



# Incisions

The Newsletter of the Philippine College of Surgeons

Volume 42 Number 2 • [secretariat@pcs.org.ph](mailto:secretariat@pcs.org.ph)/[www.pcs.org.ph](http://www.pcs.org.ph) • May - August 2022



OCCUPATION: Surgeon

JOB DESCRIPTION:

teacher | social worker | social  
adviser | life coach |  
dietician | life coach |  
advocate | PR officer |  
psychologist | PR officer |  
innovator | student |  
model | student

OTHER INTERESTS: parent

spouse | traveller |  
dreamer | writer |  
photographer |  
eater | drinker |  
sister | innovator | inventor |  
athlete | reader | philosopher |  
film buff | director |  
collector | connoisseur |  
pet owner |  
cyclist | observer | activist



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Incisions, the PCS Newsletter, is a triannual publication of the Philippine College of Surgeons, 992 EDSA, Quezon City 1005, Tel. No. 928-1083. Comments and feedback indicating the writer's full name, address, contact numbers and e-address are welcome. Letters to the editor may be edited for reasons of clarity and space. E-mail to pcs\_1936@yahoo.com.ph

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## On the Cover



LIFE OUTSIDE THE OR

Dr. Kathryn Cecille Umali-Gomez is currently practicing as a General and Laparoscopic Surgeon at the Medical City Clark and St. Catherine of Alexandria Foundation and Medical Center, Angeles City. She finished her residency training at Pasig City General Hospital - Mary Chiles General Hospital Consortium in 2015. She is a Diplomate of the Philippine Board of Surgery, a Fellow of the Philippine Society of General Surgeons (PSGS) and of the Philippine College of Surgeons (PCS). She is currently Chief of Surgery at Philippine Rehabilitation Institute and Medical Center (PRIMC), and a faculty member of the Department of Surgery at Angeles University Foundation School of Medicine.

Her interest in painting began as a child all through her college years, but went on hiatus during her medical training. Recently she has revisited both painting and digital art as a fruitful and portable hobby.



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



# 48<sup>TH</sup> MIDYEAR CONVENTION TAILORED APPROACHES TO SURGERY



**MAY 5-6, 2022 (ONLINE)**  
HOSTED BY: CENTRAL LUZON CHAPTER

Scan to Register



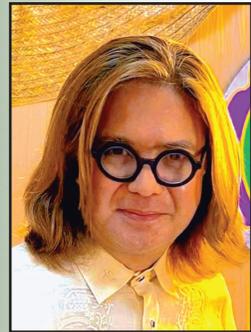
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(632) 8927 4973 to 74 / 8928 1083 / 8929 2359  
Email: [secretariat@pcs.org.ph](mailto:secretariat@pcs.org.ph)



# FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Marcus Jose B. Brillantes, MD, FPCS



## The PCS at 86

Eighty-six years ago, 34 physicians assembled on September 12, 1936 at the San Juan de Dios Hospital along Calle Real, Intramuros and took the courageous leap that was to forever change the landscape of surgery in our country. They were distinguished medical practitioners accomplished in their respective fields who recognized the need to establish a national organization that was to methodize and elevate the standards of surgery through fellowship in training surgeons, keeping abreast on current research and developing trends while promoting ethical practice in service of the Filipino.

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Gregorio C. Singian, a preeminent surgeon and professor from UST, who recommended the formation of what was to be and is now recognized as the Philippine College of Surgeons.

We give due honor to the 34 Charter Founders of our College. They all continued to further the aims of the PCS and contribute to the development of surgery in the country in the years that followed. A distinct number of them were also to assume the Presidency of the PCS in dedication to pursuing its aspirations and goals. Others among the founding members left lasting marks through their leadership in their own various institutions by maintaining the high standards set by the College in the development and training of aspirant surgeons. Many remained in their respective provinces and served as Chairs, Officers in their specialization societies, medical directors of provincial institutions and entered government service.

As we celebrate our 86th year, the PCS legacy remains, its traditions continue and the pursuit of excellence in surgery never ceases.

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

RAMOS S. INSO, MD, FPCS



As we approach the pivotal point of the transition period of the pandemic, the Philippine College of Surgeons has carefully shifted many of its activities from virtual to face to face already. This will pave the way for more options in the conduct of the activities and open opportunities again for the resumption of in-person societal interactions, befit of productive human existence. This is not to belittle what the virtual platform has done for us, and our organization, but in fact it has helped enhance our productivity.

So how is the PCS currently doing? Certainly, the PCS Team 2022 along with the PCS Foundation, has been very engaging and fast-tracking accomplishment of its national and relevant programs such as the following:

1. The conduct of educational workshops or webinars of the various committees, chapters and some specialty and affiliate societies. Many of these have been done online, some face to face while others in a hybrid format.
2. Both the Trauma Committee and the TIBCC have been occupied in conducting the ATLS and the BEST courses and is continuing to promote its advocacies on trauma and

injury prevention, emergency response and management through webinars, and in-person training. Additionally, the Trauma Committee, in cooperation with the Ad hoc Committee on LMS under the Committee on Surgical Education, has been tasked to initiate the effective utilization of the Learning Management System (LMS), undergo Moodle training as teachers/course creators and also as site administrators. They are also working on the Handbook on Burns for possible launching during the Foundation Day Celebration on September 12, 2022

3. As always, both the Committee on Surgical Education and the Committee on Conventions had been super busy in the preparation for and conduct of the midyear conventions and the much-awaited resumption of the face-to-face annual conventions. Meanwhile the CSE Subcommittee on Primary Care Surgery is in the process of revising its 4th Edition of the Primary Care Surgery Handbook and also entered into a memorandum of agreement with the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians to conduct workshops on Acute Wound Care in collaboration with the PCS SURE Commission.

