



Incisions

The Newsletter of the Philippine College of Surgeons

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STOP COVID-19 AT HOME

- 1  **Hand Sanitation**
- 2  **Step on mats soaked with 1:99 diluted bleach to remove shoes and leave it outside** **Sanitize shoes**
- 3  **Leave bag, purse, keys, etc. in a box at the entrance**
- 4  **Take off your outer clothing and put it in a laundry bag**
- 5  **Shower immediately**
- 6  **Clean your phone, glasses, and pens with soap and water, or alcohol**

Remember that it is not possible to do a total disinfection, the objective is to **REDUCE THE RISKS**

On the Cover



Dr. Ronan Chris J. Inso, currently practicing as a General and Laparoscopic Surgeon in Unihealth Southwoods Hospital and Medical Center, Carmona Hospital and Medical Center and South City Hospital, finished his Surgery Residency training in UP-PGH in 2012. He is a Diplomate of the Philippine Board of Surgery, a Fellow of Philippine Society of General Surgeons (PSGS), Philippine Association of Laparoscopic and Endoscopic Surgeons and Philippine College of Surgeons. He is currently in the Board of Directors of the Philippine College of Surgeons –Southern Tagalog Chapter representing Laguna.

His interest in pencil drawing started since grade school and recently started revisiting his hobby using colored pencils. His artwork "COVID Assassin" is a modified version of the poster of a video game called "Assasins Creed's" to honor the Surgeons and all healthcare workers in this fight against COVID-19.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Marcus Jose B. Brillantes, MD, FPCS



Bordering on COVIDiocy

"Uncertainty is the refuge of hope."

~ Henri Frederic Amiel

"The quest for certainty blocks the search for meaning. Uncertainty is the very condition to impel man to unfold his powers."

~ Erich Fromm

When mankind falls into the hideous claws of a widespread disease that is merciless as it is mysterious, life in its entirety becomes unhinged. Sorrow and despair seem to hang over the atmosphere like an ominous, dark cloud. And as most of humanity relinquishes control on vast affairs of everyday life, it hits everyone. Hard.

University campuses and school halls, usually thriving with students and bustling activities, have been forced to close - further widening the divide between the rich and poor in terms of learning alternatives. Across the continents, almost all art centers, museums and concert halls have been shutdown. Restaurants and pubs require severe measures to operate that they're better off boarded up. Free movement, one of the most treasured and basic human rights, is no longer allowed. All but essential flights have been grounded. Even those family weekend countryside trips are out of the question. Conventions, conferences, corporate shows, award ceremonies, pageants and public spectacles have been cancelled or rescheduled. Sporting, gaming, religious, political and military events have been postponed. Time immemorial cherished traditions of community worship, family reunions, christenings, graduations, engagements and weddings have been placed on indefinite hold by a force unrelenting and unseen. Virtual funeral services have affected the ability of family and friends to come together in person in times of sorrow and has blunted the grieving process. The microscopic speck has dealt a major blow on Life as we know it and the entire world is reduced to a standstill.

No word can describe this feeling.

Leaving in its wake more than 18 million infections, over 800,000 deaths, and a sharp economic downturn to the tune of trillions of dollars to date, the contagion has devastated those most defenseless and vulnerable. Take the mounting challenges of the country due to the pandemic,

include the rising death toll and add a pesky SARS-CoV-2 virus still under study by the scientific community infuse a fearful public already confused with disinformation to the mix and what you get is a potent vexatious potion called COVIDiocy.

We are close to six months into the COVID-19 pandemic as we lurch uneasily into the "ber" months and our frazzled nerves are terribly overwrought that some of us still haven't been able to skim the surface and analyze our complex, heightened sensibilities concerning the crisis. Like crashing waves, the emotional crests and troughs which we have always experienced in life still remain. But the jolting undertows are much more palpable because of the forced circumstances which offer us time to regurgitate and ruminate on these gloomy thoughts -- thoughts which would have ordinarily vanished into thin air on a regular day's routine. Somehow, our happiest recollections of our pre-COVID days visit our minds involuntarily like a favorite melody remembered from a distant memory.

And as cases continue to climb, that helpless feeling sinks lower still.

When one hears of a dear relative, a close friend, another medical school classmate or any physician colleague succumbing to COVID-19, the depth of sadness is utterly encompassing. We question this senseless and cruel deprivation. It's when our memory and whole concept of a person, the totality of a vast range of shared experiences, the sum accumulation of works and accomplishments, an entire investment of time spent together with the accompanying vast range of emotions that went into a relationship is stripped abruptly and unceremoniously condensed into a cold diminutive urn of ashes.



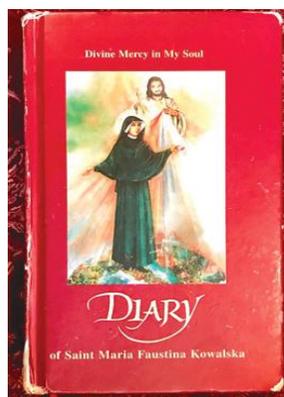
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The pandemic has torn into the fabric of the community in terms of family relations and social support. But the emergency measures in which the people are temporarily prevented from entering or leaving a restricted area has had some positive effect with individuals displaying a flare for the ingenious. The forced or self-imposed isolation has rekindled interests in other areas outside of our specialty. Some have sharpened their interest in their culinary skills. Others, from scratch, have gone into the visual arts of painting, sketching, sculpture, printmaking, design, crafts, photography, video and film making - with remarkable results. A number who had the horticulture inclination of nurturing and growing plants for beauty and residential decoration started gardening. Still a few have subjected themselves to a home exercise routine coupled with a stricter diet. The focus is now overall health. And family. And Faith.

The community lockdown gave license to extensive reading as a perfect escape of which literature plays a vital role in alleviating mental anguish. Looking back, reading has been a lifesaver for me. I do have a ton supply of books to dive into which I thought I had presciently set aside for my advanced years. Who would have thought that my ill-habit of purchasing too many books would serve its purpose much sooner than expected? Spiritual works have taken transcendent significance. Time spent in prayer is never wasted.

From a friend, I was fortunate enough to borrow an important 700-page volume by a saint shortly before the lockdown. Written on obedience following the holy orders of her confessor (and later by our Lord Himself) from 1925 until her death in 1938, I pored over the journal manuscript at a meditative pace during the initial phase of the Community Quarantine. This treasured book which helped make some sense of the current difficulties ought to be required reading for all Catholics. This book is *Diary: Divine Mercy in My Soul* by St. Faustyna Kowalska. It served as a spiritual balm during the hard lockdown particularly when a beloved uncle contracted the virus and died of COVID-19.

With ample time at our disposal, a group of alumni members from our high school song-dance-band group Kundirana decided to “get-together” once again. We desperately needed an artistic outlet to express our inner turmoil and yearnings in the manner we were most familiar with: music. Considering the lockdown and all its attendant difficulties, the task of producing an on line musical video was daunting. Since we had nothing much else to do then and given sufficient expanse and latitude, we plowed determinedly into our project. Anything that kept us busy affording partial distraction to the on-going health crisis was welcome. With a song chosen by a senior



member, voice assignments and instrument arrangements distributed, it took some two weeks to complete the separate individual video recordings. These independent tracks had to undergo production editing which required another month to complete. The song and its prayerful plea handsomely convey precisely what is needful at this desperate time: *Himala (Miracle)*.



Lately, my dreams tend to coalesce into a general theme that unsurprisingly revolves around tension. We oftentimes forget our dreams by morning’s light. One dream however stood out. In this dream, by my lonesome, I somehow find myself urgently running down several staircases only to access the next downward stairway after hurriedly traversing short distance eerily fluorescent-lighted corridors. But curiously along these narrow corridors, there are limbs, body appendages and even heads strewn across the floor which partially impede my movement. These scattered items seem to be random mannequin parts by initial glance. However, on closer inspection, these are later revealed to be actual unbloodied human body parts that appear to be fresh and lifelike.

According to my cursory research, to dream of body parts signifies the fear of losing something or someone important in life. Yet on a brighter note: dreaming of a head without a body denotes recovery from an illness. It is also symbolic of having to confront a calamity with intelligence.

God still performs miracles; some are probably considered unnoticeably small and perhaps taken for granted. Humanity has been through worse crises and still mankind has survived. We know this too shall come to pass.

May we face this viral scourge with courage and sapience. As our prayer petitions constantly intone nowadays with faith: may we all survive and recover from this COVID global pestilence.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jose Antonio M. Salud, MD, FPCS



The year 2020, a year we can never ever forget, is half over and we are still left wondering when normalcy will return to our lives. We truly live in a historical epoch and we need to remind ourselves repeatedly that things may never return to what we were once used to.

Because of the quarantine, on-line meetings and webinars have become so frequent that most days, if not everyday lately, I have been spending significant amounts of time in front of a computer or laptop attending to this and that. Technology has surely come a long way. I have been attending a number of meetings with the TWG on the Physicians' Act with the House of Representatives, PHIC meetings on premium contributions with the Joint Oversight Committees of the House and the Senate re the Universal Health Care Law, the PMA Commission on Professional Specialization and along with our VP, Tony Say, meetings with the DOH-TWG on clinical management for COVID which aims to create a manual which will serve as a guide for all LGU hospitals across the country. In most instances, these meetings involve the presidents of the other specialty divisions as well. Hopefully, our efforts in representing all the surgeons in the country will bear fruit in these activities and hope that we can influence lawmakers and government agencies to do what we feel is the right way forward.

This July, the Executive Committee of the College along with other members of the BOR have been meeting with the board/council of directors of the different surgical subspecialty societies under the PCS to discuss various issues particularly the increase in professional fees for HMO patients seen in the clinics, possible new HMO-RUV rates and encouraging their members to become fellows of

the PCS. What the AHMOPI and PAHMOC have mandated, as of this date, is that for as long as the COVID scenario is still present, they will increase consultation fees for surgeons as long as you are a fellow of the PCS and have signed the Universal Service Agreement (USA). The HMO committee of the College, along with representatives of all the surgical specialty societies, has been working on an updated RUV for the past 4-5 years to replace the existing (c. 2009) rates. If the HMOs agree to this updated RUV rates, then we can now benefit from a more favorable compensation scheme for our procedures than what we have been using for the past 10+ years.

Membership in the College has for so long been an issue especially with the subspecialty societies. The need to create new strategies to entice surgeons, particularly the younger surgeons is now, more than ever, a most important objective of the leadership of the College. Even after all these years, the relevance of the College to surgeons is being questioned. Thus we have been meeting with the different surgical specialties and chapter presidents to gather their thoughts and design the necessary programs to persuade them to join and retain those already with us.

Last June 23rd, the President of the Republic, Rodrigo Roa Duterte announced Proclamation 971, which "Declared the Second Week of July of every year as National Infection Prevention and Control Week and the Second Saturday of July of every year as Surgical Infection Prevention Awareness Day." This was the result of over two years of negotiations and discussions with the Department of Health and the Presidential Management Service to raise awareness on infection prevention and control.

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Our Committee on Surgical Infections chair and Philippine Surgical Infection Society president, Dr Esther Saguil was the point person in all of these negotiations along with Dr Renato Montenegro, the Regent-in-Charge of the CSI. And to recognize the efforts of the PSIS and the CSI, our friends from Johnson & Johnson, along with the representatives from the Infection Control community, had a ceremonial Zoom toast on the occasion of the first ever SIPA last July 11. The Board sends its warmest congratulations to Drs. Saguil and Montenegro and the PSIS/CSI for this important achievement.

The highlight of the year for the PCS has traditionally been the Annual Clinical Congress during the 1st week of December. We have decided to proceed with this for the year but it will have to be a purely virtual convention. We've tried this on a smaller scale last May for the Mid-year Convention but this time, we will add more sessions, induction ceremonies and an on-line voting process. Updates on the content of this unusual ACC will come soon.

For this year, the Board of Regents had decided to waive the annual dues of all fellows to lessen the burden on our colleagues unable to practice and earn a living especially the younger surgeons. The Fellows Assistance Plan (FAP) component of the annual dues amounting to P500 however will still be collected. Truly 2020 will be one for the books with all the unique and "novel" applications of our PCS activities that were totally unplanned and improvised on the run. The rest of 2020 will, in all likelihood, feature more of the same. Our new normal now is to get used to new normals.

Updates on Different Meetings

In addition to meeting with the eleven Surgical Specialty Society Presidents and their Board of Directors, we've also met with the 12 Chapter Presidents, the Affiliate Society Presidents to discuss the issues within the PCS especially as regards membership, HMO issues, training and many others including the plans for our Annual Clinical Congress in December.

Meeting with the PMA Commission on Professional Specialization involving all 8 specialty divisions under the PMA is being done on a monthly basis with the

PMA President Jojo Santiago and now Benny Atienza along with PMA-CPS Commissioner RM Santos. Lately discussions centered on the Physicians Act authored by Congresswoman Angelina Tan and the many recommended revisions to its contents. Also, the 8 specialty divisions have submitted all the guidelines they have created during this COVID pandemic and which will be included in a compendium to be shared with all the MDs in the land.

We are also involved with the DOH TWG sub-unit on clinical management which is working on the creation of a manual containing all the simplified guidelines and pathways created by the different specialty organizations regarding the management of cases during this COVID period. The manual will then be shared with all LGU hospitals across the country.

As regards the PHIC, we had a recent meeting with their Quality Assurance Committee to discuss possible revision in in-patient benefits for COVID cases. In relation to surgery, the PHIC requested for inputs for PHIC coverage for procedures such as tracheostomies, chest tubes, etc on COVID patients. In particular, they would like our recommendations/guidelines such as when to do certain procedures, what anesthesia will be used, what PPE to use and what devices, etc. We have informed the appropriate surgical societies for this – PSO-HNS, PATCSI, PSGS.

The PCS is also involved with the HPAAC (Health Professional Alliance Against COVID-19), the group responsible for encouraging the government to call for an MECQ for the first 2 weeks of August. While over 160 medical organizations are involved, the PCS which represents over 20 surgical societies under it, is assisting in whatever way it can in this effort. One aspect of this fight is helping the One Hospital Command of Usec Leopoldo Vega in creating designated non-COVID hospitals to manage also patients with neglected non-COVID conditions such as cancer, stroke, heart conditions, etc who are not able to undergo tests and seek treatment, including surgery due to the fear of being exposed to the virus in hospitals.

Many things still need to be done with the remaining 3 ½ months left in this calendar year. Hopefully the recent drop in cases will be sustained and that the curve is finally being flattened. With the help of all the fellows, residents and frontline health care workers, this virus will be controlled. We Heal as One!!

4th Board of Regents' Meeting, April 18, 2020 (online)

Matters Taken Up:

- o 46th Midyear Convention –will be online
- o 76th Annual Clinical Congress – December 6-9, 2020 – will also be conducted online

Treasurer's Report

- o Paper loss in long term investment (Php) at Php5M

Discussion on the drafting of PCS Guidelines on Post-ECQ Resumption of Elective Surgeries and Outpatient Clinics – Guideline No. 9 as drafted by Drs. Joselito M. Mendoza and Dr. Ramon S. Inso with the final approved.

Resumption of Meeting on April 19 (online)

- Board of Governors - An online meeting will be scheduled soon.
- HMO
 - o PAPRAS & POA have submitted their updated lists of procedures with the corresponding RVUs
 - o To request the Committee on HMO to negotiate with PAHMOC and AHMOPI to cover screening since this is contained in the College's guideline related to pre-screening.
- Surgical Research
 - o To coordinate with the Committee on Surgical Training in the drafting the surgical research on the rational use of PPEs in the post- ECQ setting.
- Surgical Infections
 - o To coordinate with the Committee on Surgical Research on issues on surgical infections related to COVID-19.
- Surgical Training
 - o Agenda for April 20 meeting at 4:30 pm is the scheduled Project HOPE scheduled on April 27-30, 2020; 7pm-10pm. Dr. Cathy Teh is working closely with the Committee. The webinar will focus on training surgeons and trainers via webinar.
- Committee on External Affairs – Sub-committee on Legislative Liaison
 - o The Committee will be requested to draft a position statement addressed to PhilHealth regarding premiums of physicians, copies of which will be given to Senate and Congress

across the board



Esperanza R. Lahoz, MD, FPCS

- Publications
 - o With the developments on the 46th Midyear Convention via webinar, a new poster design will be prepared.
 - o Incisions - The next issue, shall include COVID-19 related articles.
- Cancer
 - o Dr. MFT Roxas will be drafting the position statement regarding a centralized inter-hospital command once the ECQ is lifted. The Board mentioned that the Philippine Hospital Association and the Private Hospital Association of the Philippines should be the ones responsible in coming out with the statement. Once finalized, copies will be provided to DOH, PHA and PHAP.

