

VOLUNTEER YOUTH LEADERS FOR HEALTH

A Letter of Appreciation

By Louigie Boy Saludar



Louigie Boy Saludar joins other Mindanao representatives during the International Conference of Birth Defects and Disability in the Developing World on November 10–13, 2013.

There's so much I have to say about my experience as a delegate to the Third National Leadership Congress of Volunteer Youth Leaders for Health Philippines, but first . . . THANK YOU.

Thank you, Dr. Conchita Abarquez and the entire Newborn Screening Center–Mindanao, for believing in my capacity for volunteerism.

Thank you to my co-delegates in Mindanao who were willing to travel great distances to hear what I have to say and see how I worked within the community. I really felt everyone's warm welcome, and I was able to communicate and relate with others who share the same goals in advancing our advocacy.

Despite and amid the rage of supertyphoon Yolanda, God provided us a safe haven and brought us warmth and comfort . . .

Despite and amid the rage of supertyphoon Yolanda, God provided us a safe haven and brought us warmth and comfort through our Tito's and Tita's.

Thanks also to the March of Dimes and Institute of Human Genetics for choosing me as a delegate to the International Conference of Birth Defects and Disability in the Developing World, themed "Embedding Birth Defects in the Continuum of Care," on November 10–13, 2013.

I had a wonderful experience meeting delegates from other countries and the Global Networks of Newborn Screening Centers and in attending workshops by high-caliber speakers. I have met many medical professionals, including the famous Father of Birth Defect Surveillance, Professor Pierpaolo Mastroiacovo. I have also found a good friend in the person of Dr. Sely Akbar from Indonesia, who has been closest to me during the entire conference.

And so, on behalf of the City Government of Davao and the Office of the Department Head of the City Social Services and Development Office, thank you.

Surely, we will continue to advocate "Kabataang Dabawenyon, Kabataang Pinoy!"

Maraming salamat po!



Louigie Boy Saludar is an active VYLH community member since 2010. He is currently employed as Technical Assistant at the Children's Concern Division of LGU-Davao's City Social Services and Development Office (CSSDO).

For more news and updates, please visit ylhphilippines.blogspot.com

CHD–Region 4B Conducts NBS Orientation-Training

Ensure full implementation.

That was the ultimate goal of the Center for Health Development–Region 4B when it conducted the Newborn Screening (NBS) Orientation and Training on December 11–13, 2013, at the Fernandina 88 Suites Hotel in Cubao, Quezon City.

The trainees were health facilities (hospitals and regional health units with functional BEMONC facilities) that have no trained personnel and are planning to implement NBS as soon as possible.

The facilities were also looking to increase NBS coverage and certification of health facilities and to update the implementation of the Expanded Newborn Screening.

Lending their expertise were resource speakers Dr. April Grace Berbo, Head of Newborn Screening Center–National Institutes of Health (NSC-NIH); Joanna Abigail Decano-Terrado, Project Development Officer of NSC-NIH; Dr. Anthony Calibo, Medical Specialist IV of Family Health Office–Department of Health; Abigail Estrada, SSSC of PhilHealth; and Hermes Pascua, Project Development Officer of CHD–Metro Manila.

The hands-on training on the heel prick method, which was an integral part of the program, was done at the Quirino Memorial Medical Center, Manila. *FLCamayang*



A participant raises a point during the CHD-Region 4B NBS Orientation and Training in Quezon City.



Participants get hands-on experience after inputs from the training during the CHD-Region 4B NBS Orientation-Training.

NBS Basics and Lab Exposure . . . from page 2

Health Workers" on November 13-15, 2013, at the Daniel Mercado Medical Center, Institute of Health Sciences.

The activity was attended by the NBS Coordinators of government hospitals, health centers, and lying-ins as well as the respective NBS Coordinators of each of the five provinces in Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon, collectively known as Calabarzon.

The orientation included a tour of the NSC laboratory to familiarize the participants with the process of NBS testing.