4. The Committee on Research has made significant strides in the establishment of the PCS Research Center by coming up with a memorandum of agreement with partner healthcare institutions to be able to come up with the PCS ERB and by conducting Basic Research Ethics training among potential ERB members. The committee also is in the final stages of writing of the research paper on the Human Resource (Surgical Manpower) Study for presentation during the Annual Clinical Congress in December 2022.
5. The Ad hoc Committee on Universal Health Care had already hired the services of Dr Lam Hilton and is currently discussing with PhilHealth for the funding of the Study on “Cost Estimation of PhilHealth’s Case Rates and Determination of Cost-sharing Schemes”.
6. The Committee on Quality Assurance & Patient Safety coordinated with the other Specialty Societies, ORNAP and DOH for the Modification of the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist. The DOH eventually issued a circular to all hospitals nationwide for its adoption and compliance.
7. Being tasked to come up with more benefits for the PCS Fellows, the Committees on Finance, Membership and Fellows Assistance Plan (FAP), got the actuarial services of the Zalamea group and eventually arrived at a feasible, dynamic and a “bayanihan” type expanded fellows assistance plan which will be launched soon. This will entail very low contributions from the members per year to be able to avail of the additional benefits especially when going through health challenges.
8. With regards to the PCS SURE Commission’s Adopt-a-Hospital program, a memorandum of agreement had already been signed between the PCSF and the Our Lady of Peace Hospital in Paranaque, wherein the hospital shall be the venue for the focused specialty SURE activities like surgical missions and other charitable undertakings involving surgery.
9. In celebration of the 86th founding anniversary of the PCS, the PCS Board of Regents and the PCSF Board of Trustees, through the Committees on SURE, Finance, External Affairs and the PCS SURE Commission, have lined up activities with possible huge impact on the organization such as: the National Surgical Outreach day on September 5, 2022, which involves the numerous surgical subspecialties, affiliate societies, chapters, training institutions and other hospitals nationwide, doing simultaneous major surgeries on indigent patients. This is also in collaboration with the Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists and the ORNAP (Operating Room Nurses Association of the Philippines). The PCS SURE Commission has embarked on a fund-raising activity named Explore Art at the Pinto Art Museum starting September 11, 2022, which is an art exhibit, the proceeds of which, will help fund the outreach activities of the PCS SURE Commission.

These are just some of the initiatives of the PCS which could not have been possible without the efforts and cooperation of the heads and members of the Committees involved, the Regents in charge, Chapter and Specialty officers and most especially the general membership. Clearly, we are once again moving forward and in fact at a faster pace. On behalf of the Board of Regents I wish to my extend my sincere gratitude to all our members and also to all our partners for joining the PCS force on the road to normalcy. This definitely highlights the resilience and creativity the Philippine College of Surgeons is known for. So, has the PCS got up and gone full blast? I believe it has!

# ACROSS THE BOARD

Renato R. Montenegro, MD, FPCS



5th Board of Regents Meeting  
May 5, 2022, Meeting Room 1, Clark  
Marriott Hotel, Clark Free Port Zone

## Matters Arising from the Minutes of the previous board meeting

1. The following were discussed in relation to the DOH's request for the list of accreditation requirements and training curriculum
  - The request is more institution-based and has nothing to do with the specialty training; in any case, the College should be aware of whatever plans the DOH will pursue.
  - According to Sec. Duque, there should be one uniform examination given by non-accredited DOH hospitals for purposes of leveling the field
  - Currently, there are 4,000 vacancy positions in the DOH and PCS Fellows should be encouraged to apply for these plantilla positions
  - DOH specialists who are not boarded should be assisted by way of offering refresher courses, etc.
  - There is a need to implement Quality Surgery in the Philippines and the specialty divisions must address this concern with PCS as the lead organization
  - Suggest to consider these physicians as "Affiliate" as there is a lack of surgical specialists in the country
  - Currently, there is need to do measuring outcomes, both in big and small hospitals
  - Possibility of conducting a summit participated in by the stakeholders, i.e. DOH, surgical societies, etc.

### The Board APPROVED the following:

- a. To request the Committee on Membership to study the possibility of creating an "Affiliate Member" category where these non-boarded surgeons can apply
- b. Should this proposal be acceptable to the Committee on Membership, this will be forwarded to the Committee on By-laws and Amendments for

possible ratification as an additional membership category

- c. To request the Committee on Surgical Training to make recommendations regarding the output of the Surgical Manpower Study
  - d. Creation of an Adhoc Committee headed by Dr. ER Lahoz whose task is to study the inclusion of non-boarded surgeons in the PCS. Members include Regents Paulino, Ocampo, Madrigal and Aquino.
2. President's Update
    - a. Adhoc Committee on UHC – study on "Cost Estimation of PhilHealth's Case Rates and Determination of Cost-sharing Schemes"
      - MOA signing with Dr. Hilton Lam, Project Leader, last April 18
      - Acknowledgement of required documents submitted to DOST-PCHRD
    - b. DOH-TWG on Rules & Regulations Governing the Licensure & Regulation of Ambulatory Surgical Clinics c/o Dr. RA Madrigal. The draft will be presented in a succeeding meeting. Initial suggestions include:
      - a. ASC required only in tertiary hospitals
      - b. can do base surgery, e.g. laparoscopic cholecystectomy
      - c. suggest to have leveling of surgical clinics
    - c. LMS Courses by the specialty societies
      - a. Dr. O. Ocampo proposed that the LMS be offered also to the surgical specialties.
      - b. He initially mentioned that BEST be made a requirement for physicians who are into Trauma care. The BEST program will be among the LMS Courses offered.
  3. Surgical Infections
    - a. The results of the Anti-microbial Stewardship Program will be presented during the annual clinical congress or by next year.