Resumption of Meeting on April 27, 2020 (online)

- Committee on Conventions
 - o The Committee recommended the following in connection with the indefinite postponement of the 46th Midyear Convention:
 - o To conduct a webinar/virtual program which will replace the 46th MYC on May 28-29, 2020 (Thursday and Friday). To get the services of Docquity for this event.
 - o Telemedicine Network of the Philippines (TNP) - The Committee on Conventions also held a meeting with TNP with Dr Jeff Domino and Dr. Cathy Teh to be familiar with their platform. PCS webinars to be handled by TNP.
 - o CPD Units - Upon inquiring from the PRBOM Chair, PRBOM will not suspend CPD requirements in the renewal of accreditation. They, however, adjusted submission of requirements from 45 days to 15 days prior to the event which can be submitted on-line.

Review of Draft - COVID-19 Guideline on the Rationalization of PPEs as prepared by the Committee on

Surgical Research. Dr. R B Dofitas presented the draft for comments/suggestions by the Board. The revised draft will be submitted by Wednesday, April 29, 2020 prior to submission to Dr. Salud, Dr. Lahoz and Dr. Cathy Teh.

- Committee on Surgical Training
The Committee has scheduled a 3-day course on COVID-19 Response Training Certifying Training from April 28-30, 2020. This will be conducted via Zoom and is limited to 75 registrants (pre-registration). Said course is also accessible through YouTube. Plans for 2 more webinars will be scheduled first week of May and mid-May. This course is in cooperation with Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation.
- Other matters
 - o PhilHealth Issues - Dr. Salud informed the Board that the meeting with PhilHealth's Vice President, Dr. Shirley Domingo together with PMA and the medical organizations has been moved to May 6. The Board was requested to submit their issues/concerns for these to be discussed.

5th Board of Regents' Meeting, May 9, 2020 (online)

- President's Updates
 - o PhilHealth Premiums
 - o DOH Circular 2020-0180: Revised Interim Guidelines on Expanded Testing or COVID-19 AHMOPI Letter addressed to Dr. Fernando L. Lopez, Chair, Committee on HMO (dated May 4, 2020)
 - o PMA-Commission on Professional Specialization Meeting – held April 29, 2020
 - o PCS-Metro Manila Chapter General Assembly – May 5, 2020
During the General Assembly, the consensus was to divide the Chapter into five (5) sectors, namely:
 - Palawan
 - North (Quezon City, Caloocan, Novaliches, Malabon)
 - West – Manila, Makati
 - East – Rizal, Cainta, Antipolo
 - South – Parañaque, Muntinlupa
 The Fellows were given the option to choose which sector they would want to be part of. As the Metro Manila Chapter is a huge Chapter, it was better to split the Chapter into five (5) sectors.
 - o On-line Chapter Induction with the Executive Committee
Northern Mindanao Chapter – May 8, 2020
 - o To provide the Fellows on how they can log in to the College's website as there is difficulty logging in.

- Treasurer's Report
Dr. JRC De Leon reported on the following:
 - o Investments
Current losses – Long Term investment
Long Term Dollar investment
Bank investments
Long Term Peso investment
Short Term Peso investment
 - o Earnings from the 46th Midyear Convention are the two (2) sponsored sessions
- Board of Governors
The 2nd BOG meeting was held last May 2, 2020. The BOG Chair, Dr. JRT Bartolome reported on the current condition/experiences of Chapters and specialty societies in connection with the current pandemic.
- PCS Building
The Board APPROVED the following recommendations:
 - o Preparations for the opening of the PCS Building
 - The PCS Guards will be equipped to screen the building visitors and implement minimum health standards
 - The tenants will be reminded to implement government guidelines
 - o Appeal for waiver of rental payments
- HMO
Committee on HMO Chair, Dr. Fernando L. Lopez, has written the PAHMOC and AHMOPI Presidents regarding the formulation of a unified guideline to cover COVID testing for outpatient and in patients, increasing the professional fees (separate from RVS), among others.
- Trauma
The Commission has held in abeyance its activities for the meantime. The Sub-committee on Trauma System has included the participation of the Philippine College of Emergency Medicine and Philippine Hospital Association. The next meeting is scheduled on May 13, 2020.
- Cancer
 - o Cancer participation on PCS 46TH Midyear session; May 29, 2020, Friday, 12:00nn-1:30 pm; Topic: "Effects on Cancer Care in the Philippines in the time of Covid-19" with speaker: Manuel Francisco T. Roxas, MD and moderator: Jose Rhoel C. De Leon, MD
 - o Cancer Commission
 - Proposal for a National Cancer Care Network

- SURE
An organizational teleconference via Ring Central Meetings with Dr. Vivencio Jose P. Villaflor III presiding took place last May 02, 2020, Saturday, 9:00 PM.
- Conventions
 - o 46th Midyear Convention (Online) – May 28-29, 2020

Resumption of Meeting on May 10, 2020

- o 76th Annual Clinical Congress – December 6-9, 2020; Edsa Shangri-La Hotel
- o Webinars
- Surgical Research
 - o Manpower Study
- Surgical Training
 - o CST COVID-19 Response Training
 - o 46th Mid-Year Convention session via webinar - May 29, 2020 (Friday), 11:00am-12:00nn
- Membership
The Chapters and the Specialty Societies will be informed of the new deadline for submission of requirements for Fellowship:
June 15 - online application and payments of fees
July 15 - submission of printed copies (certified true copies)
The exclusive email address for membership applications is membership@pcs.org.ph
- Publications
 - o Approval of the following:
 - 46th MYC Poster
 - Incisions – cover for the special edition on COVID-related events/articles
- PJSS
A special edition of the PJSS containing the PCS Guidelines on COVID-19 will be printed which will serve as future reference.
- Patient Safety & Quality Assurance
 - o draft Modified WHO Surgical Safety Checklist for Surgical Patients during COVID Pandemic including safety officer's checklist and pre-op huddle.
- Other Matters
 - o Webinar Packages
 - o ATLS Mannequin – to be borrowed by Dr. Edgar Palacol

- o Election of 2021 BOR
To request COMELEC to meet to discuss/study the possibility of conducting elections on-line.

6th Board of Regents' Meeting June 20-21, 2020 (online)

- Approval of the minutes from viber group decisions
 - o May 3 – Final draft of the guidelines – Rational Use of PPE (Approved 9/9)
 - o May 14 – Layout of MYC poster (Approved 9/9)
 - o May 24 – Guidelines for Webinar (Approved 9/9)
 - o June 2 – Authorship of guidelines (disapproved: 9 based on messages; no survey form)
 - o June 16 – Extension of PCS Fellowship Application to July 31, 2020 (Approved 12/13)
- President's Update
 - o PMA-CPS Meeting – held June 10, 2020
 - o Philippine Academy of Ophthalmologists Executive Council Meeting – held June 10, 2020
 - o AHMOPI and PAHMOC prefers dealing with PCS
 - o Regarding the 2019 RUV, the Board APPROVED submitting this to PAHMOC and AHMOPI for them to review with the condition that PCS will have exclusivity in the MOA.
 - o Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on the UHC –
 - o National Task Force - met June 19, 2020
 - o DOH 2020-0258 – added subgroups E/F allowed for RT-PCR testing as the expense of the patient. Only Subgroup A, B and part of C are reimbursable from PHIC.
- New Matters
 - o Authorship Guidelines
 - o Discount on Membership Fees for 2020 - The Board APPROVED to totally suspend collecting the 2020 annual dues for 2020 (8 votes; 50% discount – 6 votes). (Clarification in viber post meeting; only the annual due is suspended and not the FAP and Chapter Share)

Resumption of Meeting: June 21, 2020 (Sunday); 7:30 pm

- Treasurer's Report
 - o Long-term investment
 - o Short-term investment (Php)
 - o Slowly recovering with a paper loss
 - o Financial assistance of Php50K allotted to each chapter (from the President's Fund)

- Finance
 - o To maintain all existing volatile investments until the market improves some more in order to recover losses
 - o To follow up with the Chapters regarding potential real property investments.
 - o Investment with Mega Pines Realty (Pre-selling condominium in Baguio City)
 - o To study the advantage of hiring a fund manager vs. fund adviser.
- PCS Building
 - o COVID Rental for the 2 ½ period
To extend a 10% discount on the rental fee of the tenants (2 ½ months period) with payment to be settled soonest
 - o Rehabilitation of the Building Directory (installed in 2013)
- Trauma
The Board noted the number of attendees during the webinar on Trauma, Critical Care and Burn during the COVID-19 Pandemic held last June 12, 2020.
- Conventions
 - o 46th Midyear Convention – May 28-29, 2020 (Online); - evaluation of the convention
 - o 76th Annual Clinical Congress - – December 6-9, 2020; Theme: ACC 20/20: Surgery Through the Looking Glass
Discussion: online or hybrid?
- CSE
 - o 76th Annual Clinical Congress – December 6-8, 2020; Proposed program (Online)
 - o List of CSE webinars held from April to June 2020
- Surgical Research
National Surgical Manpower Study 2020
- Nominations
 - o The Board APPROVED the following amendment to the Administrative Manual - Chapter IV - Committees; 2.6 Nominations, paragraph 3:

It shall appoint, by rotation, a Search Subcommittee composed of five (5) Chapter Presidents and five (5) boarded specialty society Presidents whose task shall be to recommend at least twenty-five (25) nominees. All members of the Search Subcommittee must be Fellows of the College.

The Search Subcommittee Chair shall be appointed by the Nominations Committee.
- o Search Subcommittee
The Committee recommended that the composition of the Search Subcommittee be identified by the first quarter for BOR approval some time February or March. To identify the members of the Search Sub-committee and recommend them to the BOR for approval some time February or March.
- Awards
 - o Criteria
 - PCS Outstanding Resident Award - APPROVED
 - PCS Outstanding Chapter - APPROVED
 - PCS Outstanding Specialty Society - APPROVED
 - o Presidential Citation Award to Fellows who are/former Presidents of international surgical organization/s or Society. This award is upon the discretion of the President.
 - o For the individual award categories to be given during the Annual Clinical Congress.
- External Affairs and Public Relations
 - o 84th Foundation Day
- Website and Medical Informatics
 - o Updating of Fellows database (financial) in the website
 - o The Board APPROVED to change the Subcommittee's name to: SUB-COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY (SICT).
 - o Email address – secretariat@pcs.org.ph An increase from 3GB email size/space to 500 MB with the cost of Php100./month billed together with hosting.
 - o Creation of a Viber Community for instant messaging purposes.
 - o All activities including webinars, announcements and updates are simultaneously posted on the webpage, FB and viber community.
- Council of Surgical Subspecialty Boards of the Philippines (CSSBP)
 - o Draft of the Consensus Statement on Standards, Policies and Procedures of Surgical Specialty Boards. The draft has been submitted to the chairs for comments/approval.
 - o Certifying Board examinations during the time of COVID-19

7th Board of Regents' Meeting July 10-11, 2020 (online)

- State of the College Address (SOCA) by the PCS President – delivered June 23, 2020

- President's Update
 - PMA-CPS Meeting – July 1, 2020 (Dr. Salud was represented by Board Secretary, Dr. Lahoz)
 - Meeting with PAO, PUA, POA, PAPRAS, PSTS, AFN and PATACSI (as of writing)
 - DOH Technical Working Group in Clinical Management

The Committee on Surgical Research through RIC Dr. Rodney B. Dofitas prepared the draft entitled PCS Delivery of Safe and High Quality Care for Elective Surgery which was presented during the TWG meeting last July 9 and it received an excellent feedback. The algorithm was an amalgamation of the COVID-19 guidelines of the PCS and
 - House Committee on Civil Service and Professional Regulation - A Technical Working Group is going to be organized.
- New matters:
 - Letter from POA dated July 8, 2020 regarding federation membership was discussed
 - On-line Elections – BOR 2021
- Treasurer's Report
 - Stock Market Long Term Investment
 - Bank Long Term Investment
 - Bank Short Term Investment
 - RESTRICTED FUNDS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2018 (AUDITED)
 - FELLOWS ASSISTANCE PLAN
 - RETIREMENT FUND
 - SURGICAL INFECTION
 - FELLOWS SCHOLARSHIP
- Finance
 - Presentation of Dr. Sherry O. Cunanan, Chair, Committee on Finance – Mega Tower Residences
 - Amnesty Program - no Amnesty Program offered.
- Installation of acrylic barriers in between seats at the GTS Board Room
- Purchase of industrial fans to be installed at the 3rd and 4th floor for optimal air exchange (12-15 air/hour)
- The GTSingian Board set-up with all the equipment/materials in compliance with health protocol will be in place by December
- PCS subscription to Zoom account for one (1) host for one-year subscription
- FAP - Based on a previous Board resolution, a certain percentage of the annual clinical congress is allotted to the FAP fund to replace released funds.
- HMO/RVS
 - PAHMOC agreed to extend the Php600.00 face to face consultation fee to all PAHMOC HMO-member surgeons whether they are Fellows or not (retroactive); unlike AHMOPI, the adjusted face to face consultation fee is exclusive to Fellows who signed the USA. MOA expiring by November 2020
 - Should the RVS 2020 be unacceptable, the Committee will retain the rates and just negotiate with a higher multiplier (targeting a 100 multiplier)
 - Session during the 76th Annual Clinical Congress – December 7; 1:30-2:30 pm (online).
- Trauma and TIBCC
 - Replacement for the Surgeon-General - Letter to Col. Edgar M. Cardinoza from the Armed Forces of the Philippines sent and waiting for his reply.
 - Acceptance of Dr. Teodoro J. Herbosa as member of the Medical Advisory Group (MAG) of the Philippine Red Cross – Emergency Medical Services.
 - Proceedings of TIBCC meetings held July 1; Cluster on Bicycle Safety Committee – July 4 and July 8, 2020.
- Cancer and CanCom
 - Branding, logo study and purchasing domain name via Google Suites – still being processed
 - Awaiting feedback on the PCS and WeCAN MOA with Concepcion Industrial Corporation and Cortex Technologies Corp. from the legal counsel.
 - Training Manual materials for the project on Cancer Community Outreach & Support Program of ICANSERVE and PCS Cancer Commission.
- SURE (Commission & Committee)
 - Action Plan workshop
 - Task Shifting

Resumption of the Meeting, July 12, 2020 at 6:00 pm

- PCS Building
 - Rent Discount - approved the increased discount to 30% for ALL the lessees for the period March 15 to May 31, 2020.
 - Additional update
 - Installed the LAN connection located at the GTSingian Board Room
 - GTSingian Board was identified as hub for on-line meetings
 - Purchase of a top of the line webcam (Php4K; 360 degrees). (The webcam is transferable to other rooms)