The resource speakers were Dr. Alma Andal, Unit Head of NSC-SL; Nadine Alyssa Magpantay, follow-up nurse, NSC-SL; and Jenica Querido and Emmanuel Hermoso, NBS Program Coordinators from CHD–Region 4A. They were joined by Wenalyn Viana and Joanna Abigail Terrado of the Newborn Screening Center–National Institutes of Health. *EHermoso*

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NSC-Mindanao Beefs Up

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implementing the expanded newborn screening. Meanwhile, the Photo Story Contest searched for the best collage that tells a story about newborn screening.

After the selection and deliberation processes, the following emerged as winners:

NBS Campaign Contest. 1st Prize: City Health Office–Malaybalay; 2nd Prize: Valencia Sanitarium Hospital
NBS Essay Writing Contest. 1st Prize: Michael Roland Sumber of Salug Valley Medical Center; Mariflor Nocom Del Rosario of Zamboanga Doctors Hospital; and 3rd Prize: DJ Z. Orias of Kidapawan Medical Specialist Center, Inc.
NBS Photo Story Contest. 1st Prize: New Bayugan Medical Center; 2nd Prize: Zamboanga Doctors Hospital; and 3rd Prize: Valencia Sanitarium Hospital. *SMGuilaran*

CHD-Central Mindanao Holds

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Dr. Antoniette M. Ladio, Head of the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Section of PHIC, and Dr. Conchita Abarquez, Newborn Screening Center (NSC)–Mindanao Unit Head, graced the activity as resource speakers.

Following the PIR program, an awarding ceremony was held to recognize the facilities with high NBS coverage. Plaques of recognition were given by Dr. Virgie Condez, Assistant Regional Director of CHD-Region 12; Dr. Fatima Emban, OIC Local Health Support Division of CHD-Region 12; Dr. Conchita Abarquez, Unit Head of NSC-Mindanao; Dr. Anotoniette Ladio, Head AQAS, PHIC-Region 12; and Lucy Decio, NBS Regional Coordinator for Region 12.

Regional and facility planning for 2014 capped the PIR as Region 12 NBS Coordinators look ahead to a more productive and successful implementation of newborn screening. *PBermudez*

Philippines Hosts

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Asia Pacific region—will have a collective resonance for delegates.

"When delegates return to their respective countries," added Padilla, "we are hoping to move progressively forward, ready to take on new tasks on the management of birth defects and disabilities with a lot more confidence than before."



Mangagoy . . . from page 3

Kanami Health Insurance. This health insurance program unique to the Local Government Unit of Bislig City was implemented to address health concerns on indigent and non-PhilHealth members.

No Newborn Screening–No Discharge Policy. "We consider it as a mortal sin whenever a newborn goes out of our facility unscreened," said Estrella. True to her statement, the facility screened 98.9% of their newborns and has a zero dissent cases for 2013. Their efforts were recognized in the Sixth NBS Awards (Mindanao Cluster) held in Davao City.

Free Transportation. The NBS team conducts pre-counseling to parents and offers free transportation to Tagum Doctors' Hospital for confirmatory testing.

Due to the facility's efficient implementation of the NBS program, on November 30–31, 2013, the financial aspect of the facility was presented during the Project Implementation Review for the province of Surigao Del Sur. The newborn screening services given to the babies were also evaluated. Results proved the sustainability of the NBS program of the Mangagoy Public-Private Mixed Birthing Facility. *RAGuilar*

Delegates, guests, and resource persons show solidarity during the 6th International Conference on Birth Defects and Disabilities in the Developing World in Mactan Island, Cebu City, November 10-13, 2013.

Philippines Hosts 6th International Conference on Birth Defects

Highlighting the continuum care for patients with birth defects, an important health topic in the developing world, the Philippines hosted about 300 delegates from 35 countries for the 6th International Conference on Birth Defects and Disabilities (ICBD) in the Developing World on November 10–13, 2013, in Mactan Island, Cebu City.

Themed "Embedding Birth Defects in the Continuum of Care," ICBD was organized by the Institute of Human Genetics–National Institutes of Health, University of the Philippines Manila, and the Asia Pacific Society for Human Genetics, with support from the March of Dimes Foundation and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA.