- b. Dr. Esther A. Saguil, Chair, submitted a letter requesting for a leave of absence. Dr. Miguel Gary Galvez will be the acting Chair for the meantime.

#### 4. Quality Assurance & Patient Safety

- a. Letters will be sent out to the PHA, PHAP and sub-specialty societies offering the topic on the results of the Modified WHO Surgical Safety Checklist for presentation during their respective conventions.
- b. The Board suggested that during presentation, the last slide should show the College's programs.
- c. E-claims data – for follow up from Dr. Alvin B. Marcelo

#### 5. Treasurer's Report

Dr. Villaflor had earlier presented the Treasurer's Report during the Business Meeting.

Update:

Investments made in feeder programs:

- Php12M – with A-Tran last May 1
- Php8M – with FWD last April 30

#### 6. Board of Governors

The Governors met last April 28; Dr. Inso and Dr. Vesagas also attended in order to present the amendments to some provisions of the PCSF Articles of Incorporation.

The following concerns were discussed:

- a. Webinars: Overlapping schedule of webinars conducted by the sub-specialty, affiliate societies, and PCS Chapters was mentioned. A suggestion was raised creating a calendar of webinar activities.
- b. To include the Presidents of the affiliate societies in the BOG's viber group for the purpose of coordinating/monitoring the schedule of webinars

Board Action:

- a. The Board Secretary will issue a Memorandum to all subspecialty and affiliate societies for them to submit their scheduled webinars to the Sub-committee on Webinars for proper coordination in order to avoid overlapping.
- b. To task the Committee on CSE to formulate the mechanics in accrediting these webinars
- c. Once the webinar is approved, a Webinar Number will be issued to the Society to indicate that it is PCS-accredited webinar

### Committee Reports

#### 7. Trauma Committee

##### a. Brochure on BURNS

- The Sub-committee on Burns will gather quotations for the printing of the Brochure
- The Board has given the go signal for the printing of the same
- Exploratory talks with possible sponsors can be conducted.
- The committee was instructed to formulate guidelines for sponsorship of similar materials

#### 8. Surgical Education

##### a. Conventions

- Unofficial count of registrants = 1,110
- Paid registrants = 983
- Past President, Senior Fellows = 127

##### b. CSE

- Dr. Lahoz proposed that a uniform (e.g. barong material which is cooler to the body) be worn by the members of the Committees on Convention, CSE and Sub-committee on MYC during the conventions.

### Other Matters

#### 9. ERB

- To create a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the future members of the Ethics Review Board as reference.

#### 10. Asguards Security Agency

- The PCS Building Committee is waiting for the legal opinion on our contract with the security agency. The existing contract does not include: vacation leaves, sick leaves and night differentials; only overtime is given.
- If the College was to follow the prescribed government payment, this will be an increase from Php23K to Php34K/month.

**6th Board of Regents Meeting  
June 11, 2022  
GT Singian Board Room, PCS Building**

### Matters Arising from the Minutes

- The Adhoc Committee to study the inclusion of non-boarded surgeons in the PCS will be referred to as the **Adhoc Committee on Specialty Issues on**

**Membership.** Additional members: Dr. R. Bandolon (BOG Chair) and Dr. R. B. Dofitas

President’s Update

- PhilHealth QAC meeting – May 25, 2022: Dr. Inso updated the Regents that one of the matters discussed was about acute infectious diarrhea. He suggested considering the possibility of surgical conditions as part of the differential diagnosis
- MOU Signing with the PAFP – May 31, 2022: The ceremonies was attended by some of the PAFP officials, Regents, Dr. AP De Dios, Chair, Com. On CSE and Dr. Andrei Abella, Chair, Sub-com. On Primary Care Surgery.
- Ad-hoc Committee on UHC– June 6, 2022: Update on the “Cost Estimation of Medical Services and Professional Fees” : All the requirements have been submitted to the office of Undersecretary Sancho A. Maborang, Undersecretary for Regional Operations, DOST for evaluation.
- Participation of ad hoc committee on UHC – 78th Annual Clinical Congress will be a topic on “the UHC in medical practice in the Philippines”
- Participation – 49th Midyear Convention; Theme: “Defining Surgical Practice in the Era of UHC” Speaker: Enrique T. Ona, MD
- Nominees to the National Practice Guidelines Program-QRP include: Drs Joy G. Jerusalem, MD, Alfred Phillip O. De Dios, MD, Rodney B. Dofitas, MD
- As recommended by the PCS President, the Board APPROVED recommending Dr. Teodoro J. Herbosa as possible Secretary of the Department of Health. A letter of recommendation will be sent to the Office of President-elect Ferdinand Marcos, Jr

Treasurer’s Report

SUMMARY (month of May)