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- o Curriculum based on the PCS Primary Care Manual - The Committee can proceed conducting initial talks with Dr. Roberto Chacon, Medical Director, Sorsogon District Hospital, and Medical Directors from Mangatarem District Hospital, Pangasinan, and hospitals in Odiongan, Romblon and district hospital in Mati, Davao Oriental
- o Proposed projects for the new normal
- o Private-Public Partnership (PPP) in the conduct of elective cases (as part of outreach programs)
- Surgical Infections
An online ceremonial toast was held yesterday, July 10 in celebration of Proclamation No 971 declaring the second week of July of every year as “National Infection Prevention and Control Week” and the second Saturday of July of every year as “Surgical Infection Prevention Awareness Day”.
- Conventions
 - o 76th Annual Clinical Congress -- December 6-9, 2020; Theme: ACC 20/20: Surgery Through the Looking Glass (Online/virtual congress)
 - Scientific Program
 - International Faculty Lectures
 - Finance
 - Exhibits - Virtual booths
 - Sponsorship Packages
 - Lunch symposia
 - Ad banners (runner)
 - o 47th Midyear Convention – May 5-7, 2021; Host: PCS Cebu-EV Chapter; Theme: Classic Surgery in the Present Era
 - o 77th Annual Clinical Congress – December 5-8, 2021; Edsa Shangri-La Hotel; Theme: Enveloped Ideas – Intricacies in Decision Making
- CSE
 - o 76th Annual Clinical Congress – December 6-8, 2020 Theme: ACC 20/20: Surgery Through the Looking Glass
 - Online format
 - 2 sessions from 9am – 11am x 3 rooms
 - 2 sessions from 1:30 pm-3:30pm x 3 rooms
 - 1 session from 7pm-8pm x 3 rooms
 - General and Scientific Program - APPROVED
 - o 47th MYC - May 5-7, 2021; Radisson Blu Cebu, Cebu City Theme: Classic in the Present Era 1 ½ days with three (3) simultaneous sessions (1 big function room and 2-satellite session rooms)
 - o Status of PRC-CPD applications - Noted
- Primary Care Surgery
Webinar with PAFP starting August. - Noted
- Surgical Research
 - o National Surgical Manpower Study 2020 – updates
 - o The algorithm was presented to the DOH Technical Working Group in Clinical Management during its last meeting. Should there be a need for algorithms from the surgical specialty societies, this will be requested from them.
- Surgical Training
Committee to conduct a summit with the surgical specialties focusing on how to re-design their residency training programs given the current health situation.
- HMO/RVS
 - o PAHMOC for renewal of MOA
 - o Update – RVS
- Surgical Information Communication & Technology
 - o Hiring of a full-time I.T.
- Quality Assurance & Patient Safety
 - o Results from Pilot Hospitals on the Modified WHO Surgical Safety Checklist
 - o Compress the modified checklist to two (2) pages instead of three (3) pages for the responders to easily accomplish. This will include the Pre-op Huddle and Safety Officer Forms.
- PJSS
The PJSS Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Ted Vesagas was provided a copy of the MOU with PAMJE which was earlier presented for legal opinion. The need to have a Release Form as proposed by the legal counsel signed by the authors (may use the release form used in the PCS MYC).
- External Affairs & P.R.
On-line celebration in observance of the College’s 84th Foundation Day.
- Other Matters
 - o PMA Online Elections – July 26, 2020

8th Board of Regents’ Meeting August 15, 2020 (online)

- President’s Update
 - o Meeting with PSPS, PSGS, PSCRS and PSO-HNS (last set of subspecialties)
 - o DOH-TWG on Clinical Management - The draft algorithm as prepared by Dr. Rodney B. Dofitas and the Committee on Surgical Research has been submitted to the DOH-TWG on Clinical

Management last August 11, 2020. A meeting with the TWG will be scheduled in a few days.

- o HPAAC – Re: MECQ
- o Health Promotion Framework Partners Consultative Meeting (August 12, 2020)
- o One Hospital Command

• Treasurer’s Report

- o Stock Market Long Term Investment
- o Bank Long Term Investment
- o Bank Short Term Investment
- o RESTRICTED FUNDS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2018 (AUDITED)
 - FELLOWS ASSISTANCE PLAN
 - RETIREMENT FUND
 - SURGICAL INFECTION
 - FELLOWS SCHOLARSHIP

• Board of Governors

The BOG met last August 13, 2020. The Governors reported on their COVID situation in their region, hospital and status of residency training.

Commonalities include:

- o No elective cases
- o Problem on the status of residents’ training
- o Increase in COVID-19 cases

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- o To revisit/review the Recommendations for The Rational and Effective use Personal Protective Equipment - request the Committee on Surgical Research to revisit/review this Guideline.
- o Other than giving his/her FAP benefit upon his/her demise, to also consider extending loans to Fellows – to FAP Committee for study.

This will be further studied by the Committee on FAP.

• Finance

- o Registration Fee – 76th Annual Clinical Congress – December 6-9, 2020 (Virtual). The Board has APPROVED that the Congress REGISTRATION FEE IS FREE for all delegates.
- o Packages for the Grant Category have been APPROVED:
- o Virtual Booth

• PCS Building

- o PUA Office – to be rented by PSGS
- o PSGS office will be offered to Atty. Ruben Talampas.

For Information:

• FAP

Update on the FAP - Committee on Finance to study creating a cooperative to sustain the FAP funds and consider other benefits

• HMO

As of this date, there are 609 Fellows (24.36%) who have signed their USA (Batch 11)

- o Complaint form formulated
- o PAHMOC drafted MOA in time for its renewal in December; available by September for Committee’s review and negotiations; pushing for the use of RUV 2019
- o AHMOPI still reviewing the RVS 2019; MOA for renewal in 2021

• Trauma

- o ATLS Course on September 25-27, 2020; Cotabato Regional and Medical Center, Cotabato City
- o PRC Meeting held July 13, by Dr. Joel Macalino re: The Activation of the Medical Action Group to standardize the management of patients being transported/attended to by PRC especially on Ambulance “Runs.” A Memorandum of Agreement with the PRC as one of the medical advisors of the Medical Action Group is under review

• Surgical Infections

- o ORNAP Manual
- o Surgical Site Infections (SSI) surveillance forms for post-op patients (in-hospital and out-patient) for dissemination to accredited training programs.

• Conventions

- o 76th Annual Clinical Congress – December 6-9, 2020;
 - Scientific Program
 - Opening Ceremony
 - Orientation of New Fellows
 - Gregorio T. Singian Memorial Lecture
 - BOR Dialogue with BOG, Chapter Presidents, and Presidents of surgical specialty societies – will be held via zoom after the Congress
 - Election of 2021 BOR; December 6 (9am) – December 8 (12nn)
 - Fellowship Night – December 6 (Sunday) - online event
- o 47th Midyear Convention – May 5-7, 2021; Host: PCS Cebu-EV Chapter; Theme: Classic Surgery in the Present Era
- o 77th Annual Clinical Congress – December 5-8, 2021; Edsa Shangri-La Hotel; Theme: Enveloped Ideas – Intricacies in Decision Making

• CSE

- o 76th Annual Clinical Congress
 - Approval in extending the annual congress to 4 days with 4 simultaneous sessions.

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- Cine Clinics sessions will be scheduled
- Updated scientific program
- o 48th Midyear Convention; May, 2022
- o CSE Webinar
- Surgical Research
 - o National Surgical and Anesthesia Manpower Study 2020
 - o Research Paper Contest -December 7 (Mon), 10:00am-12:00nn
- Surgical Training
 - o Meeting with Chairs of Accreditation Committees of subspecialty societies – August 11, 2020.
 - o The Board APPROVED conducting the summit by September (all subspecialties should have submitted their guidelines before the scheduled summit).
- Membership
 - o List of Applicants for Fellowship
 - o Simplified Application for Surgical Societies (Fellows for >5 years or more): Submission of documents for the Simplified Application for Surgical Societies is SEPTEMBER 30 of each year for their inclusion in the induction of new fellows during the Annual Clinical Congress.
 - o List of Deferred Applicants
 - o Orientation of Inductees (online)
 - o Fellows on Leave
- Quality Assurance & Patient Safety
 - o Modified WHO Surgical Safety Checklist (Compressed into 2 pages)
 - o Approved sharing these forms to the DOH through the office of Dr. Maria Francia Miciano-Laxamana., Assistant Secretary of Health for use in government hospitals.
 - o WHO Surgical Safety Checklist Application
- External Affairs & P.R.
 - o 84th Foundation Day; Theme: PCS @ 84: A Beacon of Hope Amidst the Covid Pandemic
 - o Week-long Celebration of the Foundation September 7-12, 2020 to be promoted through LED wall and FB page
 - o PCS Virtual Torch Run: Honoring Our Frontliners spearheaded by MMC
- Legislative Liaison

Philhealth Rules on Administrative Cases (PROAC) Against Health Care Providers, Members and Philhealth Employees.
- COMELEC
 - o Elections will be conducted online from December 6, 2020 at 9am until December 8, 2020 at 12 noon.
- o Also, the Board APPROVED that qualified voters are Fellows in good standing who have paid their annual dues for 2019.
- o BOARD RESOLUTION NO. 2020-005: A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEM FOR THE 2021 PCS BOARD OF REGENTS ELECTION
- Other matters:
 - o Letter from PCS Metro Manila Chapter regarding MMC Election
 - o PMA Memo Circular- Re: Issuance of Certificate of Good Standing as a specialist should be limited to the 8 specialty divisions

Special Board Meetings (via online) May 23, 2020

Updates:

- 46th Midyear Convention – May 28-29, 2020
- Business Meeting – 3:30 (Via Zoom)
- TNP & Sponsorship Packages for Webinars
 - o PCS Guidelines on Webinars
 - o Webinars schedule for June
- Letters from AHMOPI & PAHMOC
- PMA -CPS Meeting – May 20, 2020
- PCS Building
 - o Finalized preparation on COVID-19 protocols at the PCS Building and PCS office
 - o Increase to 20 mbps internet connection in time for the Business Meeting on May 28
- Other Matters
- Availability of the January-April 2020 issue of Incisions and a Special Issue on COVID-19 posted in the PCS website
- No MYC Fellowship Night
- Cancer Commission - To organize a network –Cancer Network Action Group or CNAG
- Dr. Samuel D. Ang, College's nominee, was officially chosen as member of the National Cancer Control Council.
- Council of Surgical Subspecialty Boards of the Philippines (CSSBP) will be meeting on May 26, 2020 to discuss among others residency training issues at the present time and standard guidelines for residents and those undergoing fellowship.

August 18, 2020

- 84th PCS Foundation Day Celebration

The Committee on External Affairs submitted the following recommendations:

 - o September 6, 2020 (Sunday) – Holy Mass at 8:30 am at G T Singian Board Room (live broadcast)

- o Torch Relay Preparations
- o DZRH Radio Interview-Kaya mo Yan Program on September 5, 2020, Saturday; 4:00-5:00pm with Speaker - Dr. Rodney Dofitas.
Topic - "Paanong makaiwas sa COVID-19"
- o Virtual Foundation Dinner Program with Keynote speaker - Dr. Gerardo Legaspi, Director UP-PGH (10 minutes max)
- o AVP – prepared by Publications Committee
- o Webinar c/o PCS-MM
- o Fund Drive – PCS Kapit Bisig 2020
- Updating of the Guidelines on the Use of PPEs
- PCS Continuing Response to COVID
 - o Continue weekly webinars
 - o Appeal to government to identify NON-COVID hospitals – schedule a meeting with USec Vega (met and presented on August 20, 2020)
- PCS Building
PSGS has finalized renting former PUA office and Atty Talampas will rent PSGS Office.

Executive Committee Meetings:

May 17, 2020 – for the preparation of the 46th MYC

July 15, 2020 – meeting with Chapter Presidents

- Updates on COVID-19 status of members
- Membership
 - o Regular and simplified application for surgical specialty societies
 - o Annual dues waived; some Chapters also waived their chapter shares
 - o Reminder to encourage delinquent Fellows to become active again
 - o Resident Trainee
 - o Update membership data at the website
- Fellow Assistance Plan – to update beneficiaries
- Chapter Share 2020 from conventions – to submit proposals up to December 31, 2020
- MOA with AHMOPI and PAHMOC
 - o Submission of signed Universal Service Agreement (USA)
 - o Increased Face-to-face consultation fee
 - o Status of RVS 2019
- 76th Annual Clinical Congress
 - o Registration Fee feedback
 - o Electronic voting of 2021 BOR

- Modified WHO Surgical Safety Checklist + huddle + safety officer checklist
- National Surgical Manpower Study
- 84th Foundation Day Celebration
- DOH-TWG in Clinical Management
- Real Estate Property scouting
- PMA National Election on July 26, 2020

With Subspecialty Societies Officers

- June 25 – Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology
- July 2 – Philippine Urological Association, Inc.
- July 3 – Philippine Orthopaedic Association, Inc.
- July 6 – Philippine Association of Plastic Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons
- July 8 – Philippine Society of Transplant Surgeons
- July 9 – Academy of Filipino Neurosurgeons, Inc.
- July 10 – Philippine Association of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery, Inc.
- July 14 – Philippine Association of Pediatric Surgeons
- July 21 – Philippine Society of General Surgeons, Inc.
- July 22 – Philippine Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons
- July 29 – Philippine Society of Otolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery

Topics discussed:

1. HMO
2. Updated RUV
3. Call for PCS Fellowship
 - a. PCS Simplified Application for Surgical Specialty Society Members
 - b. 2020 annual dues waived
4. Residency training -impact of COVID-19
5. Other matters:
 - a. DOH-TWG in Clinical Management – submission of algorithms/pathways/infographics
 - b. Building Committee – access to LED wall
 - c. Modified WHO Surgical Safety Checklist with the incorporation of COVID-19 related guidelines; huddle and safety officer checklist
 - d. National Surgical Manpower Study
 - e. Annual Clinical Congress – call for participation

Candidates for PCS Fellowship 2020

Colon and Rectal Surgery

1. Cruz, Jan Paolo M.
2. Hernandez, Joseph Lester A.
3. Imboy, Kristel A.

ENT Surgery

1. Catedral, Luzsil M.
2. Dela Cruz, Rhodieleen Anne R.

General Surgery

1. Abellon III, Ruperto L.
2. Amo, Helen B.
3. Astillero II, Carlito B.
4. Avendaño, Mark Joseph C.
5. Bacus, Jim Edward D.
6. Baldovinos, Von Michael T.
7. Belen, Krista Angeli D.
8. Bengwayan, Phyllis T.
9. Bueno, Michael Pol U.
10. Bulatao III, Jose P.
11. Caillan, Madeline May C.
12. Celzo, Ariel T.
13. Certeza, Juliene L.
14. Clarit, Elfrank P.
15. Dofitas, Anthony L.
16. Estanislao, Ernest Solomon L.
17. Flores, Ivan Clark E.
18. Fontanilla, Jeff J.
19. Galvez, Mark Gabriel E.
20. Gascon, Cressida Y.
21. Geniales, Christian Ross A.
22. Hiwatig, Manuel P.
23. Lalas, Tyrone C.
24. Landayan, Hamilton John R.
25. Lao, Jonathan T.
26. Lim, Jayne Michelle A.
27. Macaraeg, Raul O.
28. Madrid, Airen Patricia M.
29. Maraño, Gilmyr Jude G.
30. Navarro, Jonathan G.
31. Perez, Michael June C.
32. Pilpa, Pompe M.
33. Presto, Roland-Joseph B.
34. Prudente, Jet C.
35. Ramas, Jessica Marishiel M.
36. Saep, Julius Bryan G.
37. Salinas, Mark Anthony T.
38. Segundo, Ronald B.
39. Suboc, Harvey Glenn G.
40. Sumayo, Brian Chester Edmundo L.
41. Tangcos, Frances Jeannifer R.
42. Valencia, Sheryl E.
43. Yaneza, Aldwin A.

Pediatric Surgery

1. Guzman, Johann Paolo S.
2. Lopez, Dorothy Anne D.
3. Moreno, Amabelle A.

Plastic Surgery

1. Capellan, Karlo Marco C.
2. Gayos, Alexandra Monica T.

Transplant and Vascular Surgery

1. Benavidez, Joel B.
2. Duque, Arlene A.

Urology

1. Diwa, Ly-Ann T.

Vascular Surgery

1. Gloria, Rainan G.

Special Accommodation Program for Fellows of PCS Component Specialty Societies

Colon and Rectal Surgery

1. Fuentes, Joseph Roy F.

ENT Surgery

1. Bascos, Ma. Candie Pearl O.
2. Magno, Jenelyn J.
3. Uy, Melita Jesusa T.
4. Fernando, Adrian F.

General Surgery

1. Ganas, Erickson E.

Ophthalmology

1. Alegre, Elenor Reina A.
2. Alegre, Jan Carlo Y.
3. Palisoc, Erwin D.
4. Tirol, Maria Angelina P.
5. Uy, Christopher Sebastian J.