The event presented a comprehensive, scientific program highlighting the latest topics, challenges, and opportunities in the field of birth defects, preconception health services, genomics of prematurity, maternal nutrition, congenital infections, developmental disabilities, newborn screening, and non-invasive prenatal diagnosis.

Gracing the opening ceremonies were Neena Raina, Regional Adviser for Child and Adolescent Health, World Health Organization Regional Office for South-East Asia; Christopher Howson, Vice President for Global Programs, March of Dimes Foundation; and Meow Keong Thong; President of Asia Pacific Society of Human Genetics.

"We have structured the conference to encourage dialogue and sharing of experiences and best practices among the delegates from the 35 countries," said Dr. Carmencita D. Padilla, this year's Conference Chair and also Director of the Newborn Screening Reference Center.

The insights from diverse localities around the world—particularly concerning the recent trends and developments in the field of genetics, with special emphasis on the

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Number of Babies Screened as of December 2013 COUNTER: 5,051,693

NSC-NIH Conducts NSF Satisfaction Survey

Survey says . . .

Results are back from 1,018 newborn screening facilities (NSFs) in Regions 4A, 4B, 5, and NCR who were given survey forms that were designed to determine the service rating of Newborn Screening Center–National Institutes of Health (NSC-NIH), to know which among the services needs the most improvement and which is most commendable, to identify reasons behind low ratings for a particular service, and to outline ways by which NSC-NIH may improve its service delivery system.

NSC-NIH sent out the feedback forms on July 19–August 2, 2013, and got a response rate of 17.68%.

Mechanics

The questionnaire consisted of 13 statements describing key processes involved in the five areas of service delivery by the Center: 1) orientation, 2) membership, 3) purchase orders, 4) results, and 5) staff.

Respondents were then asked to rate the services using a five-point rating scale where 1 is considered “poor” and 5 is “excellent.” Open-ended questions were also included to gather problems frequently encountered by NSFs and to draw suggestions on how to improve a particular service.

Results

As a result, the overall service rating of NSC-NIH was 4.43, where 153 of respondents, or 85%, gave an average score of ≥4, while 27, or 15%, gave an average score of <4.

For the average rating per item, service involving welcome call for new members received the lowest rating of 4.18, while staff courtesy and friendliness received the highest rating of 4.66.

For the average rating per service, purchase orders received the lowest rating of 4.20, while staff received the highest rating of 4.65.

From the results of the open-ended questions, NSC-NIH was able to look into the most common problems encountered by the NSFs and some suggestions on how to improve the service delivery system.

Based on the outcome of the survey, below are the actions

NBS Basics and Lab Exposure for Health Workers in Batangas



Dr. Alma Andal, Unit Head of NSC-SL during the Basic Orientation on Newborn Screening with Laboratory Exposure for Health Workers in Tanauan City, Batangas.

As the Newborn Screening Center–South Luzon (NSC-SL) in Tanauan City, Batangas, begins its full operations, the Center for Health Development–Region 4A in partnership with NSC-SL conducted the one-day seminar “Basic Orientation on Newborn Screening (NBS) with Laboratory Exposure for Health Workers” on November 14, 2013, at the Daniel Mercado Medical Center Institute of Health Sciences.

NSC-NIH is currently undertaking or planning to work on:

- 1) Revive the welcome call protocol for new NSFs.
- 2) Work in close coordination with Center for Health Development’s NBS Coordinators to ensure timely conduct of orientation for all new member facilities. Elevate suggestions of respondents on orientation content and activities.
- 3) Assist NSFs in remote areas on requests for pickup and delivery of NBS supplies and samples by sharing the best practices of NSFs in similar situations. Closely monitor the status of deliveries by courier service providers.
- 4) Conduct semi-annual meetings with couriers to address concerns on transport time.
- 5) Expand and strengthen links with non-governmental organizations, local government units, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and other government agencies that could provide ample and immediate support for indigent patients needing financial assistance.
- 6) Increase the survey response rate by attaching a cover letter addressed to the NSF’s NBS Coordinator that strongly encourages survey response, and distribute the form to all member NSFs under NSC-NIH on an annual basis.
- 7) Add a new section to the survey which asks respondents to rank the five service areas of the Center according to perceived importance. *IManansala*

In Focus

Mangagoy Public-Private Mixed Birthing Facility



The NBS Team of Mangagoy Public-Private Mixed Birthing Facility pose for a photo in front of the facility’s building.