Stock Market Long Term Investment		
Peso	27,385,503.68	25.14%
Dollar (\$103,230.99)	5,128,362.81	4.71%
Bank Long Term Investment		
Peso	17,071,341.51	15.67%
Bank Short Term Investment		
Peso	40,087,289.24	36.80%
Cash in Bank		
Peso	14,915,287.98	13.69%
Dollar (\$82,641.77)	4,334,562.84	3.98%
Total	108,922,348.06	100.00%

RESTRICTED FUNDS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2021 (AUDITED)

FELLOWS INSURANCE PLAN	29,530,845.00
RETIREMENT FUND	7,345,217.00
SURGICAL INFECTION	575,175.00
FELLOWS SCHOLARSHIP	120,897.00
	<hr/>
	37,572,134.00

Committee Reports

Finance Committee

- New PCS Investments: April 22, 2022- Prominence Max – Peso Global (with Insular Life Assurance Company Ltd.) - Php12M; May 04, 2022- (with FWD Insurance)-Php8M
- The Zalamea Actuarial Study shows the feasibility of pushing through with the expanded FAP

PCS Building Committee

- The Committee recommends deleting the provision on “Parking Slot” for tenants whose contracts are for renewal in anticipation of parking requirements for future tenants
- Mercury Drug Corporation has withdrawn its plan to occupy the 200 sqm area at the ground floor of the PCS Bldg
- The expenses for the various repairs and maintainance in the bldg will come from its Budget which is 10% of the annual rental income equivalent to Php824,576.64. Refill of 28 cylinders of fire extinguisher at Php450. Total expense is Php12,600.00
- To re-layout the BOR group pictures at the 3/F corridor to 2 levels

Internal Audit

The Board noted the audited report and suggested the following:

- To include as Assets the PCS lot and Building
- To verify the status of the cheques that were labeled as “stale”
- To identify Accounts Receivable (“Others”), instead, as “Asset”
- Account opening (savings account) – Php100K with Union Bank for the mandatory online payment of PAG IBIG Fund

Committee on Conventions

- 48th Midyear Convention Post-Evaluation: The Committee made suggestions regarding the conduct of the convention, including the pre-convention activities, i.e. sports activities, food crawl and welcome dinner

- The College will communicate with Marriott Hotel Clark particularly on the technical glitch which occurred during the Opening Ceremonies of the MYC

Finance

- Issues raised regarding the Online Registration
  - To discuss with DragonPay various concerns regarding the payment
  - To create another online registration form for Residents
  - The need for a cut-off date in order to confirm payments received (a week) with DragonPay in order to reconcile payments
  - To input the PRC numbers of the Fellows in the system so that his/her data will automatically appear

Certificate of Attendance

- Total number of attendees: 1,286
- Only 700 + attended the online sessions
- The Certificate of Attendance will be issued to all registered delegates. As the report of attendance to sessions will only be numerical figures and not names, there will be no way of confirming the attendance of each delegate

Finance Committee

- The Board **APPROVED** the proposed Registration Fees, which is the same fees in 2019

Schedule of Payments:

1) Advance Registration	Starts on October 3 to November 4
2) Regular Registration	November 5 to November 19 (payment accepted thru bank or on-site)
3) Online Payment	Up to November 20

Sponsorship Packages

The Committee is recommending the same Sponsorship Packages, similar to the 2019 rates as follows:

<b>1. Educational Grant I - Php500,000.</b>
<i>Inclusions:</i>
*Royalty Fee
*Lunch symposium – sponsor’s choice of topic (inclusive of plated for 100 pax)
*Learning Station (formerly exhibit booth)

<b>2. Educational Grant II - Php557,500.</b>
<i>Inclusions:</i>
*Royalty Fee
*Lunch symposium – sponsor’s choice of topic (inclusive of plated for 100 pax)
<b>*Learning Station (Prime Area)</b>

<b>3. Educational Grant III - Php645,000.</b>
<i>Inclusions:</i>
*Royalty Fee
*Lunch symposium – sponsor’s choice of topic (inclusive of plated for 100 pax)
CME Learning Center (formerly Hospitality Suite)

<b>4. Educational Grant IV - Php780,000.</b>
<i>Inclusions:</i>
*Royalty Fee
*Lunch symposium - sponsor’s choice of topic (inclusive of plated for 100 pax)
*2 Learning Stations

<b>5. Educational Grant V – Php855,000. (Php854,851.50)</b>
*Royalty Fee
*Lunch symposium on a topic of company’s choice (inclusive of plated lunch for 100 pax)
Learning stations located at the Recessed Area fronting the Isla Grand Ballroom

- 6. Learning Stations (2m x 2m) – 48 spaces @Php90K**
- 7. Learning Stations at Lubang (2m x 2m) – 8 spaces @Php45K (Day 3 & 4 only)**
- 8. Learning Centers – 7 centers (exclusive of snacks) - @Php225K**
- 9. Spaces (in front of Registration area) – 3 spaces @150K**
- 10. Sulu Foyer – 3 spaces @Php200K (Prime Area)\***
- 11. Recessed Area (in front of Isla Ballroom) - 3 spaces @Php200K (Prime area)\***
- 12. E’s Bar spaces (2m x 3m) – 6 spaces @Php175K (before entering the Marquee Tent – ADDITIONAL SPACES**
- \*Additional Php50K**

79th Annual Clinical Congress – December 3-6, 2023  
Proposed Venue:

- a) Grand Hyatt
- b) Sofitel Philippine Plaza
- c) PICC
- d) Edsa Shangri-la Manila

Since Edsa Shangri-la Hotel is yet to submit their proposal by mid-June 2022, the Committee deferred submitting its recommendation.

