province. They performed heel-prick, the preferred method of sample collection for newborn screening.



Check on Good Parenting

In the newborn screening program, parents are key players in the successful long-term management of patients with inborn metabolic disorders.

Bearing this in mind, Newborn Screening Center–Visayas (NSC-V) organized the 2012 Reunion of Saved Babies for Panay and Guimaras Islands at the Center for Teaching Excellence Conference Room of West Visayas State University, Iloilo City on April 28.

Mr. Edwin Portillo, Provincial Population Officer of the Province of Iloilo and a child welfare advocate, gave a short lecture on parenting. Dr. Renilyn Reyes, Newborn Screening Medical Coordinator of Center for Health Development (CHD)-Region 6 gave a lecture on the importance of compliance to medical and therapeutic regimen of confirmed patients. Ms. Lizandra Sante, Nurse Coordinator, discussed the support given by the program to their children.

While the CHD-Region 6 and the NSC-V provide support services, parents were reminded that the program is a team effort and that parents should always provide primary care for their children.

Before the activity ended, Ms. Yugie Caroline Demegillo introduced the parents to the long-term follow-up program, which would ensure that confirmed patients will be monitored and assessed regularly.

A group of 80 parents and their kids attended the gathering. *DBuensalido*

Challenges in Patient Follow Up

It has already been a year since I began my new role as the long-term follow-up nurse of Newborn Screening Center–Visayas (NSC-V), and so far, it has truly been a rewarding and challenging experience for me.

Thankfully, the rewards have outnumbered the challenges. The challenges themselves that I have encountered have become my stepping stones toward success.

So what are these rewards? These are the caregivers—mothers, fathers, grandparents, and relatives—of our confirmed patients who continued to heed our advice of adhering to their little ones' treatment requirements in spite of the difficulties.

Many of these brave people had to travel far in order to get to where the child's laboratory tests and checkups are done with their pediatric endocrinologists. Yet, they bear this and consider the trip as a worthy sacrifice.

I tried to affirm their efforts, telling them that this sacrifice is rewarded by the sense of calm and security after their child has been successfully checked and evaluated by the specialist.



The parents and their children gathered during the Reunion of Saved Babies organized by NSC-V on April 28 in Iloilo City.



Yugie Demegillo, long term follow up nurse of NSC-V, is with the program since July 2011.

Of course, there too are the financial worries. The maintenance of the child's treatment cost money. It is with much pride that I can say that through proper use of its funds, the NSC-V was able to provide financial assistance to indigent patients, making it easier for deserving people to worry less on the financial side.

Many other things make me feel rewarded in my vocation. The dependable and dedicated nurses and health workers whom I have met across the Visayas chose to live in their areas of assignment and kept close watch and care of their patients. Indeed, many people still make a difference in the lives of others. I have much respect and admiration for them.

Lastly, perhaps the greatest reward of all for me is seeing that our patients—those beautiful, wonderful children—grow up to live a normal, healthy life. This is what we are here for. *YDemegillo*



NBS Training Dovetails in EINC Program

It's a one-two punch for infant and neonatal health!

The Center for Health Development–Region 9 (CHD 9) conducted two consecutive trainings for Essential Intrapartum, Newborn Care (EINC) and Newborn Screening Programs at Mibang Hotel, Dipolog City, and Grand Astoria Hotel, Zamboanga City, May 15–17 and June 19–21, respectively.



The health personnel from different municipalities attended the series of training organized by CHD 9 for Zamboanga Peninsula. The photo shows the participants in the training in Dipolog City on May 15-17.

The trainings aimed to improve the knowledge, skills, and attitude of the health workers on EINC and NBS to prevent neonatal and infant mortality by providing the proper health care from the time the child is born.

Dr. Teogenes F. Baluma, CHD 9 Regional Director, gave the welcome remarks to the participants, while Dr. Romeo A. Ong, Chief of Hospital of Zamboanga City Medical Center, and Dr. Joshua G. Brillantes, CHD-ZP Chief of Local Health Support Division, gave inspirational messages.

For the training proper, Dr. Ruvellinda Grace Uy (MS-III Obstetrician), Dr. Mary Ann

Torregosa (MS-III Pathologist), Dr. Cesar Jeffrey Masilungan (MS-II Neonatologist ZCMC), and Dr. Augusto Manolo Alpichi (MS-II, CHD 9) were tapped as resource speakers.

A total of 83 participants from Regional Health Units, CHOs, private hospitals and DOH-Retained Hospitals from different Municipalities of Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay, and Zamboanga City participated in the event. *ACalibot*



Dr. Conchita Abarquez, NSC-Mindanao Unit Head, addresses queries and concerns of parents during the G6PD Forum held in Davao City on May 5.