In the heart of Bislig, a third class city with 24 barangays in Surigao del Sur and known for its promising ecotourism, stands Mangagoy Public-Private Mixed Birthing Facility, a government-run center that began providing newborn screening (NBS) in 2011.

Dr. Brenda M. Estrella, City Health Officer and the facility’s NBS Coordinator, leads the NBS team composed of Felix A. Tan III, Assistant NBS Coordinator; Exaltacion E. Porras, PHIC Processor; Anabella O. Bacatan, Administrative Officer; Ludifel M. Masancay and Helen C. Bulasa, Medical Technologists; and Merla Recto, Laboratory Aide.

With a bustling monthly average of 42 deliveries, the team came up with an impressive, organized plan of action that would assure successful implementation.

Advocacy Program. This program includes radio plugs, lectures during pre-natal visits, and focus group discussions. Porras conducts initial assessment during focus group discussions, and if a patient is a non-PhilHealth member, she encourages the patient to apply for membership.

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NSC-Mindanao Beefs Up NBS Campaign

To celebrate Newborn Screening (NBS) Week 2013, Newborn Screening Center (NSC)–Mindanao launched a series of campaigns that would boost advocacy and increase awareness on NBS.

NSC-Mindanao invited all newborn screening facilities (NSFs) to participate in three Mindanao-wide contests on newborn screening—NBS Campaign Contest 2013, NBS Essay Writing Contest, and NBS Photo Story Contest. The NSFs were given a month to submit their entries.

The Campaign Contest aimed to look for the most comprehensive, intense, and creative campaign, while the Essay Writing Contest looked for the best original write-up on challenges, strategies, and plans in successfully

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CHD–Central Mindanao Holds 2013 PIR

The Center for Health Development (CHD)–Region 12 gathered 146 implementers from private and government newborn screening facilities (NSFs) for the Regional Newborn Screening (NBS) Program Implementation Review (PIR) on November 26–27, 2013, at the Family Country Inn Hotel, General Santos City.

During the PIR, the participants discussed updates on the implementation of the NBS program and expansion, assessment of the various NBS programs, and sharing of best practices.

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NSC-Mindanao Conducts Lay Fora Series

Three fora, three days.

Newborn Screening Center (NSC)–Mindanao conducted three different lay fora in three days for parents and families of afflicted babies at the Lauan Room and Mahogany Room of Southern Philippines Medical Center, Davao City.

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NEWS BRIEFS

San Fernando RHU Holds First G6PD Deficiency Orientation and Parents Forum

The Rural Health Unit (RHU) of San Fernando, Bukidnon, held its first G6PD Deficiency Orientation and Parents Forum on December 17, 2013, at the Municipal Gymnasium.



Participants and organizers share a light moment during the First G6PD Deficiency Orientation and Parents Forum sponsored by RHU of San Fernando Bukidnon.

Headed by the Municipal Health Officer, Dr. Maria Algerina T. Edma, the program was attended by 264 volunteer barangay health workers (BHWs), 52 Municipal Health Office personnel, and 60 parents.

The idea of conducting the forum began when the RHU team realized that like other provinces, G6PD deficiency is the most common positive cases in their locality.

“The parents need all necessary information about the disorder to ease their anxiety and understand how to manage the health of their children,” stressed Dr. Edma.

San Fernando RHU ensured that every pregnant mother

understands the importance of newborn screening. This is emphasized during household classes, mothers’ classes, barangay assemblies, and pre-natal checkups.