## Other Matters

- GT Singian Memorial Lecturer:  
  
Dr. Domingo Alvear, pediatric surgeon and founder of the World Surgical Foundation was recommended by Dr. RS Inso as this year's GTS Memorial Lecturer. At the same time, Dr. Alvear is being recommended conferment of Honorary Fellowship.

## CSE Committee

- 78th Annual Clinical Congress; December 4-7, 2022; Edsa Shangri-la Hotel
- Speaker: Jaymie Ang Henry, MD (Replacement for Professor Veronique Tan)  
Global Alliance for Surgical, Obstetric, Trauma, and Anaesthesia Care (G4 Alliance)  
International Standards and Guidelines for Quality Safe Surgery and Anesthesia  
Topic: "A New Era in Global Surgery Access Hand in Hand with Quality and Safety"  
49th Midyear Convention; May 4-5, 2023; SMX Convention Center, Davao
- Additional Members to the Sub-committee:  
Shalimar C. Cortez, MD - host chapter representative  
Raymond Joseph R. Manzo, MD

## 79th Annual Clinical Congress - December 2023

- The Board APPROVED the theme: Collaborations and Innovations in the Era of Global Surgery  
Suggested list of foreign speakers
  - Manish Chand - Colorectal Surgeon (London)
  - Sam Atallah - Colorectal Surgeon (Orlando Florida USA)
  - Ava Kwong – Breast Surgeon (Hong Kong)
  - Gustavo Zucca-Matthes – Breast Surgeon (Brazil)
  - Jean-Claude Schwartz – Oncoplastic Breast Surgeon (USA)
  - Jatin Shah— Head and Neck Surgeon (New York, USA)

## 78th Annual Clinical Congress; December 4-7, 2022; Edsa Shangri-la Hotel, Mandaluyong City; Theme: Quality Surgery For All

- An updated list of speakers is contained in the succeeding 7th Board Meeting proceedings.

## Sub-committee on Primary Care Surgery

- A webinar will be scheduled on the topic Thyroid Cancer Guidelines, based on the preferred date of the PAFP

## Membership

- In order for the Committee to study the possibility of creating the Affiliate Member category, the Board APPROVED the following recommendations:
  - To retrieve the 2015 guidelines on the creation of Associate Fellow
  - To request for the POGS guidelines regarding their Associate Member category
  - Differentiate the benefits and obligations of Fellows vs Associate members

## 2022 Application for Fellowship

- The Board APPROVED extending the deadline for Fellowship application from June 15, 2022 to JULY 31, 2022 in order to accommodate more applicants.

## Other Matters

- Letters Received:
  - 3rd International Symposium – December 1-2, 2022: The College received a letter from Dr. Ronnie Cacas, President, Philippine Association of Hepatopancreato Biliary Surgeons requesting that their 3rd International Symposium scheduled on December 1-2, 2022 be considered as a pre-convention event of the PCS' 78th Annual Clinical Congress. This was approved by the Board.  
\* December 2, 2022; 8am-5pm – Biliary Surgery in Focus
  - NOTES: A letter from Dr. Catherine Teh, Project Lead for the Non-technical Skills for Surgeons was received expressing her interest in conducting a workshop during the forthcoming PCS 78th Annual Clinical Congress. The workshop will be facilitated by Prof. Simon Paterson Brown who heads the NOTSS program of the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh and by Dr. Teh.

## The workshop has two (2) parts:

1. Training the trainers workshop where 10 trainers who have been invited will be trained for a half-day session preferably before the 1st day of the PCS ACC 2022
2. A full day open workshop for all those interested which will be held after training the trainers workshop where the trainers will sit in as observers. There will be limited seats of up to 20 participants (free of charge). This will be held on the last day of the ACC.

**7th Board of Regents Meeting  
July 9, 2022 9:00 a.m.  
via Zoom Platform**

Matters Arising from the Minutes:  
Administrative Concerns

The retirement of the Executive Secretary and Assistant Executive Secretary was discussed and the following related issues were agreed upon:

1. Dr. Jose Ravelo T. Bartolome will draft the structural chart for both the PCS and PCSF
2. To conduct a BOR summit to further discuss the restructuring of the College and the PCS Foundation
3. To hire the services of an Executive Director

President's Update:

1. The officers of the College attended the Ceremonial signing and operational workshop on the Espesyalista Para Sa Bayan Program conducted June 20 to 22, 2022 at Seda Vertis North, Quezon City. This was attended by Sec. Francisco Duque, Dr. Hector M. Santos, Jr. representing the PMA, representatives from the surgical specialty societies. The College was duly recognized. Dr. Espineda attended the workshop and was able to share the PCS-SPSA program.
2. Consultative Meeting with DOH/WHO – Re: Manual of Operations, Procedures and Standards for Organized Cancer Screening in the Philippines – June 27, 2022 & July 4, 2022. PSCRS President, Dr. Carlo Cajucom attended the June 27 meeting which focused on the MOPS for Colorectal Cancer. PSGS President, Dr. Jorge M. Concepcion together with the PSGS Breast Study Group attended the July 4 meeting.
3. DOH-HFSRB-SDD – 2nd ASC TWG Meeting, July 4. was attended by Dr Madrigal. The guidelines for setting up Ambulatory Surgical Clinics are being created.
4. An update on the study, “Cost-estimation of Medical Services and Professional Fees in the Philippines” was given. The PCHRD-DOST has recently issued the Research & Development certificate last June 17, 2022 recognizing the research study.