Orthopedic Surgery

1. Alonto, Joe Bair J.
2. Cuenca, Jr., Cesar S.

Plastic Surgery

1. Nazareno, Hector Bobby Z.

Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery

1. Hilado, Rafael Martin D.

Rising Above the Pandemic

PCS Makes History as it Hosts the Country's First-Ever Online Medical Convention

The Philippine College of Surgeons (PCS) has always been at the forefront of innovation. It has always prided itself on its commitment to continuing professional development, with the ultimate goal of providing the best service to the Filipino people. In the midst of a global pandemic that continues to plague us today, the PCS has remained resilient and committed to this mandate.

The Midyear Convention (MYC) has always been an awaited summer event, which this year was to take place in Naga City (to be hosted by PCS-Bicol Chapter). The establishment of the community quarantine cancelled all pre-existing plans and presented a new challenge: how to facilitate continuing medical education through the restrictions placed on travel and public gatherings. Meanwhile, numerous webinars were held to facilitate exchange of knowledge regarding COVID-19. Going virtual for the MYC was then conceptualized.

Surgeons love a good challenge and are known for facing difficulties head on. This determination was exemplified by the Conventions Committee leaders and volunteers. With only a couple of weeks to prepare, they succeeded in organizing what turned out to be the first ever online medical convention in the Philippines. The 45th PCS midyear convention - Current Directions in Surgery, took place on May 28-29, 2020.

The two-day hallmark convention was opened by PCS president, Dr. Antonio Salud. Twelve pre-recorded webinars were hosted by different PCS committees and subspecialties. Emphasis was placed on how Covid-19 affected the practice of surgery in various fields. Active exchanges between speakers and participants were made possible at the end of the sessions. Highlights from event included the talk given by keynote speaker, Dr. Teodoro Herbosa, who gave insight on "Flattening the Curve." The devastating effect of the Covid-19 was perhaps never more felt than when remembering and giving tribute to fallen colleagues.

With a record-breaking 2837 registrants across the country, with an average of 500 participants per session, the 45th midyear convention was definitely a game changer. Not only did it live up to its vision of being a fruitful and meaningful exchange of ideas, its novel online platform became the standard of future conferences in the country.



PCS COMMISSIONS: A Mid-Year Update

**Teodoro J. Herbosa, MD, FPCS; Ramon S. Inso, MD, FPCS;
Manuel Francisco T. Roxas, MD, FPCS and Vicencio Jose Villafior III, MD, FPCS**

August 2020 – During the Annual Convention last December 2019, the PCS launched its three core Commissions, specifically the Cancer Commission (CanCom), the Surgery in the Underserved Regions and Education Commission (SUREComm), and the Trauma, Injury, and Burn Care Commission (TIBCC).

All Commissions had their respective meetings to come up with project proposals for this year and some strategies needed to achieve the project objectives. The CanCom celebrated World Cancer Day through a Cancer Summit last February 04, 2020, at the Philippine Medical Association (PMA) Auditorium. The SUREComm had a formal signing to renew its Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the World Surgical Foundation Philippines (WSFP) and the League of Municipalities (LMP) last March 09, 2020, during the National LMP Convention at the Grand Marriott Hotel, Pasay City.

Soon after that, COVID 19 pandemic was declared and lockdowns were implemented which lead to the unexpected challenges. Despite these, the Commissions proceeded with their respective mandates. The CanCom drafted a letter of appeal for more assistance to cancer patients struggling thru the lockdown, signed by various medical and patient organizations and submitted to the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), Department of Health (DOH), and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). Furthermore, CanCom created an ad-hoc group called the Cancer Network Action Group Philippines (C-NAG PH) in collaboration with patient organizations to look into the various initiatives to help cancer patients. Dr. Catherine Teh also led an initiative between Cortex, which is a technology company, and C-NAG PH, to develop an application called WeCan, to help cancer patients reach available providers.

The CanCom and the Philam Foundation, Inc. (PFI) signed a MoA of partnership last July

23, 2020, pledging to collaborate in improving cancer care across the country. This will be done by first helping CanCom establish a foundation, with seed capital given by PFI to hasten SEC registration.

Meanwhile, the SUREComm continued to conduct its modified strategic planning workshop online, with discussions not only on the future directions of the commission, such as data gathering, surgical missions with education under the new normal, the task shifting modules in the underserved areas, but also on proposed programs relevant during this pandemic. Recently, the Commission embarked on a partnership with ASSIST (Asia Society for Social Improvement and Sustainable Transformation) and Project Hope to implement a project on rolling out healthcare workers' training on COVID-19 preparedness and response. The Commission is also in the process of identifying district hospitals where they can focus their advocacies during these challenging times. While this is being done by the Commission, the World Surgical Foundation Philippines (WSFP), shifted from surgical missions to charity drives like donating personal protective equipment to frontliners and/or hospitals.

Lastly, the TIBCC has been convening every month for updates from its different clusters. Proposed projects like bicycle safety is being developed for implementation. Responding to the call by trauma colleagues from the provinces, the said Commission created the interim trauma guidelines on handling trauma and burn patients in the time of COVID-19.

The Commissions will carry on with their missions despite the current health crisis. They will continue to work in order to help address the surgical burden especially in the far-flung areas with difficult access to surgical care and ensure delivery of quality cancer and trauma care in the country.

SURE Activities Reel Off

• Rhoderick C. De Leon MD, FPCS, FPSGS •

Chairman

SURE Committee on Engagement and Outreach Services

It was last March 12 when I, together with other SURE volunteer surgeons (Drs. Liborio Soledad, Enrico Jayma and Joel Evangelista) were discussing the possibility of cancelling our scheduled SURE missions at the Southern Tagalog Medical Center in Bacoor, Cavite in 2 days time and at the Masbate Mission the following week. It was a tough decision for the volunteers weighing the expectations of patients finally receiving free medical/surgical attention versus compromising their own safety and the volunteers' as well.

We were asking for guidance and when our prayers were answered on live television. President Duterte declared the country to be under Enhanced Community Quarantine as the World Health Organization (WHO) characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic. All sectors are affected including surgical missions.

With transportation being restricted through various checkpoints and strict infection controls being implemented, performing missions in far-flung areas is not plausible. Plus the confusion between local government guidelines being different in each city. The Commission and its Stakeholders took a big hit and must cancel and/or postpone surgical missions for the year.

Despite the crisis, the SURE Commission continued to meet via online platforms and discussed proposals that can be conducted during this time. We realized that we have to adjust to the situation and not the other way around. Recently, the Commission had a teleconference with the modified strategic team care of Dr. Don Eliseo Prisno III on helping them prioritize which projects to carry out and help corporatize the Commission.

While modifying our strategies, one of the stakeholders, The World Surgical Foundation

Philippines headed by our President Dr. Marcus Lester Suntay shifted its focus on charitable acts of donating food supplies, personal protective equipment and other necessary medical equipment to hospitals. Mind you this is not an easy task-from garnering, sorting and repacking donations (done by Ms. Sugar Ferre, Beth Marasigan and Mr. Erven Manzano our nurses) mobilizing people to deliver (through Dr. Henrique da Rosa and Reina Bakunawa) selection of hospitals and actual handing it down to our recipients.

Also in the works is a COVID-19 Response Training for Healthworkers and Frontliners via a series of training modules on how to better cope with the present pandemic. It will consist of Webinars for further information on strategies and planning to counter the Virus. This project is initiated by the Asia Society for Social Improvement and Sustainable Transformation (ASSIST) represented by Mr. Sreeni Narayanan and of course Dr. Juvie Villaflor, our Commissioner and Dr. Ramon Inso representing the Philippine College of Surgeons.

With continuous efforts, not just from the Commission but also from various medical organizations and institutions, we can see that the pandemic is far from over. Resources are still scarce and hospitals are overwhelmed. Cases are on the rise and healthcare concerns in government specifically Philhealth have been tarnished. The local and national governments' funds are depleting and so is their moral support for the healthcare sector which is very sad.

To our donors we can only say "Thank You". If not for you, the Commission will not be able to sustain what we do. Let it be known that we are still accepting donations whether monetary or in kind.

Stay Positive

• Tamarah P. Cristobal, MD, DPBS •



Here's what a lot of people don't get: the opposite of happiness is not anger or sadness.

- A.J. Zautra, *Emotions, Stress, and Health* (Oxford University Press, 2003)

"No, the opposite of happiness is hopelessness, an endless gray horizon of resignation and indifference."

- M.W. Gallagher and S.J. Lopez, "Positive Expectancies and Mental Health: Identifying the Unique Contributions of Hope and Optimism," *Journal of Positive Psychology* 2009

It has been 3 months since I last wrote an article and during that time, my inspiration to write my piece was stemmed from a very personal experience not as a doctor, but as a patient. Three months and three RT PCR tests after, my expectations of gaining a lot more inspiration has gone down the drain and I found it hard to start writing again because of the constant blank page that I have in my mind. As a surgeon, I felt my world was encased in such a tight space owing to the fact that most elective procedures are withheld and that I personally felt useless during this time. During the first few months, my energy was so high that I constantly helped with delivering donations to hospitals and it felt good to serve a purpose in any way I can and simultaneously thinking that everything will be back to the way it was pre-COVID days. That in no time, I will be doing what I love the most: using my hands as instruments of healing and holding on to the scalpel as if I were reunited with a long lost friend. Well, let's just say that in half of those 3 months, my hands were used more as instruments of cooking, planting, house fixing, and playing video games. Mainly because only emergency surgeries were being done and the lockdown made us cut back on our clinic hours so I am sure I am not the lone surgeon turned baker/gardener/gamer/electrician here.

For me, surgeons are very energetic people. Long standing hours and missed meals are normal for us and still at the end of the day, we can party and get enticed with a single "one shot" request from our friends only to wake up early the following day repeating the same scenario. And so to be acclimated to the changes brought about by this pandemic has been hard on most of us. Most of us have this feeling of withdrawal because we are passionate with what we do and to be faced with so many restrictions into doing what we love, we feel anxious, worried, and hopeless. Anxious because we miss our battlefield and the action that we crave for and at the same time, worried that we might not be so victorious after all once we stepped out of our arena with the virus being the prize. As a parent, I am fearful that I may not be able to provide if I remain

frightened and yet terrified of becoming so fearless and being able to provide but leaving my family one person less if I get defeated by this invisible enemy.

Our dedication to our patients and passion to our craft give us the drive to continue doing what we do despite our fears. The first few months since the pandemic began, I was compelled to do what I can and step inside the hospital with a spring in my step because I was fueled to the highest degree by hope - hope that everything will get better and that this pandemic will be over soon. There were times when I spent most of my days wondering when will I get to operate again because I miss it and let's face it, surgeons get bored when a week has gone by without holding a scalpel. And when a call is made that I am needed by a patient, I leave the house with a big smile on my face and a hidden excitement runs through me like fuel giving me such energy like a kid eating all her Halloween candy the morning after. During those days, my courage was bigger than my fears. It was ignited by this tiny ray of hope inside me that it will probably be over in a few months and that I will be safe because I am careful enough with my every day activities. There was enthusiasm in everyone and so during the first few months, I can really feel how everyone is helping out and donations were pouring in. We held on to the happy thought that it will all get better and so everyone still has this positive energy to share and it made our work feel like it's all worth it.

Roughly, six months have passed since this pandemic began and just let me ask: How are you doing? Are you still doing fine physically, mentally, and emotionally? Did you ever asked yourself that during the past few weeks or are you too exhausted not only from work but also the negative energy surrounding yourself nowadays? At first you probably had enough energy to last for days with the kind of hope that you have. But nowadays, it possibly feels like you're burned to your very core even after an 8 hour sleep. We can only take so much worry, fear, physical exhaustion, and patience and when we are really stripped down of all hope, we start to feel helpless. We see stories of hope, goodness, and positivity at the beginning but this situation has led on too long that everyone felt hopeless and so started the negativity and the feeling of hopelessness which drained out every bit of happiness within us. It then

> 26

UNMASQUED

• Vietrez David-Abella, MD, FPCS, FPSGS •



"Are we really happy with this lonely game we play?
Looking for the right words to say
Searching but not finding
Understanding anyway
We're lost in this masquerade

"Both afraid to say we're just too far away
From being close together from the start
We try to talk it over but the words got in the way
We're lost inside this lonely game we play

"Thoughts of leaving disappear each time I see your eyes
And no matter how hard I try
To understand the reason why we carry on this way
We're lost in a masquerade"

- "This Masquerade," written by Leon Russel,
as sung by The Carpenters, 1973

Going into six months of the Covid-19 pandemic, having been declared as such by the World Health Organization last March 11, 2020, mankind seems to be in a losing battle against this 50-nanometer virus. Trillions of dollars (<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/03/25/where-is-the-u-s-government-getting-all-the-money-its-spending-in-the-coronavirus-crisis/>) have been spent by the U.S. government and its counterparts all over the world not just directly on the medical aspect of this health crisis, but also on socio-economic support as a record number of people lost their jobs. For the Philippines, the figure is estimated at 7.3 million people (<https://hrmasia.com/over-7-3-million-jobs-lost-in-the-philippines-due-to-covid-19/>), for a 17.7% unemployment rate, as businesses closed because of lockdown geared to curb the rising transmission of the disease.

Despite this, a third of one percent of the world population (<https://www.worldmeters.info/coronavirus/>), or over 24 million, has been documented to have contracted the SARS-CoV 2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2) disease, of which 3%, or over 800,000 have died. Point-zero-zero-one percent (0.001%) of seven billion people in the planet seems such a tiny drop in the ocean, but putting names and faces to these 800,000 means at least 800,000 heartbreaks: lives shattered, generational timelines broken, and a collective mourning for those who have fallen in this Covid night.

While the big pharma and biotech companies are on a race to develop that pill or vaccine which may be the key to getting our lives back to what it was pre-Covid, governments have pushed "minimal health standards" including hygiene and quarantine measures to slow down the spread of cases. Some leaders have been lauded for their timely actions (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/15/world/coronavirus-women-leaders.html>); a lot more have been vilified for sins of commission or omission.

In Metro Manila, population of 12 million, for a moment, or more accurately, for two months and fourteen days, life stood still, as the first-ever Expanded Community Quarantine, or ECQ, the many of such CQs, was imposed (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enhanced_community_quarantine_in_Luzon). But then the pressure of the dammed-back economy and quarantined persons breached the sandbags. Life finds a way to go on. And the virus, weaved into the nucleic acid of its human host, continued to be transmitted, sneeze upon cough, breath by breath. R naught becomes R, yes! as more than a reproduction value of one means that fattening the flabs is more attainable than flattening the curve.

And as political/medical/psychosocial pundits traded barbs with quacks and other birds of some other feathers, the medical community finally ended up holding the bag that was ours to begin with. Initially touted as front-liners with the rash of high-profile deaths, society finally realized that hospitals should properly be the last line of defense. And rather than cry "Foul!!!," the Metro's physicians cried out in unison: "Time Out!" (<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/08/032032522/timeout-metro-manila-back-mecq-august-4-18>), six months from the time that Covid-19 announced its presence in the Philippine islands, January 30, 2020. I've lost track of the number of medical colleagues who have preceded this year's autumn season, dropping off like multi-colored leaves from the tree of the health care system, and landing on the soft topsoil beneath: "I die without seeing the dawn's light shining on my country... You, who will see it, welcome it for me...don't forget those who fell during the night time" (Jose Rizal, Noli Me Tangere).

How fare the other islands in the 7,100? To date, only Batanes, Siquijor, Aurora, and Quirino have remained Covid-free (<https://www.cnnphilippines.com/regional/2020/8/16/Batanes-COVID-free.html>). The story is far from over. The Philippines has breached the 200,000 mark for Covid cases, with over 3,000 deaths. The much-touted "new normal" seems to be this: mask and face shield on, 70% alcohol on hand, social distancing, Zoom parties, online shopping, contract tracing/chismisan, isolation/stigmatizing, with health care workers being herofied or bullied, depending on the color of the on-looker's lens. Strap in, we're in for a long hell of a ride.