The RHU also facilitates the processing of marriage certificates of Lumad couples for PhilHealth enrollment to increase facility-based deliveries.

The RHU achieved 90% newborn screening coverage for 2011 and 2012 and made the facility a recipient of the Exemplary Performance Award in the Sixth Newborn Screening Awards for Mindanao Cluster last November 22, 2013. *RAguilar*

Mindanao Cluster Holds Third Reunion of Saved Babies



Participants and mascots share a photo during the Third Reunion of Saved Babies in the Mindanao Cluster.

The Newborn Screening Center (NSC)–Mindanao held its Third Reunion of Saved Babies–Mindanao Cluster on November 5, 2013, at the Abreeza Mall, Davao City.

More than 100 guests, parents, and relatives graced the event. Among them are 25 confirmed CH, 2 CAH, 3 PKU, 2 GAL, and 45 G6PD deficient children.

Most of the families were from Davao City and neighboring

areas such as Tagum and Digos. But there were also families that came all the way from South Cotabato and Surigao del Sur.

It was an afternoon filled with fun, laughter, and games for children and parents. Some

parents also shared inspirational stories about their children and their managing the disorders.

Dr. Conchita Abarquez, Unit Head of NSC-Mindanao, reminded families to continue with their children’s regular check up, follow proper medication, and—for growing GAL, PKU children and G6PD deficient children—guide their children to eat right. *SMGuilaran*

NBS Awards 2013 Moves North



Honorees of the NBS Awards 2013 join the organizers of the event for a photo.

It’s called NBS Awards—the biennially held program where the newborn screening (NBS) family honors all stakeholders of the newborn screening program for their efforts to support their tenets to save newborns from mental retardation and death.

For the past years, the ceremonies were held at a national level in Manila. But this year, NBS Awards went zonal.

The NBS Awards 2013 hosted by Newborn Screening Center–Central Luzon was held at the Baguio Country Club on November 26, 2013. A total of 132 guests and awardees attended the ceremony.

During the program, The Nightingales, a five-member choir group, rendered an a capella version of The Lord’s Prayer for the doxology and the Philippine National Anthem.

Dr. Benito Arca, Assistant Regional Director of the Center for Health Development (CHD)–Region 1, opened the ceremony with warm praises for the implementers and achievements of the newborn screening program.

NSC-Mindanao Conducts Lay Fora Series . . . from page 3

NSC-Mindanao held the Forum on Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia (CAH) and Congenital Hypothyroidism (CH) on November 18 and 19, 2013, respectively, and the Parent Fora on Phenylketonuria (PKU) and Galactosemia (GAL) on November 20.

The Pediatric Endocrinologist of Mindanao, Dr. Eleonor Du, served as the resource speaker for both CAH and CH Fora, while Dr. Conchita Abarquez, a pediatric geneticist, talked about the basics on PKU and GAL.

Baguio City Mayor Mauricio Domogan, represented by Rafael Tallocoy, Secretary to the Mayor, hailed the awardees who worked hard for the aspirations of the newborn screening program.

Dr. Valeriano Lopez, Regional Director of CHD–Cordillera Administrative Region, on behalf of Dr. Gerardo Bayugo, Assistant Secretary of Health for Northern and Central Luzon, saluted the success of the program and hoped for even bigger and better areas for development, specifically the Expanded Newborn Screening.

Meanwhile, Ma. Elouisa Reyes, Assistant Director for Administration of the Newborn Screening Reference Center (NSRC), speaking on behalf of Dr. Carmencita Padilla, NSRC Director, emphasized the notable work rallied by the program’s stakeholders.

Dr. Florencio Dizon, Unit Head of Newborn Screening Center–Central Luzon, closed the event with an inspiring congratulatory message. *NDelaCruz*

The Center also invited Dr. Perlina Quitain, a pediatric gastroenterologist, to talk about a topic that many mothers can relate to—“Feeding a Picky Child.”

The fora series was attended by a total of 70 patients, parents, and NSC-Mindanao organizers and aimed to further educate parents and families regarding the health of their babies. *PBermudez*