Treasurer's Report

Dr. Villafior reported on the following:

JUNE SUMMARY:

Stock Market Long Term Investment		
Peso	25,682,334.65	23.83%
Dollar (\$103,230.99)	5,214,282.89	4.84%
Bank Long Term Investment		
Peso	17,071,341.51	15.84%
Bank Short Term Investment		
Peso	40,094,857.40	37.20%
Cash in Bank		
Peso	15,168,452.61	14.07%
Dollar (\$82,650.03)	4,544,098.65	4.22%
-----		
Total	107,775,367.71	100.00%
=====		

RESTRICTED FUNDS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2021  
(AUDITED)

FELLOWS INSURANCE PLAN	29,530,845.00
RETIREMENT FUND	7,345,217.00
SURGICAL INFECTION	575,175.00
FELLOWS SCHOLARSHIP	120,897.00
-----	
	37,572,134.00

Committee Reports

Cluster E – Socio-economic Matters

Finance Committee:

- The Committees on Finance, FAP and Membership are currently formulating the guidelines for the expanded FAP
- The existing Fellows Assistance Plan (FAP) will continue separate from the expanded FAP
- The Expanded Fellows Assistance Plan will be launched during the 86th Foundation Day dinner on September 12, 2022

PCS Building

- The 200 sq. m office space located at the ground floor is still vacant. Aventus is currently evaluating whether they will rent said office space.
- Engr. Joy Cabaneros inspected the PCS Building's structural condition and noted several minor leaks from the ceiling. These will be addressed.

## Hospital Standardization & Accreditation

- The draft of the PCS Guidelines on Confidentiality and Privacy of Health Information is currently being reviewed by the committee
- Participation during the 78th Annual Clinical Congress will be a Panel Discussion on Ambulatory Surgery. The proposed speaker is Atty. Nicolas B. Lutero III (Director IV, Health Facilities and Services Regulatory Bureau, DOH)
- Panel Discussion on Guidelines on Confidentiality and Privacy of Health Information; December 6, 2022. Proposed Speaker is Atty. Ivy D. Patdu, MD (former Deputy Commissioner of the National Privacy Commission)

## Cluster A – National Programs

### Committee on HMO/RVS

- An update on the Unified Service Agreement (USA) between PCS and AHMOPI & PAHMOC was given taking note of the low turn out in signatures.
- To address the above problem, a desk will be provided during the PSGS Surgical Forum and PCS 78th Annual Clinical Congress for the Fellows to accomplish the AHMOPI and PAHMOC Information Sheets and USAs.
- The target by the end of the year is to have at least 900 Fellow sign the USA.

### Trauma Committee

- The participation during the 78th Annual Clinical Congress will be a session entitled, “IMPROVING TRAUMA CARE THROUGH FELLOWSHIP TRAINING AND SHARING EXPERIENCE”
- The proposed topics for the 49th Mid-Year Session on May 4-5, 2023: “Why the Need for the Universal Health Care” and “Trauma Surgery and UHC”
- Educational Workshops:  
ATLS: July 1-3, 2022 at the Cotabato Regional and Medical Center, Cotabato City, 19 participants (F2F); July 29-31, 2022, PCS Bldg. 20 participants Webinar last July 5, 2022 , Title: “Including the Environment in Emergency Response-Why and How?” Number of attendees - 231  
Asian Collaboration for Trauma (ACT) Webinar on July 20, 2022; Topic: Living on the Fast Lane... Beating the Golden Hour...Racing to Save Lives

### Trauma Commission

- Hospital Care Cluster : Proposal on the Development of the PCS Trauma Registry System was presented

- Disaster Risk Reduction Cluster: TIBCC 3rd Quarter Webinar – Lecture - July 5, 2022 (Tuesday) at 5:00 – 7:00 PM via Zoom platform
  - Lecture: “Including the Environment in Emergency Response - Why and How?”
  - Speaker: Richard G.R. Mitchener BSc (Hons) MSc PhD AMICE FGS CGeol EurGeol

### Learning Management System (LMS)

The Board congratulated the LMS Committee for preparing an overview of the PCS Educational Hub, which included a brief history, the Organizational Structure and Functions, and the Implementation.

The following were APPROVED:

1. Governance: PCS Board of Regents
2. Operations: LMS Committee
3. Managers: Representatives from Societies & Committees
4. Administrators: Warren M. Roraldo, MD & Alvin Jalimao (PCS IT)
5. Official Background

### Cancer Committee

- Participation during the 49th Midyear Convention will be a topic on Cancer Screening Program. The speakers will come from the PCS-Davao Southern Mindanao Chapter
- The Board approved the revision of the cancer brochures and the Cancer Summit for 2023

### Cancer Commission

- The following resolutions were approved by the PCS CanCom BODs during their meeting held last June 3, 2022:

The terms of the board of directors and the official fiscal year of the PCS CanCom will begin on March 1 each year, and end on February 28 of the succeeding year, primarily for the BOD to focus on the National Cancer Summit held each February.

The position of Program Manager has been renamed to Executive Director, with all the duties and responsibilities of such office. An Executive Director has already been selected, by the name of Constance Eleanor Pico, and she is expected to start work in 2 weeks.

For the PCS CanCom to be more inclusive and representative of various stakeholders in the battle

against cancer, 6 additional Board Seats have been created, increasing the current BOD seats to 15.

