

DOH Conducts Workshop to Reinforce Patient Care



Participants of the Workshop on Reinforcing Dynamic Strategies (WORDS) for Short-Term and Long-Term Patient Care

On October 20, 2014, the Department of Health (DOH) issued Administrative Order No. 2014-0035, which set the guidelines for setting up Newborn Screening Continuity Clinics. These clinics, together with the Newborn Screening Centers (NSCs) and the DOH Regional Offices (ROs), are vital components of the National Comprehensive Newborn Screening System and form part of the mandate of the DOH to ensure that a network of facilities for referral and management of all positive cases is established.

Recognizing the importance of effective collaboration among these vital components, the DOH-Family Health Office, in collaboration with the National Institutes of Health-Newborn Screening Reference Center (NSRC), conducted the Workshop on Reinforcing Dynamic Strategies (WORDS)

for Short-Term and Long-Term Patient Care at Bayview Park Hotel, Manila, on February 11-12, 2016.

The activity sought to improve coordination among short-term and long-term follow-up teams and DOH-ROs in the total quality care of patients. It highlighted several strategies in ensuring the welfare of all confirmed patients.

Dr. Anthony Calibo, focal person of the Philippines Newborn Care Program of the Family Health Office, encouraged the participants to prepare for transition and changes in leadership, budgetary constraints, and challenges in human resources. He further urged the participants to continuously identify new strategies in improving program implementation and coordination among stakeholders. *FBeltran*

NSC Summit 2016 Targets ENBS Implementation

The Newborn Screening Center (NSC) Summit has set its crosshairs on the implementation of the Expanded Newborn Screening (ENBS) when it was held at the Waterfront Insular Hotel, Davao City, on February 19-20, 2016.

The two-day event, which was attended by 170 personnel from the five NSCs and the Newborn Screening Reference Center, focused on the improved coordination and collaborative operation of all NSCs.

Each of the NSCs' Unit Heads gave inspirational talks and addressed the challenges faced during the first year of ENBS implementation and how to enhance the overall efficiency and



Participants from the five NSCs and from NSRC attend the NSC Summit 2016.

effectiveness of the program.

The NSC Summit is a regular event where all NSCs come together for continuing information, education, re-education, and training programs on the operations and management of newborn screening. *MBaylon*

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NSC-V Kicks Off . . . from p. 1

Starting January 25, NSC-V has also made confirmatory testing for G6PD deficiency more affordable by providing the test at a discounted rate for all its walk-in clients until June 30, 2016.

Upcoming activities include holding a G6PD lay forum with free confirmatory testing for indigent patients in the second half of the year, and this is in partnership with Department of Health-Regional Offices in the Visayas. Through this, NSC-V hopes that more patients with G6PD positive results could avail themselves of the much-needed confirmatory testing for the disorder.

NSC-V is manned by 35 staff members and headed by Dr. J Edgar Winston Posecion with Dr. Ana Victoria Sombong as Laboratory Head and Yugie Caroline Demegillo as Program Manager. *YCMDemegillo*



Top: Fr. Joel Esabra leads the official blessing of the Center's MS/MS laboratory. Bottom: NSC-V staff pose for a photo following the blessing of the Center.

More photos on page 8 . . .

IN FOCUS

Newborn Screening Center-Visayas

On February 26, 2006, the Philippine Newborn Screening Program marked the birth of its second newborn screening laboratory, the Newborn Screening Center-Visayas (NSC-V).

At its inception, NSC-V only had six working staff: Dr. J Edgar Winston C. Posecion, Unit Head; Shiela Celeste and Edna Mae Genzola, laboratory analysts; Mario Benliro, nurse; Mary Catherine Castro, clerk; and Bryan Digidigan, computer specialist.

The following sets of medical equipment were initially at their disposal: an AutoDelfia to run the tests for congenital hypothyroidism (CH) and congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH), a Victor2D to run the test for G6PD deficiency, a Camag UV light box to analyze galactosemia, two ovens, a fume hood, and a hand puncher.

They started with newborn screening samples coming only from five newborn screening facilities within Iloilo City, and samples averaging to only about 40-90 samples that were run every other day. Only five routine tests were run then: CAH, CH, phenylketonuria, galactosemia, and G6PD deficiency.