Paradigm Shift

• Ricardo Riego de Dios, MD, FPCS, FPSGS •

“IF YOU HEAR A VOICE WITHIN YOU SAYING, YOU ARE NOT A PAINTER, THEN BY ALL MEANS PAINT, BOY, AND THAT VOICE WILL BE SILENCED.” ~ VINCENT VAN GOGH

“I AM HAPPY TO BE ALIVE AS LONG AS I CAN PAINT.”
~ FRIDA KAHLO

During our Residency in Surgery we were taught to do the best we can under different and at times difficult scenarios. We learned how to excel even under every worse situation and that is how we were trained – to have nerves of steel.

But how about if we were locked down inside the humdrums of our imagination and confined in a place we call “home”. Not doing much – no urgent calls, no emergency referrals, no hospital rounds and no surgery. Suddenly we feel trapped in unfamiliar circumstances. Our professional life has often been spent in the fast lanes around the dangerous bends of race tracks. We live life like those of the F1 racing greats: Lewis Hamilton, Michael Schumacher and others. We were used to a speeding through the track of Life. Then a radical shift. “Paano na?”

The answer is: We divert, we modify, we become creative and in the case this COVID pandemic, we strive to realize the best within us. In my case, this brought out the artistic side of me.

Unable to do our usual work routine and leaving us with more idle moments, we try to adjust to the difficult times. That is the reason we create, we blend, we adjust. We think of ways and in our reflections we learn our real purpose, the reason we exist. The fruit of this time in reflection has given me an opportunity to get more in touch with the Artist in me.

And that’s how I started. I got hold of old painting materials left over by my youngest son from senior high school at the Ateneo. First I tried watercolors in used sketch pads, joggling one medium to another. Soon I became a little more imaginative and daring and I plunged myself in this newly discovered passion. In a matter of 5 short months starting March, my sons, daughter and I have painted more than 50 artworks in canvas, oil and acrylics. These creative time not only kept us busy but this also bonded us more closely together – with my supportive wife as our number one fan and cheerleader. We would make our sketches at night. And what made our mornings happier was seeing what we had accomplished.

Knowing that our life is short and our tomorrows might not come, whatever anomalies we may experience in this COVID pandemic, we now turn to ART as a means to share whatever we have - leaving a legacy to our workmates, our children and our children’s children. Learning that compulsory solitude does not mean a situation to despair but it now serves as a means to shine and discover what we are really made for.

I CAN’T UNDERSTAND HOW ANYONE IS ABLE TO PAINT WITHOUT OPTIMISM. DESPITE THE GENERAL PESSEMISTIC ATTITUDE IN THE WORLD TODAY, I AM NOTHING BUT AN OPTIMIST

~ HANS HOFFMANN

ART IS NOT ALWAYS ABOUT PRETTY THINGS. IT’S ABOUT WHO WE ARE, WHAT HAPPENED TO US, AND HOW OUR LIVES ARE AFFECTED

~ ELIZABETH BROWN



Re-Inventing the Wheel: How a PCS Chapter was Able to Become Relevant in the COVID-19 Pandemic

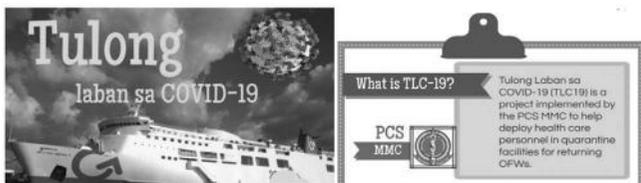
• Leonardo O. Ona III, MD, FPCS, FPSGS •

The current COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the operations of all aspects of living, mainly because of the strict quarantine measures instituted by the government. Even professional societies have incurred a major setback in terms of continuing its schedule of activities. There is one chapter in the Philippine College of Surgeons which has risen from this conundrum. The Metro Manila Chapter has taken the lead in providing relevant and meaningful activities for its members and stakeholders.

The board of the chapter was quick to re-calibrate and find ways to step-up in functioning and deliver its mandate.

It held its first virtual General Assembly last May 5, 2020 using the Zoom Platform and was attended by 594 members, the largest attendance in the history of the chapter. This event witnessed the creation of the chapter clusters, assigning specific geographical units to better disseminate information and improve fellows participation within the chapter.

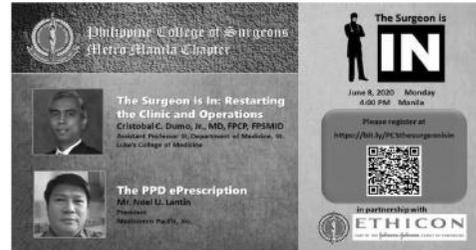
In the assembly, the chapter also launched the “Tulong sa Covid-19 (TLC-19)” project which aims to deploy able fellows from the chapter and other volunteers to man quarantine facilities in the North Harbor in Manila. This project was coordinated with the Department of Transportation and the Philippine Coast Guard.



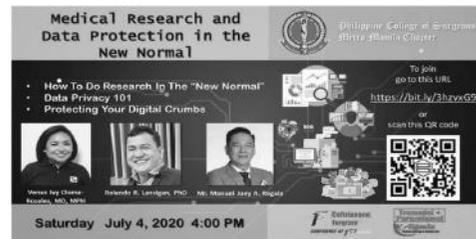
Dr. Elvis Llarena, PCS Metro Manila Chapter president, was unfazed by the limitation of mobility brought about by the pandemic. He set further directions to the board by embarking on a series of webinars to address issues besetting the surgeons in the chapter.

Last June 8, 2020, the PCS-MMC started its first of a series of webinars. “The Surgeon is In” was envisioned to help practicing clinicians in adjusting clinic practices as the quarantine was eased up by the government from an enhanced community quarantine to a general community quarantine. The resource persons for this event was Dr. Cristtobal Dumo, an Infectious Disease Specialist from St. Luke’s Medical Center, who talked about best practices in starting clinic operations. This was complemented by a talk

from Mr. Noel Lantin, CEO of Medicomm Pacific, who talked about an EMR and teleconsultation platform, PPD-e-prescription.



In addressing the concerns of conducting medical research during the pandemic, the chapter held a webinar entitled: “Medical research and Data Protection in the New Normal” last July 4, 2020. Dr. Venus Ivy Cloma Rosales talked about “How to do Research in the New Normal”. Dr. Rolando Lansingan of the Data Privacy Commission talked about Data Privacy 101. While Mr. Manuel Joey A. Regala, Information Security and Data Protection specialist, delivered a talk on “How to Protect Your Digital Crumbs”.



To focus on the issue of health care financing and how it is responding through the community quarantine, a webinar entitled “The Impact of the Covi-19 on Healthcare Financing” was held last July 25, 2020. The speakers included General Ricardo Morales of Philhealth, Mr. Carlos Da Silva representing the Association of Health Maintenance Organizations in the Philippines, and Mr. Christian Argos, representing the Philippine Association of Health Maintenance Organization Companies.



The chapter continues to seek novel approaches in adapting to the challenges brought about by the quarantine. The regular activities will continue but this time in a new and more unique yet participatory manner.

2020 for PCS-NM

• Dures Fe Tagayuna, MD, FPCS and Vilma Jane Yacapin, MD, FPCS •

In the last quarter of 2019, the Philippine College of Surgeons - Northern Mindanao (PCS-NM) chapter leadership and elders began talks with the new set of officers for the 2020 plans. This was a hopeful time for the group, enumerating activities that would respond to the membership, the surgical patients and the community in general. This group eagerly accompanied the Chapter Past President, Dr. Natasha Emano-Elazegui, and the Incoming President, Dr. Vilma Jane Yacapin, to the PCS Induction Dinner during the 2019 Annual Clinical Congress.

Upon return to Cagayan de Oro City, the officers hit the ground running with a well-laid out plan for the year. To fully reach all the members in its area of responsibility: five (5) provinces (Bukidnon, Camiguin, Lanao del Norte, Misamis Oriental and Misamis Occidental) as well as nine (9) cities (Cagayan de Oro, Gingoog, El Salvador, Malaybalay, Valencia, Iligan, Tangub, Ozamiz and Oroquieta), Area Representatives were appointed. The plans of activities were very realistic, worthy and mainly, not expensive. The officers also agreed to have regular monthly meetings.

January 2020. A Surgeons' Forum on the Republic Act 11223 or the Universal Health Care Act was conducted in response to the need for information and to air questions and concerns of the membership. It was

well-attended by the different cutting subspecialties. Notable speakers from the regional office of the Department of Health (DOH) X, PHIC X and our very own PCS-NM Past President and the current President of the Philippine Hospital Association Dr. Jesus Jardin. It did not only allow us a significant learning experience but also re-established friendships and camaraderie.

February 2020. Together with the Philippine Society of General Surgeons - Northern Mindanao (PSGS-NM) chapter, a dinner-concert for a cause was held at the Luxe Hotel for the benefit of the environmental programs of both chapters. This was a timely activity as COVID-19 was just lurking around the corner. The night revealed a few musical talents among the fellows, who braved the stage and belted out their own covers of familiar songs

In response to patient needs, the PCS-NM conducted a simultaneous blood-letting drives done in Cagayan de Oro, Iligan and Ozamiz Cities, led by Dr. Anton Valdez in Iligan City and Drs. Dennis Ybañez and Edven Manabat in Ozamiz City. It was a good haul with a total of 150 blood donors who willingly shared the gift of life. These were endorsed to the Northern Mindanao Medical Center in Cagayan de Oro City and local Red Cross Unit.



PCS Davao-Southern Mindanao Chapter

• Manuel S. Tesoro Jr., MD, FPCS •

The Philippine College of Surgeons – Davao Southern Mindanao Chapter has been planning yearlong events since the beginning of 2020. It began with a joint conference with PSGS DSM chapter on the 29th of January 2020 to discuss collaborative activities for the year. The incoming officers and fellows discussed joint events with the PSGS DSM Chapter that would encourage participation from residents and fellows alike, from athletic affairs to skills challenges to research presentations. Preparations for the induction of the chapter officers on March were initiated.

Preparations from the local surgical chapters and the local residents’ association were initiated through media announcements and logistics for the sportsfest on April and Operation Tuli on May. However, due to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, crisis management included postponement and/or cancellation of events, meetings and conventions. PCS national then decided to postpone all future activities from March onwards.

Despite this disruption, the Chapter leaders continued communication to its members. On March 25, the PCS National held the first ever online DMSC chapter induction. Inducted were Dr. Manuel S. Tesoro, Jr. (President), Dr. Lauralee L. Samonte (Vice-President), Dr. Hannah Angela D. Acosta (Secretary), Dr. Eillen A. Borje (Treasurer) and Dr. Lydcelle Ann

Encarnacion-Rongo (PRO). Drs. Wencelito Clapano, Roland Victor Chiu and Alfredo Tan II are the other trustees. Discussions on what to expect this COVID season and how to begin preparation were conducted. We are grateful to the National office for its assistance in acquiring resources for the chapter. Project proposals and other concerns were also deliberated on.

With the shift from ECQ to GCQ, the Chapter officers held an online conference on April 30 to strengthen the assistance of the Chapter to the local Fellows and residents. Funds from the national and local chapter were pooled to add on the resources of our surgeons. Another agenda was also to evaluate the recommendation for PCS fellow applicants.

Recently, the chapter had the first Online Interhospital Interesting Surgical Case Presentation with PSGS DSM Chapter. The activity was attended by fellows and other surgeons of the chapter especially those from training institutions from Cotabato City, General Santos City and Zamboanga City.

We are aware that the SARS CoV-2 pandemic will not end soon but that the PCS fellows of Davao Southern Mindanao chapter and the residents of the training institutions will be vigilant and will continue serving our locality.



PCS - Northern Luzon Chapter DDVMH opens RT-PCR Testing Laboratory

• Kay Pioquinto Jimenez, MD, FPCS, FAFN •

The Philippine College of Surgeons (PCS) in response to the nationwide plan to decrease the spread of COVID-19 released as early as March 2020 recommendations to guide precautionary measures in handling surgical cases and ensure safety of the surgeon and healthcare workers.

One of the recommendations of PCS is to test patients for surgery without causing delay. The Dagupan Doctors Villaflor Memorial Hospital (DDVMH) in addressing the challenges of COVID 19 and transform health care that will best meet the needs of their patients opened an RT-PCR testing molecular laboratory within the hospital. This will help meet the surgical needs of the community and guide decision-making to proceed with medically necessary, time-sensitive procedures. The RT-PCR started operations last August 12, 2020, now addressing the need to identify (test), isolate and treat COVID-19 patients. Villaflor PCR Molecular Laboratory releases swab results in 24-48 hours.



Therefore, DDVMH with its RT-PCR Testing Capacity is now able to test pre-operative patients and schedule safe elective surgeries. The hospital's negative-pressure operating rooms, available PAPRs, adequate PPEs and stringest infection protocols, complement RT-PCR testing in making the hospital a COVID-Safe Facility assuring high-quality and safe surgery.

Stay Positive... from page 20

translates to how we work and the quality of our work. There were times when we felt so miserable that we refuse to even go to the hospital and think if its even worth it. Not only do we feel bad because we are physically drained, but we feel bad because our feelings of hopelessness make us feel not to want doing what we love to do. It's like giving up your passion even when you don't want to because at some point, we have to draw the line when it is healthy for us mentally and physically to continue. Feeling hopeless can be debilitating. We sometimes feel desolate and despondent and very unhappy with what we do and we may even feel stuck in a blank state of mind or even too tired to function. It can cause us to shut down and eventually turn our backs from our duties as physicians. Because during these dark times, it isn't impossible for us to feel our situation will never get better. Negative scenarios around us with no signs of improvement can cause a strain mentally and physically. And I am sure that I am not the only one who feels that way given our current situation. That's why I am asking, "How are you? Are you still doing fine?" Because sometimes it just takes one person to ask you how you are and make you feel that you are not forgotten and that there will always be a bright light at the end of a dark tunnel.

Taking care of ourselves at this point is important more than ever. They say negative things attract negative energy and for me, that was laying off social media for a while and doing things that I used to do before I was

fully consumed with the negative things that I have been seeing and reading. I went back to work on those things that spark joy and for me that meant reading books, playing a great video game, and discovering new shows to watch that would make me laugh or feel good. I set new goals for myself so that I can focus on more things that would make me more productive. For some, finding and learning a new hobby made them open up to a new world wherein they can retreat back to happiness after a hard day at the operating room. I know a lot of us are tired, worried, anxious, and fearful but we must never lose faith that things will get better. There is no assurance as to when this current situation will end nor is there any assurance that when it does end, things will go back to the way it normally was. We may be dealing with these things as part of our new norm and only then can we feel uplifted when we start to accept that this might be the new thing and that it's going to be ok. But acceptance that comes with a new sense of hope is what I am wishing for so that even in the darkest of hours, we can remain steadfast and perform our duties with hopeful smiles. Because the virus might be strong, but our faith and hope that there will be a better tomorrow is stronger. And I want to end this article with a quote that I find befitting our current situation:

"One day you will tell your story of how you overcame what you went through and it will be someone else's survival guide."

– Brene Brown

Association of Women Surgeons of the Philippines

• Ida Marie T. Lim, MD, FPCS, FPSGS •

The Association of Women Surgeons of the Philippines held its election of Board of Trustees last December 4, 2019 during the PCS Annual Clinical Congress. Elected were Dr. Anita Tarectecan, a general surgeon from Pangasinan as president. Esther A. Saguil, MD as Vice-President; Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, MD as Secretary and Bernice C. Navarro, MD as Treasurer.

Also elected as board members were Drs. Ida Marie T. Lim, Maria Rica C. Lumague, Hilda M. Sagayaga, Joan S. Tagorda, and Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas.

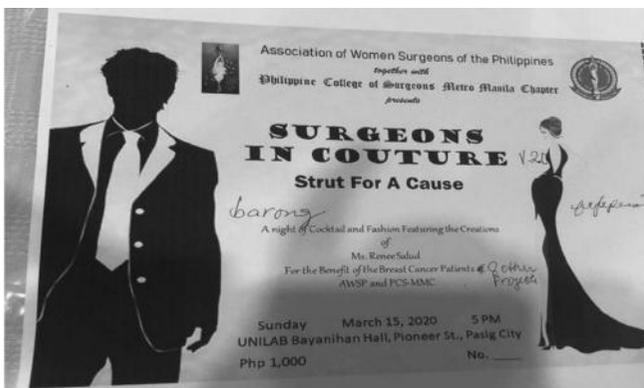
As one of its major activities for 2020, AWSP prepared for Part 2 of Surgeons in Couture (Strut for a cause), a fashion show by surgeons in partnership with Renee Salud.