#### SURE & Community Services

- SURE Commission meeting with PSA: June 3, 2022. The Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists' commitment and full support to the SPSA-PCS Scholarship Program was reiterated. Their graduates will work in tandem with the GS Scholar
- Surgical Outreach Activities: June 25, 2022 – in collaboration with Makati Medical Center and Toyota Foundations at Our Lady of Peace Mission Hospital, Paranaque; Sorsogon: Aug 30-Sept 4, 2022; Tarlac: October 2022; Isabela: November 2022-08-25
- Ceremonial signing of MOA (PCS -WSFP - OLPH) last June 25, 2022
- Mangatarem Provincial Hospital : MOA being drafted
- Donations from the A.Y. Foundation through the PCS Foundation:
  - 4 anesthesia machines
  - 3 Cautery machines
  - 25 hospital beds
  - supplies
- Fund Raising (Explore Art)
  - Opening Ceremonies on September 11, 2022, at 4PM
  - Venue: Academy Hall, Pinto Museum in Antipolo by Dr. Joven Cuanang
  - Committed artists:
  - 10 artists from Pinto Art Museum and Alitaptap group of artists (20 artists)
  - Tacloban Group – through Mr. Jojo Pinto

#### Surgical Infections

- CSI and CSR Multicenter Research Project title: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Surgical Trainees and Trainers with regard to Certain Aspects of Recommended SSI Prevention Protocols
- Webinar: Appendicitis: “To Cut or not to Cut” in cooperation with PSGS and PSPS July 16, 2022; Platform: Docquity; Speakers: Josefina R. Almonte, MD (Non-Operative Management); Jose Modesto B. Abellera III, MD (Operative Management); General Surgeons: Leonardo O. Ona III, MD, FPCS (Operative Management), Joseph Roy F. Fuentes, MD, FPCS (Non-Operative)

#### Conventions Committee

- 78th Annual Clinical Congress – December 4-7, 2022; Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City; Theme: Quality Surgery For All
- Review of scientific program – (refer to the CSE report)

- Fellowship Night – December 4 (Sunday); Theme: The Zoom Party Live
- 49th Midyear Convention – May 4-5, 2023; SMX Convention Center, Davao City, Theme: Surgery and Universal Health Care
- 79th Annual Clinical Congress – December 3-6, 2023 , Theme: Collaborations and Innovations in the Era of Global Surgery

#### Committee on Continuing Surgical Education

- The Sub-committee on Webinars was tasked with the streamlining of all webinars under the College to avoid overlapping of schedule and topics
- 50th Midyear Convention - May 2024. The Board approved the appointment of Maria Cheryl L. Cucueco, MD, FPCS as Sub-Committee Chair
- 80th Annual Clinical Congress – December 2024 Sub-Committee Chairman: Ferdinand Y. Syfu, MD, FPCS
- 8th Annual Clinical Congress- December 4-7, 2022; Edsa Shangri-la

#### VIRTUAL LIVE LECTURES:

No.	SPEAKER	TOPIC
1	Charles M. Vollmer, MD (USA)	For PAHPBSI: Post-op Pancreatic Fistula
2	Jaymie Ang Henry, MD	A New Era in Global Surgery: Access Hand in Hand with Quality and Safety
3	Ian S. Soriano, MD, FPCS Honorary	For PALES: Global Directions in Achieving Competency in MIS Education
4	Prof Sir Alfred Cuschieri (UK)	A Leaf from High Tech Industry – Quality Management System for Optimal Surgical Practice
5	Clifford Y. Ko, MD (USA)	1. Quality Improvement in Colorectal Surgery
6	Clifford Y. Ko, MD (USA)	2. Defining Quality in Surgery
7	Thomas G. Weiser, MD (USA)	1. Lifebox - Improving Surgical and Anesthetic Safety Worldwide
8	Thomas G. Weiser, MD (USA)	2. Clean Cut - A Program of Surgical Infection Reduction

**FACE-TO-FACE LECTURES:**

1.	Adnan Alseidi, MD (USA)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For The Clinical Part: The Difficult Gallbladder: Where the Critical View of Safety Becomes a Zone of Danger</li> <li>For PAHPBSI: Mis Liver Surgery: Team-Based Hemorrhage Control &amp; When and How to Convert Safety</li> <li>For Surgical Education: The Challenging Landscape of Pyschomotor Training: Dynamic Learning Curves and AI</li> </ol>
2.	Henry A. Pitt, MD (USA)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For PAHPBSI: Preventing Post Pancreatectomy Infections</li> <li>Plenary: Optimal HPB Surgery</li> <li>Neoadjuvant Therapy for Pancreatic Cancer</li> </ol>
3.	Simon Paterson Brown, MD (UK)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sub-Specialization in Emergency General Surgery</li> <li>The Role of Non-Technical Skills in Surgical Performance</li> <li>For Surgical Leadership: Improving Teamwork in Peri-Operative Care</li> <li>NOTSS Training the Trainers</li> </ol>
4.	Professor Kotaro Yoshimura, MD (Japan)	For PAPRAS: Fat Grafting for the Breast Augmentation, Reconstruction and Revitalization
5.	Prof. Kim Hyung-Ho (Korea)	For PSGS: Managing Complications After Gastrectomy

**Surgical Research**

- Participation - 78th Annual Clinical Congress: Champion of Champions Surgical Research Contest  
Chair: Beverlee Verona L. Mante, MD, FPCS
- Day 2: Dec 5, 2022, National Surgery and Anesthesia Human Health Resource Study; Speakers: Chapter representatives; Moderator: Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, MD, FPCS; Chair: Rodney B. Dofitas, MD, FPCS
- The successful conduct of the ERB Workshop for Research Ethics was noted: (Part 1) ERB Workshop last June 25, 2022. The subsequent activities are as follows:
  - Step1. Convene ERB working group
  - Step2. Invite potential members
  - Step 3. Identify Partner Hospitals with signing of MOA
  - Step 4. Hire a Research Administrative staff
  - Step 5. Creation of SOPs – ready by Nov.-Dec.
- Endorsement of the PSGS research on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on residents’ caseloads for possible PCSF funding.