Ten years later, NSC-V is now a huge family of 35 members. It now houses a wide range of machines, including three AutoDelfias, two Victor 2Ds, two High Performance Liquid Chromatography machines, two tandem mass spectrometers, one Alisei, and two fume hoods.

From running five tests in 2006 to six tests in 2012, NSC-V is now capable of running more than 20 tests under the Expanded Newborn Screening panel of disorders. From an average of 40-90 samples a day, the Center is now running tests daily, with an average of 1,400 samples. NSC-V now serves 1,039 newborn screening facilities in Regions 6, 7, and 8.

The evolution and growth of NSC-V have been steady and consistent. As it celebrates its tenth anniversary in 2016, NSC-V hopes to continue to save lives by providing high-quality service, accurate newborn screening testing, and farther-reaching advocacy efforts.

There are more yet to be done, for sure. But NSC-V will not tire in providing exceptional health services and vows that it is ready for the next 10 years. *YCMDemegillo*

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IN FOCUS

MHCBH NBS Story



The Maguling Health Center and Birthing Home (MHCBH) is located at Barangay Maguling, Maitum, Sarangani Province, and serves a population of 2,484. The health center was enrolled as a newborn screening (NBS) facility in September 2014.

Like most health facilities, MHCBH encountered difficulties during the first few months of NBS implementation. These challenges include patients' refusal of the newborn screening due to financial constraints. Even the cost of confirmatory tests for positive cases was daunting for parents. With these two obstacles, achieving high NBS coverage seemed to be difficult.

But as the saying goes, every problem has a solution. To address these challenges, the health workers—through the leadership of Josielyn Lazelle, NBS Coordinator, and Dr. Junie F. Basmillio, Municipal Health Officer—dedicated time and effort to lobby newborn screening to the Provincial Health Office of Sarangani for the sponsorship of indigent patients. The efforts have not been futile. In 2015, MHCBH screened 100 percent of its live births.

But MHCBH did not stop there! The facility applied for PhilHealth accreditation. Soon enough, the health center got accredited in January 2015. Reimbursements claimed from PhilHealth were then used to purchase NBS kits to keep the program running. The sponsorship covers confirmatory testing fee and transportation allowance of the accompanying family member. To date, positive cases encountered in the facility are that of G6PD deficiency.

The dedication of MHCBH staff to serve all their newborn constituents has led not only to full and complete NBS coverage but also to sustain the program. This success could not be possible without the collaboration between the Municipal Health Office, the Provincial Health Office, and the local government. *PBermudez*

IPHO-Maguindanao Trains Field Health Workers on ENBS

The Integrated Provincial Health Office (IPHO)-Maguindanao, in partnership with Newborn Screening Center-Mindanao (NSC-M), spearheaded three batches of Expanded Newborn Screening (NBS) Training Programs from December 2015 to March 2016 at Marco Polo Hotel, Davao City.

A total of 150 field health workers from different municipalities and Rural Health Units in Maguindanao participated in the said training, which provided field health service providers with necessary knowledge and skills to successfully implement ENBS in their areas of assignment.

The training team from IPHO-Maguindanao was composed of Dr. Geraldine A. Macapeges, Chief of the Technical Services Section; Joy C. Baybay, IPHO Nutritionist-Dietician; and Karen D. Kadatuan, NBS Program Coordinator. IPHO-Maguindanao is headed by Dr. Tahir B. Sulaik, Provincial Health Officer.

Dr. Macapeges discussed Republic Act 9288 and its implementing rules and regulations. This was followed by presentations of the disorders under the ENBS panel by Dr. Conchita Abarquez, NSC-M Unit Head, and Dr. Eleonor Du, pediatric endocrinologist and consultant at Southern Philippines Medical Center (SPMC). Afterward, Perly Bermudez, Amerah Matuan, and Ronald Aguilar, NSC-Mindanao Project Development Officers, discussed and facilitated protocols in newborn screening facilities (NSFs), NBS implementation in NSFs, and sample collection and prevention of unsatisfactory samples. The heel prick practicum was held at the OB-Ward of SPMC.