This was originally scheduled for March 15, 2020 but due to the pandemic, it was indefinitely postponed. Last July 4, 2020, AWSP was able to hold a unique webinar. Instead of featuring topics in Surgery and its allied fields, the organization decided to have something different and relevant to the current times when stress is real. Together with the Halili Cruz



Filipino women surgeons from all over the country in full force during the PCS Clinical Congress led by its officers for 2020-2021.

Dance Company, the Halili Cruz School of Ballet and Halili Cruz Conservatory, a webinar teaching different genre of dance was conducted. Ballet, jazz and hip hop were taught by zealous teachers from the school led by Associate directors Anna Cruz - Bueno and Grace Garalde – Perez. Consultants and residents alike enjoyed this webinar for a change.

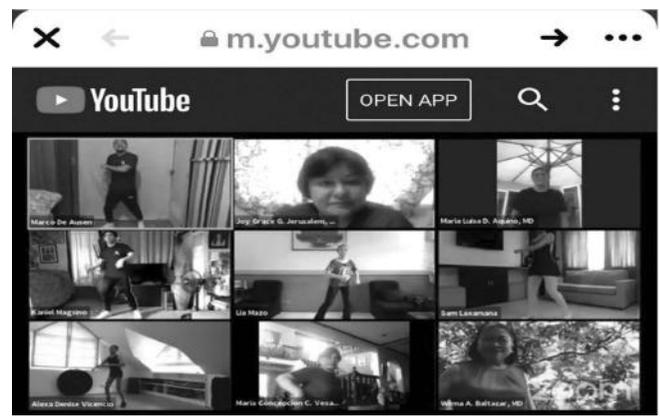
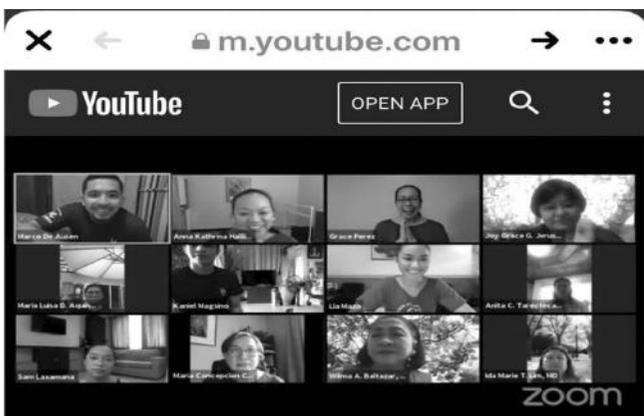


| PROGRAMME | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| 10:00 AM | Opening Prayer | |
| 10:05 AM | National Anthem | |
| 10:10 AM | PCS Hymn | |
| 10:15 AM | Welcome Remarks | ANTONIO S. SAY, MD PCS Vice-President |
| 10:20 AM | Introduction of Speaker | IDA MARIE T. LIM, MD |
| 10:25 AM | Introduction Dance Education - Adjusting to the New Normal Importance of Physical Fitness | DR. ANNA KATHARINA HALILI CRUZ - BUENO Associate Artistic Director, Halili Cruz School of Dance |
| 10:30 AM | Dance Activities for the Family Democratization and audience engagement | WITH MS. GRACE GARALDE - PEREZ Associate Artistic Director AND HESO FACILITY |
| 11:25 AM | Video We Heal As One | |
| 11:30 AM | Open Forum | JOY GRACE G. JERUSALEM, MD |
| 11:55 AM | Closing Remarks | ANTAC TARECTECAN, MD AWSP President |

MODERATORS:
BERNICE C. NAVARRO, MD
Series
JOY GRACE G. JERUSALEM, MD
Question and Answer

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WOL - 20200704-09:00AM-10:00AM
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

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Philippine Academy for Head and Neck Surgery

• Ida Marie T. Lim, MD, FPCS, FPSGS •

Last December 4, 2019 during the PCS Annual Clinical Congress, the Philippine Academy for Head and Neck Surgery held a session on Game Changers in Head and Neck Oncology. The topics discussed were as follows: Multidisciplinary Approaches in Head and Neck Cancer Improve Outcomes by Dr Ian Fernando; Head and Neck Reconstruction by Dr. Brian Ang; Judicious Use of Ultrasound in Managing Head and Neck Cancers by Dr. Rainier Lutanco and Utilization of Clinical Practice Guidelines in Thyroid Cancer Management - Results of the PCS-PSGS-PAHNSI KAP Study – Dr Ida Marie T. Lim.

In celebration of International Thyroid Awareness Week, the Philippine Thyroid Association prepared a week long series of webinars. PAHNSI had a collaboration with PTA and PCS and PGS for a webinar held last May 22, 2020 “Management of Thyroid Conditions in the Time of Covid 19: Challenges and Mitigating its Impact.” The objectives of this webinar were as follows: discuss the challenges in the diagnosis and management of thyroid conditions in the time of the COVID 19 pandemic; and present options to mitigate and lessen the impact on the patient and the institution/community of possible delays in their management due to the pandemic.

The speakers included prominent endocrinologist Prof. Nemencio Nicodemus, president of PTA; Dr. Jeremyjones Robles, president of Philippine Society of Endocrine Diabetes and

Metabolism; nuclear medicine specialist Dr. Wenceslau Llauderer, past president of PTA; Dr. Alfred Philip de Dios, president of PSUS; Dr. Roberto Sarmiento, Vice President of PGS during that time and Dr. Ian Fernando from PSO-HNS. The activity was supported by Telemedicine Network of the Philippines (TNP) through its president, Dr. Jeffrey Domino.

Speakers

| | | |
|--|---|--|
|  <p>Alfred Philip O. de Dios, MD, FPCS, FPSGS, FPSUS, FPAHNSI President, Philippine Society of Ultrasound in Surgery Associate Professor, St. Luke's College of Medicine</p> |  <p>Roberto A. Sarmiento, MD, FPCS, FPSGS, FPAHNSI Vice President, Philippine Society of General Surgeons Medical Director, Mother Seton Hospital</p> |  <p>Adrian F. Fernando, MD, FPSOHNS, FPAHNSI Board of Trustee, Philippine Society of Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery, Inc., Assistant Professor, University of the East - Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center</p> |
|  <p>Wenceslao S. Llauderer, MD, FPSNM, FPCGM Immediate Past President, Philippine Thyroid Association Chief of Medical Professional Staff, Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center</p> |  <p>Nemencio A. Nicodemus, Jr., MD, FPCP, FPSEDM Professor, University of the Philippines-College of Medicine President, Philippine Thyroid Association Past President, Philippine Society of Endocrinology, Diabetes & Metabolism</p> |  <p>Jeremyjones F. Robles, MD, FPCP, FPSEDM President, Philippine Society of Endocrinology, Diabetes & Metabolism</p> |

Course Director



Ida Marie Tabangay-Lim, MD, FPCS, FPSGS, FPAHNSI
Associate Professor, UST Faculty of Medicine & Surgery
Past President, Philippine Academy for Head and Neck Surgery, Inc.

Host



Jeffrey J. P. Domino, MD, IMHL, FPCS, FPSGS
Section Chief, Endocrine Surgery, Institute of Surgery at St. Luke's Medical Center-QC
President, Telemedicine Network Philippines



In partnership with
Telemedicine
Network of the Philippines

No Boundaries

• Karen Latorre, MD and Catherine SC Teh, MD, FPCS, PSGS •

Amidst this pandemic, SpaceX launched NASA astronauts to space on May 30. How you ever wondered what the earth looks like from outer space? Astronauts have the best view of the earth from outer space seeing it as a shared space with no boundaries at all even when we are setting the 6 feet boundary to distance ourselves from each other during this pandemic. As the challenge to eliminate COVID-19 continues, taking this perspective from space, we should learn to recognize that we are all struggling and facing this challenge together, apart. In reality, there is no boundary.

As we continue to fight against COVID-19 performing our duties in treating HPB patients, helping our colleagues manage COVID-19 patients and responsibly looking after ourselves, our families, colleagues and friends; we continue to enrich ourselves in expanding our knowledge and improving our surgical skills by spearheading & participating in various e-learning programs and platforms. In light of the unique set of challenges posed by the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic, the organization adapted to the rapidly changing clinical landscape.

Recognizing the need for immediate action, grounded on best-available yet rapidly evolving data, PAHPBS released online circulars and guides for patients and surgeons alike as early as March 21, a few days after the lockdown. Among these were the widely circulated PAHPBS Recommendations in the Time of Covid-19 Pandemic which served as a guide for clinicians in managing HPB surgical cases as the Covid-19 situation was unfolding. It emphasized Risk Urgency strategies for triage in situations of dwindling resources and manpower.

In keeping with its mandate of leadership, PAHPBS likewise continued to release regular updates to its recommendations throughout March and April as majority of the country went into ECQ. These were not limited to quality surgical care alone, but also extended to systems engineering, organizing team competencies, and action plans for surgical teams that could be adopted

in hospital settings across the country. Circulars were released online: Managing Covid-19 in Surgical Systems, STOP COVID, The PAHPBS Covid-19 Health Advisory for people with Liver Disease and Liver Transplant patients and A Guide for Clinicians: Liver involvement in SARS-CoV2 Infection/Covid-19 and videos for simple and affordable innovations in smoke evacuation in laparoscopic and open surgery were widely disseminated and shared through all social media platforms.

Recognizing the need to always be two steps ahead of a problem, PAHPBS released a circular The 9Ps of PAHPBS Post-ECQ Preparedness in COVID-19 Pandemic were released and was received widely as a guide for many institutions, well-ahead of the lifting of the ECQ measures in the country. These recommendations emphasized risk mitigation strategies for patients and health care workers alike, rationalization of team approaches as well as rational use of PPE. It was subsequently updated to the 10Ps of Post-ECQ Preparedness. All these may be found in the PAHPBS facebook page as the PAHPBS webpage is still under construction.

As the world gradually learned to adapt to this pandemic, so did scientific meetings evolve in this “New Normal”. Having a knack for innovation and technology, PAHPBS leadership teamed up with PALES in collaboration with the Telemedicine Network of the Philippines for one of the 1st Webinars in the country during this pandemic to

present the well-attended webinar “Impact, Innovations and Planning for Surgery in COVID-19” on April 24 with SAGES president Horacio Asbun as a special guest reactor. This event was attended by more than 600 participants.

We also hosted a symposium on Advanced imaging in HPB Surgery last May 28, 2020 as part of the PCS 46th Midyear Online Convention. Our young, dynamic speakers Drs RJ Romero and Romulo Ong Abrantes took the centerstage.

Multidisciplinary team approach in management of HPB diseases is one of our advocacy in PAHPBS, thus, one of the webinars we hosted entitled “Decision-Making and Tailored Management of Gallbladder Cancer” on June 4, 2020 had almost 400 attendees with the participation of 6 local experts including radiology, pathology, medical oncology and our very own Drs Hanisah Guro and Cenon Alfonso together with a world authority on GB Cancer, Dr Anil Argawal from India.

In an effort to move forward with pursuing excellence and exchange of ideas in other equally-important HPB topics, our very own Dr Jonathan Nolasco spoke comprehensively on Surgical Approaches to Bile Duct Injuries while Dr Catherine Teh gave her interesting viewpoints on Emerging Trends in Pancreatic Cancer with Neoadjuvant Tx in Resectable Disease in the recently concluded PSGS 18th Surgical Forum (Online) on August 6 to 8.

Following through on its commitment to promoting the highest standards in training, PAHPBS likewise moved its regular bi-monthly Fellows’ Forum to an online format last April and July.

As part of the goals of the current PAHPBS leadership for international partnerships, The PAHPBS participated in the SAGES HPB Facebook Collaborative Educational Series “All things HPB” in May 13, 2020 as our very own President, was invited to give a talk on “All things HCC”.

Together with leaders in liver transplantation globally, Dr Teh set up a steering committee to organize a recurring educational program that addresses various issues like forming a team to infrastructure development and core topics in

liver transplantation, aptly called the “LiverTx Seminars”, consisting of scheduled webinars held starting July 1, 2020. This continues to run with pioneers and leading liver transplant experts.

As a testament to the organization’s resilience, creativity, and passion for blazing new trails, the PAHPBS rendered an online concerto unlike anything seen before for an Online Scientific Congress. PAHPBS hosted the 3rd ASEAN Laparoscopic HPB Conference and 2nd PAHPBS International Symposium Online last August 1-15, 2020 in a unique format. An online opus kickstarted on Aug1 with a glorious opening ceremony having Prof Martin Smith, the President of the IHPBA as keynote followed by daily On-Demand videos of lectures from world-renowned experts in HPB ending with a Live online plenary discussion on 2 weekends in an engaging blended learning format, as well as culminating in a meaningful closing ceremony and an Online Party with carefully crafted original signature drinks unlike any other! There were more than 1000 registrations, 38 international faculty, 7 local faculty, 35 liver and 18 pancreatic sessions. It was definitely one for the books! At the #ASEANLHC2020, PAHPBS has certainly set a new standard in hosting virtual congresses as other societies locally and internationally has approached us for tips and made us a model for their upcoming virtual events.

Visit the Facebook page Philippine Association of HPB Surgeons or IG and twitter page @pahpbsi for more information on the dynamic facets of PAHPBS and to contact this growing organization.

Times of uncertainty and fear bring about changes and serve to highlight different aspects of human nature. On one end, it may completely overwhelm and shut down an organization; but on the other, it may just be the catalyst for positive change and growth. Firm in its resolve and inspired by its dynamic leadership, PAHPBS remains steadfast in its commitment to deliver quality HPB surgical care and upholds its mandate to raise standards and improve the quality of HPB care; including training by paving the way for innovations and exchange of ideas, amidst challenges and uncertainty, during this pandemic and beyond, setting no boundaries.

PALES organizes 1st Live Virtual Congress 2020

• Jeffrey JP. Domino, MD •



The Philippine Association of Laparoscopic and Endoscopic Surgeons (PALES) conducted their 10th Annual Convention by organizing their first 3- day live virtual congress entitled “Optimizing Outcomes in MIS during Challenging Times” last July 17-19,2020.

The passion of PALES for teaching and learning inspired them to continue the congress despite the difficulties and isolation brought by the pandemic. The PALES Board of Directors, led by their President Dr. Ernesto Tan, made the bold decision to continue the 10th Annual Convention as a virtual congress by utilizing the available resources and on-line technology. Even with the limited preparation time to tackle the unknown realities of crafting their first virtual convention, the committee for the annual convention organized itself swiftly and faced the difficult task head on.

The July 17 program was composed of various pre-Congress activities, starting with the course on

“Effective Leadership in Crisis and Beyond” directed by Drs. Cathy Teh and Juvie Villaflor. This interactive, educational discussion fostered good insights on leadership, and featured several local and international speakers from Argentina, Singapore, and the United States. The second pre-Congress activity was led by Dr. Raymund Ong. This course reminded participants on the PALES guidelines on membership and raised awareness on the Zero BDI (bile duct injury) campaign in minimally invasive surgery.

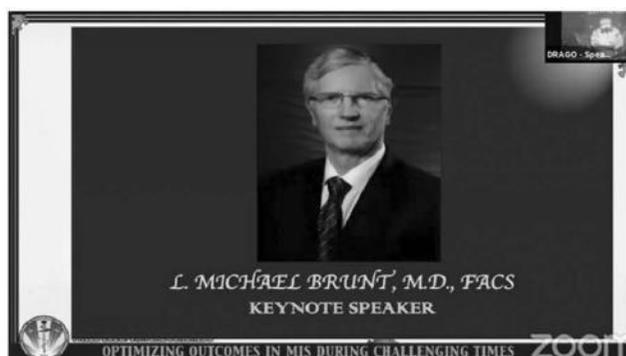
The convention officially started on July 18, with the opening ceremonies being webcasted live to Zoom and YouTube from the halls of the Philippine Center for Advanced Surgery (PCAS). The formal ceremony started with welcome remarks and opening messages from Senator Christopher “Bong” Go and his excellency, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte. This was followed by a tribute to Dr. Leandro L. Resurreccion III, a member of the board directors of PALES and the presentation and induction of the

new fellows of PALES. The ceremony was capped by a keynote speech by Dr. L. Michael Brunt from Missouri, USA who presented a multi-society consensus of safe Cholecystectomy, validating the PALES Zero-BDI campaign.