Davao City Hosts 2nd G6PD Deficiency Forum

To educate parents and to establish support system to families of babies afflicted with G6PD deficiency, Newborn Screening Center–Mindanao conducted its Second G6PD Deficiency Forum at the Southern Philippines Medical Center, Davao City, May 5.

A total of 87 parents from Davao City flocked to the event where pre- and post-tests were given to assess the level of understanding of parents toward G6PD deficiency. *PBermudez*



Three Days of Fun for VYLH

The Volunteer Youth Leaders for Health (VYLH)-Philippines has definitely seen growth and commitment as it celebrated its Second VYLH National Leadership Congress at Island Cove Hotel and Leisure Park in Kawit, Cavite, June 2-4.

Themed "One Heart, One Vision, and One Goal in Sustaining the VYLH Commitment to Servant Leadership," the congress was participated by about 160 active volunteers from all over the archipelago.

For three days, volunteers reunited and shared their experiences with one another and with new members, who are now the 13th batch. The congress served as a welcome party to the new members as well.

The highlights of the congress include the ratification of the VYLH-Philippines constitution and by-laws, which was voted on by the pioneer and K4 batches during the first day of the activity. Volunteers also received updates on the three main advocacy topics of VYLH-Philippines: newborn screening, folic acid supplementation, and orphan disorders.

Besides recognition and award giving to outstanding volunteers and schools and universities, socialization was part of the program too. Regional representatives and clusters presented their special numbers and talents, while the Centers for Health Development and the advisers had their special presentation as well.

The Black and White Party and the Cultural Night, likewise, gave an opportunity to volunteers to showcase the diverse Filipino culture, allowing them to reflect on the spirit of true voluntarism.

The event culminated with the election of new officers and the appointment of the regional coordinators. *ATadlas*



The young volunteers together with the cluster advisers, DOH Regional Coordinators, and partners pose for a group photo on the second day of the assembly.

VYLH in the 9th NYP: Advocacy into Policy



One hundred sixty youth leaders gathered for the Ninth National Youth Parliament in Naga City, Camarines Sur, May 2-6, to formulate policy recommendations that will address youth issues and serve as the government's guide in policy and program development.

During this biennial convention, a participant from VYLH-Philippines took center stage when he was selected as one of the young parliamentarians.

Stephen Bryan Bongcarras, the lone Boholano representative who is a senior nursing student from Holy Name University, lobbied for the advocacies of the VYLH-Philippines through its inclusion in one of the NYP's resolutions—a first for the network.

Stephen described his participation as a "rare opportunity" and was

asked during the event to join in one of the committees to formulate resolutions on a specific youth issue.

In the parliament, in which he was elected as the Secretary General, Stephen recalled:

As a health advocate, I opted to register under the Committee on Health and Wellness. This is one rare chance for me to put my advocacy into policy. So, I pushed for a resolution calling the DILG and DOH to strengthen the maternal, children and youth-friendly services in all health centers in the Philippines (P. Resolution No. NYP-09-12-17, S.2012). I also took this opportunity to mainstream into the resolution the importance of folic acid supplementation to prevent neural tube defects and mental retardation.

Stephen said it was a great joy when his resolution was approved in the plenary. He said that he might not have conducted many activities for VYLH, but it was nevertheless an important contribution that may bring forth a nationwide effect.

In 2010, Stephen also pushed for the formation of a core group of volunteers and for a tie-up with a network of BHWs. *RPascual, ZZamudio*



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in cooperation with

Philippine Pediatric Society -Southern Tagalog Chapter

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10TH NEWBORN SCREENING CONVENTION

Moving on: Expanded Newborn Screening for Filipino Newborns



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(1:00-5:00 pm)

CONVENTION PROPER
02 October 2012, Tuesday
(8:00 am -5:00 pm)

SMX CONVENTION CENTER
SM MALL OF ASIA COMPLEX
Pasay City, Philippines

TOPICS

Overview of Expanded Newborn Screening
New Conditions in the Expanded Screening Panel
What Expanded Newborn Screening will NOT Screen
G6PD Deficiency in Asia/Philippines
Cut Offs for Prematurity and Low Birth Weights
Updates on Philhealth Newborn Care Package

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Limited to 150 slots
Must confirm before
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Php 1200 non MDs

ON-SITE REGISTRATION
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Four NSCs Undergo Planning Workshop

It's that time of the year when we sit down together and plan for the future.

That was what four Newborn Screening Centers (NSCs) did on May 11-13 when they came together for the Consultative and Strategic Planning Workshop for NSCs at the Island Cove Resort and Leisure Park in Kawit, Cavite.