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Organizers and participants of the ENBS Training Programs for field health workers sponsored by IPHO-Maguindanao

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DOH-CAR Empowers Teen Moms



Participants receive their certificates of attendance to the Teen Moms Congress in Baguio City.

According to the report released by the Philippine Statistics Authority in 2014, one in ten young Filipino women aged 15-19 has begun childbearing. To raise awareness of teen moms on the prevention of risky behaviors and on the adolescent-friendly services available for them, the Department of Health-Cordillera Administrative Regional (DOH-CAR) Office conducted the Teen Moms Congress at Crown Legacy Hotel, Baguio City, on December 2-3, 2015.

Headed by Dr. Virginia Narciso of the Child and Adolescent Health and Development Cluster, the event gathered together 76 teen mothers, 21 health officers from the different provinces of CAR, and 60 participants from the academe, National Youth Commission, Volunteer Youth Leaders for Health (VYLH), Woman Health of the Philippines, PopCom CAR, Luzon Health, BCYA, BGHMC, Luzon Health, NNC-CAR, Family

Frontline Health Providers Attend Orientation on CMDs

Thirty-nine provincial and municipal health officers, resident physicians, medical directors, and nurses gathered together for the second Orientation on Common Congenital Metabolic Disorders (CMDs) at Prince Plaza Hotel, Baguio City, on February 25-26, 2015.

The activity, which was conducted by the newborn screening team of the Department of Health-Cordillera Administrative Regional (DOH-CAR) Office in cooperation with the Newborn Screening Center-Central Luzon (NSC-CL), sought to inform frontline health service providers about the Expanded Newborn Screening (ENBS) and the management of common congenital metabolic disorders.

Planning Office of the Philippines, and Newborn Screening Center-Central Luzon.

During the congress, Dr. Narciso talked about the different maternal and child services and emphasized the importance of utilizing these services for the reduction of maternal and neonatal deaths among teen moms in the region.

Meanwhile, Dr. Florencio Dizon, Unit Head of Newborn Screening Center-Central Luzon, discussed birth defects and the Expanded Newborn Screening (ENBS), and the significance of ferrous sulphate and folic acid supplementation for all women of reproductive age. He also encouraged the participants to be advocates of ENBS, since babies of teen moms have higher risk of developing congenital abnormalities. *NDelaCruz*

Dr. Virginia Narciso, Head of the Child and Adolescent Health Cluster of DOH-CAR Office, gave the newborn screening situation in the region and the guidelines in the implementation of ENBS. Meanwhile, Dr. Florencio Dizon, Unit Head of NSC-CL, discussed the traditional and expanded newborn screening and the difference between the long-term and short-term follow-up clinics.

Dr. Wilson Cua, pediatric endocrinologist, explained the basic facts and management of Congenital Hypothyroidism (CH) and Congenital Adrenal

Continued on page 8 . . .

Looking Ahead: DOH Conducts Planning Workshop for Next Decade of Newborn Screening

Newborn screening in the Philippines has been growing by leaps and bounds. But now is not the time to rest on one's laurels.



DOH Assistant Secretary Gerardo V. Bayugo speaks during the planning workshop.

of the program and to review the manual of operations harmonizing the expanded newborn screening.

DOH Assistant Secretary Gerardo V. Bayugo, University of the Philippines Manila Chancellor Carmencita D. Padilla, former Maternal and Child Health Division Chief Juanita A. Basilio, and National Newborn Screening Program Coordinator Lita L. Orbillo were present during the workshop to provide guidance in setting long-term directions and in the harmonization of policies and program implementation.

At the end of the workshop, the group agreed to focus their strategies and directional plans on building alliance, health promotions and education, and monitoring and evaluation. *JACasamorin*

The workshop, which also served as an orientation on the online monitoring system, aimed to come up with a long-term strategic plan for the newborn screening program until 2025. It also became a venue to discuss and resolve issues pertaining to the implementation

North and Central Luzon Cluster Holds Planning Workshop



Administrators and staff of NSC-CL participate in the strategic planning workshop.

To improve program performance and coverage in both northern and central Luzon, the Newborn Screening Center–Central Luzon (NSC-CL) conducted its first Strategic Planning Workshop at Century Hotel, Angeles City, on February 5-6, 2016.