The opening ceremony was followed by multiple sessions on impactful topics such as hepato-biliary, education, hernia, innovations and emergencies in MIS, all of which were presented by expert surgeons from all over the world, and were streamed online throughout the day. The sessions stressed the need to continue and innovate learning despite the challenging times, show-cased the updates on new technologies for MIS and presented strategies and realities of

dealing the pandemic during laparoscopic emergencies.

July 19, the third and last day of the congress, started with the annual business meeting and the induction of the new Board of Directors of PALES 2020-2022. This was highlighted by the inaugural address of the newly elected president of PALES, Dr. Miguel “Ike” Mendoza. The sessions that followed initiated discussions on metabolic surgery, upper and lower GI surgery and the future directions of MIS in the new normal. A live surgery on laparoscopic fundoplication was streamed online – successfully performed by Dr. Allen Buenafe from the Rizal Medical Center.



Re-defining Elective Surgery During the COVID Pandemic

• Benjamin G. Herbosa, MD, FPCS, FPAPRAS •

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous surgeons and institutions have been forced to place on hold almost all procedures in the area of elective surgery during this period of uncertainty. This view is upheld by a majority of task force members of various governments worldwide. During the lockdowns in designated areas, the rules banned all unnecessary procedures in major hospitals. The move prevents indefinitely any and all electives during the pandemic. A main thrust is to move for closures of institutions or facilities (surgicenters or ambulatory care centers) that cater to elective cases which will then allow doctors for redeployment to the community hospitals and assist in the care for the patients stricken with COVID.

Major medical centers have been overburdened by the loads of patients who contracted the deadly virus. The indefinite postponement or outright cancellation of non-essential procedures decreed until hospital staffing are eased and the ICU and critical care units are decongested is of no argument. Reassignment of the operating suites often used for elective procedures at this time occurs to accommodate the increasing number of COVID cases. Other areas have been temporarily converted into makeshift wards. I totally agree that a patient may be compromised and even be exposed to the virus while having a procedure in a COVID designated facility. Aside from a patient undergoing a non-essential aesthetic procedure displacing a critically-ill COVID patient, the surgeon may likewise risk acquiring the infection. Numerous reasons have been enumerated and all of the concerns to delay and postpone “elective” surgeries given are founded. Most resources are channeled to the fight of the pandemic and are also directed to protect our frontliners.

COVID patients have understandably been given priority during this period. But what about the patients who still require surgical attention but are not infected with the virus? How do we address the needs and concerns of these

subset of patients who are uninfected? Thousands of individuals who are unfortunately “kept at bay” and awaiting medical and surgical interventions are now seemingly left out in the cold. These are a multitude of sidelined medical and surgical patients also in need of medical attention.

Controversial as it sounds, there is an overall bad imprint left on the possibility of doing elective surgeries during these times. And why? Because the majority of elective surgeries in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery are aesthetic in nature. Secondly, the overemphasis on COVID concerns has become so overwhelming. Timing should also probably be taken into consideration as well as the availability of extra surgical staff and non-COVID facilities.

The truth is that there may always be a negative connotation of cosmetic or aesthetic procedures, with or without COVID. This is mere proof that they are unnecessary and non essential. Possibly correct to an extent but wrong in another premise. There are many procedures that may be cosmetic but necessary like Breast Reconstructions after Cancer Extirpations, Release of Burn Contractures as a result of Deforming Conditions secondary to scalding, Cleft lip and palate or Craniofacial Repairs to name a few on the issues of Reconstruction and maybe aesthetic as well. On the matters

PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF PLASTIC RECONSTRUCTIVE AND AESTHETIC SURGEONS, INC.
WEEKEND 2020
PLASTIC SURGERY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC TIMES

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
DR. RICARDO F. DAVER, MD, FACS
 Director in Chief
 Congress General of Plastic Surgery
 Department of Plastic Surgery
 Hospital Federico de Sison, Vero
 University of Buenos Aires Medical School
 Argentina

PANELIST
DR. ERNEST S. CHIU, MD, FACS
 Director, Ethics, and Medical & Research
 Hospital and Advanced Training Center STU - Laguna Medical Center
 New York, USA

PANELIST
DR. JOST-JOYCE V. CRUZ, MD, FPAPRAS
 Associate Dean for Planning and Development
 College of Medicine
 University of the Philippines Health
 Science Center General Hospital
 Philippines

MODERATOR
DR. LAURENCE T. LEE, MD, FPAPRAS
 FPAPRAS PRESIDENT
 Chief, Section of Plastic Surgery - Jose Reyes
 Memorial Medical Center
 and Chief of Laser Medical Center
 Quezon City, Philippines

CO-HOST
DR. KATHRINA VICTORIA E. ANGELES, MD, FPAPRAS
 Co-Chair Secretary Committee FPAPRAS
 Consultant and Training Officer
 Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
 Queen Sofia Memorial Medical Center
 Quezon City, Philippines

DATE: MAY 9, 2020, SATURDAY
TIME: 11:00 AM MANILA, STC-108
 11:00 AM NEW YORK (ET/CT) STC-31
 11:00 AM LAGUNA (ET/CT) STC-31
 11:00 AM CEBU (ET/CT) STC-31
 11:00 AM DAVAO (ET/CT) STC-31
 11:00 AM CAGAYAN (ET/CT) STC-31
 11:00 AM ILOILO (ET/CT) STC-31
 11:00 AM CORDOBA (ET/CT) STC-31

REGISTRATION: https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_UCIO3to1Rz2oOwmZ9YPNwg

of Breast Augmentations and/or Reductions, when the mental health benefits are considered, can these be enough reason enough or justifiable as medical necessities? To quote a recent article of Forbes magazine (May 2020):

“Rhinoplasties and facelifts often involve mental health and wellness; potentially making the lines between optional and medically necessary even grayer”.

Thus the word “elective” as a category used for certain surgeries, I personally feel, is an absolute misnomer.

Naturally, there is no quick fix and obvious answer to this public and professional disagreement as facts and data evolve each day regarding the behavior of the virus. There are just too many unknowns today. But when the COVID case numbers begin to dwindle and as the government efforts become successful in curbing and controlling the spread, I surely can welcome the reintroduction of these procedures in the OR’s list of scheduled operations. The Department of Surgery of the University of Chicago studied this issue and instigated how to help those patients and their surgeons stratify an approach to this dilemma. The concern of triaging hundreds of these patients will now be subjected to the MeNTS (Medically Necessary, Time-Sensitive) scoring system to assess the acuity and safety of patients for surgery having a high benefit and a low risk status at the same time reducing harm to the health care providers and to the patients as well.

The Journal of the American College of Surgeons, March 2020, with Dr. Jeffrey Matthews, chair of the Dept of Surgery at the University of Chicago, offers this quick and reproducible guideline for Elective Surgeries at this time.

- I. Procedure:
 - How long is the surgery?
 - Will the patient need an ICU bed after surgery?
 - How much blood will be lost during surgery?
 - How many surgeons and nurses are needed in the operating room?
 - Will the patient need a ventilator during or after the surgery?
 - Is the surgery in the abdomen (lower risk) or in the airway/lungs (higher risk)?
- II. Disease:
 - Is non-operative treatment available?
 - Would the outcome of the illness be impacted with a 2-week delay?
 - What about a 6-week delay?
- III. Patient Issues:
 - How old is the patient? (under 20 years is lowest risk; over 65 years is highest risk)
 - Do they have breathing issues like lung disease or sleep apnea?
 - Do they have heart disease?
 - Are they diabetic?
 - Do they have a weakened immune system?
 - Do they have signs of an acute respiratory illness?
 - Do they have known COVID-19 exposure in the past 2 weeks?

With this protocol, an Elective Surgery Acuity Scale (ESAS) is established. For my purposes, this gives me a small chance to redefine, restart and resume my work. Though deep in my heart I know that some semblance of my immediate past life may still be salvageable, the forthcoming months might just prove me wrong and that lifestyle may no longer be part of the New Normal.



Newsbits from PATOS

• Mallen Gellido, MD, FPCS •

- The officers and members of the Board of Directors of the Philippine Association of Training Officers in Surgery (PATOS) for 2019 and 2020 are the following: Dr. Joseph Melbert O. Gulfan (President), Dr. Malen M. Gellido (Vice President), Dr. Andrea Joanne A. Torre (Treasurer) and Dr. Alfred Q. Lasasa II (Secretary). Dr. Stanley U. Kho, Dr. Carlo Angelo C. Cajucom, Dr. Ida Marie T. Lim, Dr. Warren M. Roraldo and Dr. Raymond Joseph R. Manzo are directors.



- PATOS conducted a whole day workshop on May 1, 2019 entitled “Preventing Complications by Promoting Patient Safety” at the City State Asturias Palawan Hotel, Puerto Prinsesa City, Palawan. This was attended by 104 participants.
- Continuing the theme on Patient Safety from the Palawan activity, a workshop on TEAMSTEPS was held at the EDSA Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City on July 31, 2019. There were 210 participants.



- Two sessions on November 30, 2019 served as prelude to the Annual PCS Convention. Surgical

trainers attended the workshop on “Clinical Hospital Conferences: Promoting Learning and Exchange of Ideas for Better Patient Outcomes. Surgical trainees attended “Communication and Presentation Skills: Impart of Clinical Outcome and Patient Safety”. Both activities were held at the EDSA Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City. The total number of attendees was 245. During this time the new and official PATOS Hymn was first sung. This was composed by: Candice Tiongson MD; musical arrangement by Voltaire Carandang Sr, MD and Raymond Joseph Manzo, MD; sung by: Adrienne Krystine Mendoza. The past presidents of PATOS were also honored and were each given, for the very first time, the PATOS Presidential Medal.



- PATOS traditionally starts the year with a workshop coinciding with the PCS Mid-Year Convention. But due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the workshop did not push through. This however did not deter PATOS in holding an online activity to discuss pressing concerns related to surgical training. On June 12, 2020 PATOS hosted “Issues in Surgical Training Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic : A PATOS Webinar.” A total of 402 people attended.



The Dr. Jun Resurreccion Pediatric Surgery Webinar Series

• Leona Bettina P. Dungca, MD •

We have lost yet another colleague in the battle against the COVID-19 virus. Dr. Leandro Resurreccion III will always be remembered as a great surgeon, a passionate teacher, a loving father and a good friend. To the very end, he has dedicated his life and worked fervently in the service of the Filipino children. His untimely demise is a great loss to the medical community.

The Philippine Society of Pediatric Surgeons (PSPS) has conceptualized a series of webinars to commemorate him. The Dr. Jun Resurreccion Pediatric Surgery Webinar Series aims to provide relevant and up-to-date information to the medical community during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the preparation for the webinars, PSPS also launched its new website, www.pspsonline.com. The first part of the series entitled Challenges in Pediatric Surgery in the COVID-19 Pandemic was held last July 30. Dr. Maria Imelda Sales, a pediatric gastroenterologist discussed the abdominal manifestations of COVID-19 in children while our pediatric surgery expert, Dr. Esther Saguil, gave a comprehensive lecture on how to deal with the surgical abdomen in the background of the ongoing pandemic. Subsequently, Dr. Benjamin Valera, a pediatric anesthesiologist, Dr. Mary Ann Aison, a pediatric pulmonologist and Dr. Fatima Gimenez, a pediatric infectious disease expert enlightened the audience regarding the perioperative considerations in the surgical child. At the end of the lectures, Dr. Wilma Baltazar led the panel discussion where the speakers addressed various questions from the attendees. Added to this was a review of a sample case of a patient who underwent surgery for acute appendicitis who later turned out to be COVID positive.

Last August 13, two distinguished speakers talked about stem cell therapy and its current applications in certain pediatric neurological and sur-

gical conditions. Dr. Nguyen Thanh Liem, the current president of the Vietnamese Association of Pediatric Surgeons and Dr. Carolyn Butler, the head of the Community Services of the Department of Pediatrics in Makati Medical City, shed some light on this very interesting topic. The third



Leandro Resurreccion III, MD, FPCS, FPSPS

webinar will be held on August 27. We have invited experts from the medical and legal fields to discuss the role of social media and telemedicine in health care, the possible liabilities that may arise, and how to prevent them. On September 4, a webinar focusing on entrepreneurship 101 for doctors will conclude the Dr. Jun Resurreccion webinar series. Our guest speakers will share personal experiences and tips in choosing and setting up a business to suit our professional lifestyle in the midst of the pandemic. We hope that through these webinars, our fellow medical professionals will be better informed and updated on important topics as we adapt to the so-called new normal brought about by the present health crisis.

Dr. Jun Resurreccion had such a great zest for life as he chased after horizons on his trusty motorbike. And while it is customary for mountaineers to remind each other to “leave no trace” on the places they visit, the way Dr Resurreccion forged his path had left a mark on the people he knew. May his contributions to the medical field be long celebrated and the legacy he left live on.

18th Surgical Forum

PSGS holds webinar series

• Alfred Lasala, MD, FPCS, FPSGS, FACS •

The eighth month of each year has always been a busy time for the Philippine Society of General Surgeons (PSGS). Even before the beginning of the PSGS fiscal year was changed from January to September, the first week of August is that time of the year when the largest gathering of general surgeons takes place during the Surgical Forum, the Society's annual convention. However, the emergence of the SARS COV2 virus that led to the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically and dramatically changed the health landscape not only of our nation but the whole world. And as the PSGS was one with the whole health-care community in battling the invisible enemy, the Society decided to push through with this important scientific activity as part of its mission to provide excellence through innovation in surgical training, education and research.

Due to the social distancing rules, and restrictions on travel and large gatherings brought about by the pandemic, the challenge was how to conduct the Surgical Forum while adhering to all these regulations. And so the decision to migrate all the activities to the virtual platform was made. Under the steady leadership of the President Dr. Andrea Joanne A. Torre, and Vice President Dr. Roberto A. Sarmiento, who is also the overall chair of the Surgical Forum, the Board of Directors and the various committees were given the task of creating and delivering an informative, relevant and engaging scientific program to all the Fellows and other medical specialists online. Other equally important events scheduled within the Surgical Forum were also migrated to the virtual realm including the Annual Membership Business meeting, the Election for the 2020-2021 PSGS Board of Directors, the Induction Ceremony for the New National Board of Directors and Chapter Board of Trustees, and of course, even the Fellowship Night.

The 18th PSGS Surgical Forum webinar series bannered the theme "*PSGS at the Forefront of Specialization: Integration and Collaboration*". Chaired by Dr. Andrei Cesar Abella, together with Director-in-charge Dr. Raymond Andrew Ong, the Committee on Surgical Education came up with a diverse but inclusive scientific program that catered to all interests in general surgery. A partnership with Docquity, the medical education and knowledge sharing platform exclusively for doctors, was crafted to help bring the convention to the virtual arena. The Surgical Forum was held from August 6 to 8, 2020. The sessions were held 4-5 hours each day and utilized 2 virtual rooms. The advantage of having the Forum held on Docquity is that one can choose when to "attend" the sessions. There are two options: attend the session real-time according to the schedule of the session, or attend the session at one's own convenient time. So even if there are simultaneous sessions or an attendee had to do surgery during the scheduled session, he/she can always choose to come back and attend whenever he/she pleases. Furthermore, the sessions will be on Docquity for six months, so an attendee can actually finish the whole convention at his or her own pace.