Hosted by the National Center for Disease Prevention and Control of the Department of Health and the Newborn Screening Reference Center-National Institutes of Health, the event aimed to improve NBS efficiency and effectiveness at the NSC level. It also served as a venue to discuss strategic directional plans and improve coordination, networking and collaborative operation of all four NSCs.

Partly sponsored by PerkinElmer, Inc. and Biotech Philippines, the three-day event was also an opportunity for all NSC Heads and personnel to socialize and get to know one another. This is the second year that a national NSC assembly was called. With newborn screening expansion in the horizon, NSC personnel need the time to gear up for the challenges ahead. *VMendoza*



The forefront leaders in the implementation of newborn screening addressed all newborn screening staff during the Newborn Screening Assembly (L-R): Dr. Juanita Basilio, Medical Officer VII of the Family Health Office; Dr. Carmencita Padilla, Director of the Newborn Screening Reference Center; Dr. Conchita Abarquez, Unit Head of NSC-Mindanao; Dr. Florencio Dizon, Unit Head of NSC-Central Luzon; Dr. April Grace Berbos of NSC-National Institutes of Health; and Dr. Edgar Posecion, Unit Head of NSC-Visayas



Perly Bermudez shared her experience as PDO at the NSC-Mindanao as the group set goals to meet new challenges.

The new members of the newborn screening family were introduced to the group at the beginning of the assembly.



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Bagumbayan RHU: A Model Newborn Screening Facility

In this issue

- Bagumbayan RHU: A Model Screening Facility P1
- NSC-NIH Facilitates Exposure Training P2
- CHD-MM and DZMM Team Up to Strengthen NBS Advocacy P2
- LGU Assemblies Step Up NBS Campaign P2
- Newborn Screening Program, Province of Batangas P3
- Check on Good Parenting P4
- Challenges in Patient Follow Up P4
- NBS Training Dovetails in EINC Program P5
- Davao City Hosts 2nd G6PD Deficiency Forum P5
- Three Days of Fun for VYLH P6
- VYLH in the 9th NYP: Advocacy into Policy P6
- 10th Newborn Screening Convention P7
- Four NSCs Undergo Planning Workshop P8



Photo on the left shows all the staff behind the achievements of Rural Health Unit of Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat. Photo on the right shows a regular Mother's Class conducted by the RHU.

They travel the road to perfection!

The Rural Health Unit (RHU) of Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat, is the only unit in the province that screened almost 100% of its deliveries for 2011.

With an average of 70 deliveries per month, Bagumbayan RHU maintained its good performance due to its exemplary practices, making it an observation study tour site for Region 12, its neighboring regions, and even other countries. Among these study tours include groups from Davao del Sur, Sultan Kudarat and the one headed by Ugochi Daniels, UNFPA Representative to the Philippines.

One of Bagumbayan RHU's outstanding practices is the "Hilot," which is a program that assists pregnant women and gives them incentives from the Maternity Care Package reimbursements. The program helps pregnant women to support rather than violate the ordinance against untrained hilot.

Aside from the basic maternity and child care services, newborn screening (NBS) and birth registrations are also being done before sending the mother and baby home.

The Annual Buntis Congress forms a big part of the information dissemination campaign among mothers and expectant mothers regarding the importance of having their babies screened.

On a smaller scale, every Wednesday is Buntis Day where free laboratory and dental services are offered.

In November 2009, Mayor Bernardita Bito-onon sent out a memorandum that provided free

transport to patients. Pregnant women are fetched from their homes and brought to the birthing clinic and will be delivered back after delivery free of charge. In case no ambulance is available, the Women's Health Team will assist by coordinating with any available vehicle in the community. The LGU will provide fuel/fare reimbursements.

Since the Rural Health Unit was the only birthing facility in Bagumbayan, people there were practicing facility-based delivery. This has decreased the maternal deaths, sustained zero neonatal deaths, and increased NBS coverage. The facility, through Municipal Health Officer Dr. Raul Manansala, is committed to support and sustain its commitment to this program.

RHU Bagumbayan Birthing Clinic was established and made functional under the leadership of Mayor Felipe Allaga in 2006. In December 2007, it was accredited as MCP provider under the leadership of Mayor Bernardita Bito-onon and became the first MCP-Accredited Birthing Home in Region 12. The LGU financed the Birthing Home physical setup.

Meanwhile, the PhilHealth Trust Fund (MCP, TB-DOTS, and OPB) and the OPB Capitation Fund helped purchase new ambulances in 2009 and 2011, shelling out P800,000 and P870,000, respectively.

Bagumbayan RHU was accredited as a Newborn Screening Facility in March 8, 2007, and since then, it has slowly motivated parents to have their babies screened. Because of strong support from leaders and dedicated RHU personnel, the facility has reached almost 100% of NBS coverage. *ADimacasil*

Number of Babies Screened
as of June 2012

COUNTER: 3,537,034