The workshop gathered newborn screening (NBS) representatives from the Newborn Screening Reference Center (NSRC), NSC-CL and its host institution, the Angeles University Foundation Medical Center, Volunteer Youth Leaders for Health, and Department of Health–Regional Offices (DOH-ROs), and Continuity Clinics in Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, and the Cordillera Administrative Region.

During the first day, Ma. Elouisa Reyes, NSRC Project Development Officer, presented the current status of the program in the national level, while Dr. Florencio Dizon, NSC-CL Unit Head, discussed that of the zonal level.

Coordinators from the different DOH-ROs as well as the

long-term continuity clinic nurses under NSC-CL presented their program accomplishments and plan of activities for the following years and shared insights that could help improve the present strategies, solve relevant issues, and widen ventures toward providing newborn screening to all Filipino newborns. Also, the current mission, vision, and goals of the NSC-CL were revisited, and core values were formulated.

On the second day, participants reviewed the strategic direction of the NSC-CL and crafted plans on how to achieve its vision for 2020. The participants, who were grouped into follow-up services, administrative services, and laboratory services, conducted an internal and external environmental scanning, and developed strategic plan goals through identifying the Center's thrusts and determining the key result areas where they should focus on in order to achieve their targets. The outputs of the breakout session were then presented by representatives from each section and were later on collated and synthesized. *NDelaCruz*

DOH-RO 10 Holds 1st Consultative Meeting for 2016

The Department of Health–Regional Office (DOH-RO) 10 started 2016 with its routine consultative meeting that gathered all provincial, city, and municipal and DOH-retained newborn screening (NBS) coordinators to discuss program implementation, including regional coverage, acceptability of samples, and enhancement of program protocols.

Oliver Ryan Cabading, NBS Continuity Clinic Follow-up Nurse, discussed the importance of monitoring of confirmed cases and reiterated that the program does not stop at screening but continues until all confirmed babies are traced.

To ensure that the participants were well-equipped to handle ENBS cases, Dr. Conchita G. Abarquez, Newborn Screening Center–Mindanao Unit Head, discussed the protocols and classification of metabolic disorders included in the test. Meanwhile, Dr. Fernando Douglas A. Go, pedia-hematologist, talked about thalassemias and hemoglobinopathies.

At the activity's culmination, participants presented the best practices and developed strategies to address the challenges in their respective facilities. *RAguilar*



Participants of the DOH-RO 10 consultative meeting

NBS STATISTICS

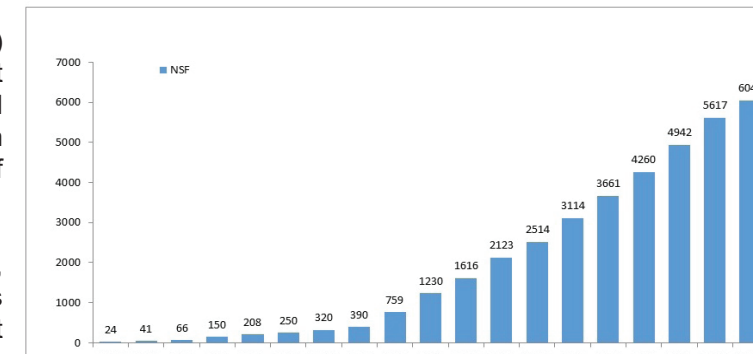


Table 1. Number of NSFs as of December 31, 2015.

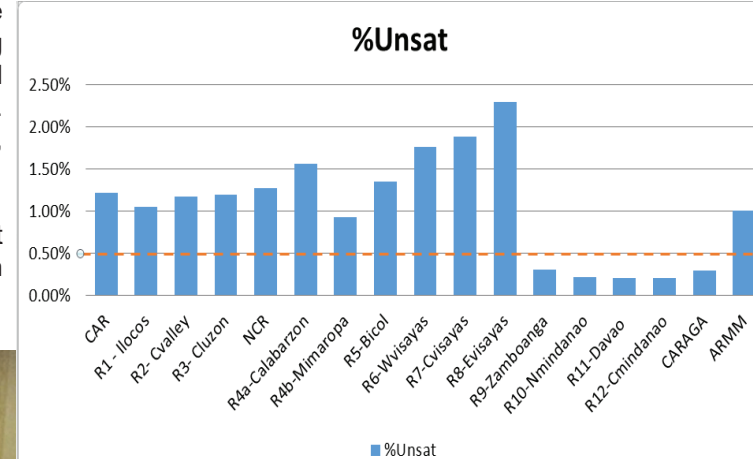


Table 2. Percentage of Unsatisfactory Samples across all regions.