There was a total of 20 scientific sessions, with four sessions held live. There were 6,462 unique views for the whole

3-day event which does not include the growing number of doctors viewing the sessions after August 8. Aside from our local experts, the roster of invited faculty boasted a number of foreign speakers who are highly respected in the global surgical community. The PSGS is honored to have these guest lecturers participate in the Surgical Forum: Prof. Jacques Marescaux (France), Founder and President of IRCAD; Prof. Kok-Yang Tan (Singapore) Clinical Director of Geriatric Surgery Service, Khoo Teck Puat Hospital; Dr. Wayne Shin-Wei Huang (Taiwan), Director of IRCAD Taiwan; Dr. Lim Geok Hoon (Singapore) Senior Consultant, Breast Center, KK Women's and Children's Hospital; and Dr. Lincoln D. Nadauld (USA) Vice President, Precision Health and Genomics Intermountain Healthcare.

The Opening Ceremony was well attended with 1,976 unique views, a number that cannot be attained if this was held at the Edsa Shangri-la Hotel. The most attended scientific sessions were the two live panel discussions on the morning of the first day. These were the sessions on "Ten-year Summary of the Annual Reports of PSGS Accredited Training Programs", and "The PSGS Curriculum: What is the Thrust of GS Training in the Country?", both of which dealt with surgical training in the country, and garnered 1,197 and 910 unique views, respectively. The average number of unique views per session for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd days were 990, 620 and 487, respectively.

Though this was the first time the PSGS held the Surgical Forum online, we can consider it a success. The overall evaluation of the attendees was a testament to this. A big majority of the respondents (88.3%) said that the sessions were highly relevant to their practice. Fifty-five percent (55%) said the sessions met their expectations while forty-four percent (44%) said the sessions exceeded their expectations. Most of the respondents (66.5%) strongly agreed that the speakers provided valuable information and directions during their sessions. Majority of the respondents (55%) gave the Surgical Forum an overall rating of excellent.

As we come to the tail end of the year 2020, the PSGS will continue to venture into innovative ways to promote general surgery as a premier and distinct specialty, to provide the Fellows and trainees its needs in terms of continued surgical education and training, and deliver holistic service to the community and the nation.



Busy sked for PSGS

• Ida Marie T. Lim, MD, FPCS, FPSGS •



Inspite of the COVID 19 pandemic, the Philippine Society of General Surgeons led by the 2019-2020 Board of Directors has been busy with activities.

- Fellows at the Forefront: The Taal Volcano Eruption - January 12, 2020

At the start of the year, during the eruption of Taal volcano, fellows of PSGS, especially the Southern Luzon Chapter organized relief efforts and fund drive to help the victims.

- PSGS Forges with PBS through MOA January 22, 2020

As a result of bilateral talks between the Philippine Board of Surgery and Philippine Society of General Surgeons to comply with the PRC ruling of one board, one society for accreditation, a memorandum of agreement was signed to make the relationship between the two institutions official.

PSGS-PBS MOA Signing led by PSGS President Dr. Andrea Joanne A. Torre and PBS Chairman Dr. Orlando O. Ocampo last January 22, 2020 at the SEDA Vertis North Hotel, Quezon City. The event was witnessed by (seated): Drs. Jose Antonio M. Salud and Roberto A. Sarmiento; (standing): Drs. Rodney B. Dofitas, Alejandro C. Dizon, Jose Macario V. Faylona, Rey Melchor F. Santos, Ray B. Malilay, Jorge M. Concepcion and Alfred Q. Lasala II.

- PSGS Head and Neck Study Group Lays Down Plans for year 2020

Last February 1, 2020, the PSGS Head and Neck Study Group led by the director-in-charge Dr. Roberto Sarmiento held a meeting at Lily Pad, along Examiner St., Quezon City. The meeting was attended by the Chair of the Committee, Dr. Ida Marie T. Lim and members, Drs. Rainier Lutanco and AJ Fabric.

- PSGS joins PCS Alliance for Life Cancer Summit held last February 04, 2020 at the Philippine Medical Association

- Strat Planning Workshop February 21-22 2020 Park Inn Hotel, North EDSA QC

With the prevailing ECQ in most parts of the country, the activities of PSGS shifted to virtual or online mode starting March 2020.

- PSGS Starts Webinar Series, April 27 and May 8, 2020

There were two webinars participated in by PSGS. One is its very first webinar on “Best Practices for the Surgeon Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic” with speakers PSGS President Dr. Andrea Joanne Torre, Dr. Narciso S. Navarro Jr., Chairman of the Department of Surgery St. Lukes Global and Dr. Jose Antonio Salud, PCS President to discuss pressing matters at the start of the pandemic and to guide the fellows on how to go about with practice and changes in policies.

PSGS also participated in a webinar sponsored by PCS, Continuing Medical Education during the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Philippine Society of General Surgeons through the Head and Neck Study group participates in the PCS CSE series of webinars. In line with the forthcoming celebration of International Thyroid Week from May 25 – 31, 2020, the webinar seeks to tackle how the COVID 19 crisis affected the management of thyroid conditions, its possible effects on the patient and what can be done to minimize poor outcomes.

The webinar is a collaboration of specialties involved in the management of thyroid conditions General Surgeons, Head and neck surgeons as well as colleagues from ENT, Endocrinology and Nuclear Medicine.

- Recently, the PSGS held online its 18th SURGICAL FORUM with the theme: PSGS at the Forefront of Specialization – Integration and Collaboration held last August 6-8, 2020 - Webinar Series

Likewise, the 21st Annual Membership Business Meeting was done through a ZOOM MEETING as well as the Election for the 2020-2021 PSGS National BOD and concomitant Induction of Officers as well as the Fellowship Night were all held virtually

- Virtual Fellowship Night 2020 (Zoom Party)

The Philippine Spine Society

In these trying times, it is worth sharing this quote from Thomas Jefferson: “*The most fortunate of us all in our journey through life frequently meet with calamities and misfortunes which greatly afflict us. To fortify our minds against the attacks of these calamities and misfortunes should be one of the principal studies and endeavors of our lives.*”

The Philippine Spine Society has done exactly this—fortifying the principles and bonds among its members. It is no wonder then that after 25 years, the Society has stood the test of time, and emerged ready to meet these challenges.

Since its inception on 17 November 1995, when 15 pioneering orthopedic surgeons and neurosurgeons founded the Society, the group has stayed true to its passion and actively cultivated its commitment to quality spine care and accessible service, allowing it not only to hurdle every obstacle but also to grow into a robust and active membership currently 108- strong. Through the membership’s continuous hard work, the Society’s common beliefs and shared principles of transparency, responsibility, accountability, inclusiveness, teamwork and service (TRAITS) continue to live on and attract new talent to the fold. Talented surgeons who joined the Society have been able to live up to its commitment, to evolve and innovate in order to address whatever challenge is brought to the fore.

Thanks to its active, unassuming and hardworking members, the Society has been well equipped to meet the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, as seen in the following highlights of the Society’s activities before, during and beyond the covid 19 crisis:

The roster of founding members includes Drs. Antonio B. Sison, Bienvenido B. Aldanese, Leonido C. Castillo, Teodoro R. Castro, Pedro V. Sembrano, Rimando C. Saguin, Adrian B. Catbagan, Ruben C. Cardenas, David M. Cabatan, Regalado L. dela Pena, Jose M. Pujalte, Ramon L. Celo, Alberto Ma. Morano, Raul A. Grageda and Gersan D. Lukban.

The PSS Officers, 2019 were Antonio B. Sison, MD, FPOA (President); Tiong Sam N. Lim, MD, FPOA (Vice-President & Treasurer); Adriano B. Catbagan, MD, FPOA (Secretary) and Jose Manuel F. Ignacio, MD, FPOA (Chair, Scientific Committee).

The current Board of Trustees is composed of: Francisco F. Altarejos, MD, FPOA (President); Ronald P. Tangente, MD, FPOA (Vice President); Richard V. Condor, MD, FPOA (Secretary); Jose Miguel T. Lumawig, MD, FPOA (Treasurer); Ryan Conrad A. Carnero, MD, FPOA (Auditor); Anne Kathleen Ganal-

Antonio, MD, FPOA; (Chair, Scientific Committee) and Romel P. Estillo, MD, FPOA (Chair, Research Committee)

- 1st Meeting of the 2020 PSS Board Of Trustees at the Belmont Café, Pasay City-February 15, 2020
- PSS Board Of Trustees- Monthly Online Zoom Meeting: April 15, May 27, June 27, July 25 and August 25, 2020
- Online PSS Research 101 Workshop/Modules (June to October, 2020)
- Webinars

July 9, 2020

Topic: Metastatic Spinal Tumors

Speakers: Dr. Mamer S. Rosario
Clinical Presentation and Instability
Dr. Mark U. Pasion
When is Surgery Feasible?
Dr. Pierre M. Mella
Treatment Algorithms

August 29, 2020- 9:00 am

Topic: Anterior to the Psoas
Approach for Spine Tumours
Speaker: Dr. Jeffrey Thomas Luna
Spine Surgeon
University of Minnesota

September 26, 2020- 9:00 am

Topic: Navigation in Spine Surgery
Speaker: Dr. Edward Rainier Santos

October 24 2020-9:00 am

Topic: OLIF, XLIF and ALIFs
Speaker: Dr. Jonathan N. Sembrano

November 23, 2020

Speakers 1: Dr. Rolando M. Puno Speaker
2: Dr. Leah Carreon

Francisco P. Altarejos, MD, FPOA
President
Philippine Spine Society
2020-2021



PSS Annual Business Meeting &
PSS 25th Anniversary
Induction of New Members for 2021

November 27, 2020

Topic: Teleconsultation in Spine
During the Time of COVID.

Speaker: Dr. Paul Julius Medina

To end, let me quote George Kell, who identified four lessons we should learn from this pandemic:

1. Human history and natural history can no longer be separated.
2. Prevention is better than cure-we must learn to listen to science
3. Global threats need global collaboration
4. The pivotal role of the private sector

The pandemic teaches us that human health, economic well-being and natural environment are deeply connected. Let us seize this opportunity to

rediscover our common humanity and the values that bond us with mother nature and with each other. Guided by this respect for our common future, we are rest assured that the Philippine Spine Society will continue to actively participate in whatever manner we can, to fight and defeat this pandemic crisis. We will hold our line together as we face more complex challenges during these times, enriched by the wisdom and time-tested traditions of the past while we welcome the future with great hope as we embrace the creative ideas of the younger generation.

Let us also never forget our comrades in the white coat, those who were afflicted and who have perished as well as our health care workers and front liners who remain unyielding in the face of adversity. It is for their heroism that Aristotle spoke when he said: *“The wise man does not expose himself needlessly to danger, since there are few things for which he cares sufficiently; but he is willing in great crises to give even his life-knowing that under certain condition it is not worthwhile to live.”*

Let us stay negative and think positive



Philippine Society of Ultrasound in Surgery Officers inducted, CSE activities held

The Philippine Society of Ultrasound in Surgery has a new set of officers for 2020 and 2021. Elections were held last year during the Annual Convention of the Philippine College of Surgeons with the following fellows elected to the board: Drs. Marco Jose C. Abad, Jose Modesto B. Abellera III, Orlino C. Bisquera Jr., Joseph Alfred B. de Leon, Rico C. Estrella, Saleshe Tracy Anne B. Fernandez, Beverlee Verona L. Mante, Joel P. Merced, Derek C. Resurreccion, Charlton S. Sibal and Juan Alejandro R. Sotto. Chosen to lead the board were Dr. Alfred Phillip O. de Dios, as president, Dr. Joy M. Gali, as vice-president, Dr. Jeryl Anne Silvia R. Reyes, as secretary and Dr. Maria Kaiserin Santos-Lipana as treasurer.

Members of the new board are a diverse mix of surgeons from different surgical specialties utilizing ultrasound as part of their armamentarium. The new board aims to coordinate with other subspecialties with regards to their ultrasound workshops to incorporate basic ultrasound training workshops and giving their attendees the chance to be certified and become members or fellows of PSUS. This will enable the society to increase its membership and expand awareness on the use of ultrasound in surgical practice. At present, the PSUS has 84 active fellows and 279 associate fellows.

Another activity that would enable the Society to achieve this goal is to expand its offer of basic course workshops outside of PCS convention schedules. The basic workshop is now offered to surgical training programs who have their own ultrasound machines. The first of these scheduled workshops was held last

February 15 at the Department of Surgery of the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center. Participants included intermediate and senior residents together with their fellows-in-training.

The scheduled workshops were however cut short by the pandemic. This did not stop the Society from contributing to continuing surgical education. We were part of a joint webinar of PCS, PSGS, PAHNSI and PTA held last May 22 on the “Management of Thyroid Conditions in the Time of COVID-19: Challenges and Mitigating Its Impact.” A lecture on “Ultrasound Evaluation of Thyroid Nodules” was given by Dr. AP de Dios. This was followed by participation of the society in the PSGS Annual Forum last August 6 with the session on “Ultrasound as a Surgeon’s Tool”. Lectures on “The Role of Ultrasound in Wound Management” and “The Use of Endorectal Ultrasound in Rectal Tumors” were delivered by Dr. Joy Gali and Dr. Alfred de Leon, respectively.

The Society also came up with guidelines entitled “Recommendations for Ultrasound Use for Surgeons in the Era of the COVID-19 Pandemic” which can now be accessed in the PCS website.

Despite the existing limitations in these times, the PSUS is striving to do its part in contributing to surgical education.



January 26, 2020 PSUS Board Meeting: Dr. Derek C. Resurreccion (PRO), Dr. Jeryl Anne Silvia R. Reyes (Secretary), Dr. Joy M. Gali (Vice-President), Dr. Kaiserin S. Lipana (Treasurer), Dr. Marco Jose Fulvio C. Abad (BM), Dr. Alfred Phillip O. De Dios (President), Dr. Arvin G. Briones (Immediate Past-President), Dr. Orlino C. Bisquera Jr. (BM), Dr. Joel P. Merced (BM), Not in photo – Dr. Jose Modesto B. Abellera III, Dr. Joseph Alfred B. De Leon, Dr. Rico D. Estrella, Dr. Saleshe Tracey Anne B. Fernandez, Dr. Beverlee Verona L. Mante, Dr. Charlton S. Sibal, and Dr. Juan Alejandro R. Sotto

PUA Amidst a Pandemic

• Paul Nimrod B. Firaza, MD and Harry G. Longno, MD •

The year 2020 marked another milestone for the Philippine Urological Association with the signing of the “ONE PUA” memorandum of agreement and addressing the ratification of the amendments to its By laws. PUA also recently purchased a property for its future office building taking into consideration accessibility of the location, and future developments, especially the need for an adequate parking area. This property will also be a venue for future activities like conferences, seminars, and skills/ training workshops.

In March 2020, the start of the lockdown halted all the association activities. In the interest of the safety and health of the members, the executive council decided to cancel the midyear convention and other events. It was at this time that they shifted to virtual operations, conducting several teleconferences with key committees and seeking counsel from senior members.

In June, the new PUA website (www.puaweb.org) was launched, headed by Dr. Karl Tan. It will be a big help in boosting their operations. It will be instrumental in connecting with members in both local and international levels. It will serve as a catalyst to fast pace their goal of an independent and well-known organization.

The Men’s Health Committee headed by Dr. Raymond Cablitas, held a successful teleconsultation a day before “Father’s Day” despite the limited time. They are planning to host a larger event this coming September.

The Committee on Practice Guidelines headed by Dr. Art Castro produced the recommendations on dealing with the practice of urology during this pandemic. Several subspecialties adapted by making use of webinars to continue their educational courses. These were initiated by Dr. JV Prodigalidad, Dr. Godofredo Gasa and immediate past president, Dr. Sam Yrastorza.

Through the efforts of the executive council headed by Dr. Harry G. Longno, the pandemic was not a hindrance in learning new ideas. The association is now looking forward for the virtual annual convention in November as Dr. Patrick Tuliao and company are going the extra mile to make the event a success.

From the words of the PUA president “This health crisis is an example of the grave threats we will encounter in the future. This will be a test of how, we, as an organization can hold up... Only together can we make a positive impact on society and the world.”





**Philippine
College of Surgeons
Foundation, Inc.**



**Philippine
College of Surgeons**

PCS 2020

76th Annual Clinical Congress

December 6-9, 2020

ONLINE

**Surgery
Through the
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