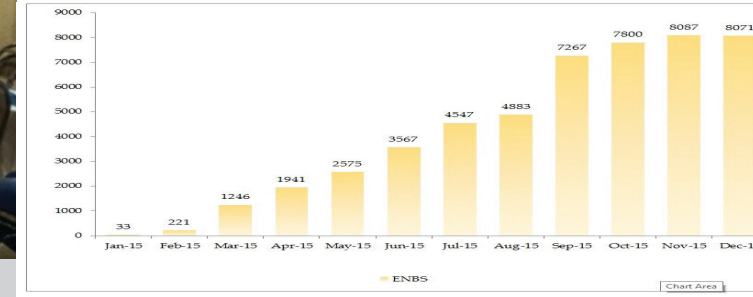


Table 3. Number of babies screened through ENBS.



Top: Officers and staff of NSC-V with Dr. Carmencita D. Padilla (fourth from left). Bottom: NSC-V staff join the Dinagyang Festival to promote NBS.

Frontline Health . . . from p. 5

Hyperplasia (CAH), while Dr. Rainela Runez, haematologist, explained Glucose-6-phosphate Dehydrogenase (G6PD) Deficiency. CH, CAH, and G6PD Deficiency have been the focus of the discussion because these disorders are the most common in CAR.

Besides serving as a venue to discuss ENBS, the activity also helped health providers, especially those in far-flung areas, how to render appropriate management at the community level before referral to specialists once positive cases have been detected in order to prevent the development of complications. *NDelaCruz*

IPHO-Maguindanao . . . from p. 4

Meanwhile, Dr. Carmelo B. Esberto, North Upi Municipal Health Officer, and Nurman Lakin of PhilHealth presented good NBS practices and the mechanism on PhilHealth Claims and Reimbursements on Newborn Screening under the NCP, respectively. During the open fora, participants raised two major concerns: how to get NBS available to non-PhilHealth patients and support from the local government.

The courses were made possible by support from PhilHealth's Primary Care Revitalized and Enhanced Through Skills and Services (PRevEnTS) Funds.

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If you would like to write an article, please contact us at info@newbornscreening.ph. We will do our best to keep you informed about current and relevant newborn screening issues.



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Number of Babies Screened
as of February 2016

7,841,254



NSC-V staff with Unit Head Dr. J. Edgar Winston Posecion (center) during the NSC Summit 2016 in Davao City

NSC-V Kicks Off 10th Anniversary Celebration

The Newborn Screening Center–Visayas (NSC-V) is celebrating ten years of providing quality newborn screening services in the Visayas region this 2016.

For ten years, NSC-V has complied with the standards established by the Philippine National Institutes of Health (NIH) and provided all required laboratory tests and follow-up programs for newborns with heritable conditions. It has tested 1,487,706 newborns from 2006 to end of 2015.

As part of its celebration, NSC-V has prepared year-long activities. It kicked off the celebration by hosting the NSC Managers' Meeting at West Visayas State University Medical Center (WVSUMC), Iloilo City, on January 22, 2016.

A celebratory luncheon was also shared by all NSC-V staff with guests from the Newborn Screening Reference Center (NSRC) and the other five NSCs as well as from the host institution, WVSUMC. A blessing of the Center's tandem mass spectrometry testing laboratory was officiated by Fr. Joel Eslabra.

After the kickoff ceremonies, NSC-V staff participated in the Kasadyahan 2016 and Dinagyang 2016 parades on January 23 and 24 to promote newborn screening. NSC-V sponsored two competing Ati tribes during the 2016 Dinagyang Festival competition: Tribu Salognon of Jaro National High School and Tribu Paghidaet of Lapaz National High School. Both tribes were the festival's champion and third place winner, respectively.

Continued on page 3 . . .