**Surgical Training**

- The Board APPROVED the Committee’s recommendation of posting on the website the video

recording of the webinar on the ABCs of a Case Report provided that the Committee obtain the consent from the faculty

- Presentation of Interesting Case during the 78th PCS Annual Clinical Congress
- Participation – 49th Midyear Convention: “The Impact of Universal Health Care on Surgical Training”

**Ethics & Judicial Matters**

- Participation during the 78th Annual Clinical Congress will be a Panel discussion on “Ethics in Quality Improvement in Healthcare”

**Council of Surgical Specialty Boards of the Philippines**

- The CSSBP will be participating during the forthcoming Annual Clinical Congress on the topic: “RE-CERTIFICATION”. Speaker: Larry S. King, MD (Board Secretary, Philippine Board of Anesthesiology)
- In connection with the creation of newly organized specialty boards, the Council is tasked to formulate guidelines, which would address various concerns (criteria for establishing specialty board exams, accredited training programs, curriculum, examiners, etc.).

**Membership Committee**

- Appointment of Drs. Chris Ryan Cruz and Manolete R. Roque to the Committee
- Conferment of Honorary Fellowship to Dr. Domingo T. Alvear during the 78th ACC
- Summary of applicants for Fellowship:

1	Simplified	15
2	Regular	36
	TOTAL	51 as of meeting time

**Administrative Concerns**

**Newly hired employees:**

- Ms. Carmelita Aldas (PCS Plantilla, External Affairs & Public Relations, Cancer, Surgical Infections, PJSS)
- Ms. Sherryl H Geronimo (PCS Plantilla, Membership, Surgical Training, HMO, SICT)
- Ms. Romagayle Marquez (PCSF Plantilla, Surgical Research, Trauma, Patient Safety & Quality Assurance, Hospital Standardization & Accreditation)
- Ms. Krystine Elyzabeth Santiago (PCSF Plantilla, SURE Commission, TIBCC)

## External Affairs & Public Relations

- “Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko” memorandum of agreement is still to be finalized
- Manila Broadcasting Network (DZRH): No update from Mr. Cesar Chavez VP, regarding the status of the College’s radio program “Ang Galing Mo Doc”.
- PCS 86th Foundation Day Celebration Activities/ Program:
  1. A Surgical Outreach Program will be conducted on September 5-9, 2022 in collaboration with Chapters, Sub-specialties other Organizations like ORNAP, POGS, PAFP, PPS and PCP. The proposal is to do one specialty procedure per day and document this through video like Zoom
  2. Art for a Cause: The Art Exhibit will be held on September 11, 2022, 5pm at the Pinto Art Museum, Antipolo City
  3. Holy Mass at Veterans Memorial Medical Center Chapel on the morning of September 11, 2022 with Father Paredes officiating
  4. Foundation Day Dinner on September 12, 2022 (Monday) 7pm at EDSA Shangri-la Hotel
  5. Updating of the PCS History (AVP) – c/o Committee On Publications
  6. Awards Committee announcement and awarding of winners for the following categories:
    - Legends of the Knife
    - Lifetime Achievements Award
    - Community Service Award
    - Outstanding Resident Award

## Publications Committee

- PCS Incisions/Newsletter (2nd Issue) is being finalized
- 86th Foundation Day AVP
  - Currently collecting materials
  - Sub-Specialty Society BOD photos and new logos (if any)
  - photos and videos of 2022 PCS National/ Chapter/Specialty Society activities
  - Deadline for Submission of Materials: August 19, 2022 (Friday)
- Planned Committee Activities
  - Editing / Technical Layout Workshop (Still looking for resource speaker)
  - Writing Workshop with speaker Ms. Isa Garcia
- PJSS: The January-June 2022 issue of the PJSS is forthcoming in compliance with the accreditation requirements of Index Medicus.

## Patient Safety & Quality Assurance

- The Committee is reviewing the final draft of the “Update on the COVID-19 Risk Stratification and Screening Algorithm for Patients Undergoing Elective Major Surgical Procedures” in preparation for its presentation during the PSGS Surgical Forum
- PSGS Surgical Forum – August 5, 2022; 3-4 pm; Edsa Shangri-La Hotel; Topic: Update on the COVID-19 Risk Stratification and Screening Algorithm for Patients Undergoing Elective Major Surgical Procedures
  - Speaker: Albertson R. Gumarao, MD
  - Moderator: Gaudencio I. Abratique, MD
- Presentation of the PCS Modified WHO Surgical Safety Checklist during the ORNAP convention last July 2, 2022
- An update regarding the status of the implementation of the Modified WHO Surgical Safety Checklist especially among nurses will be requested from the ORNAP
- Participation - 78th Annual Clinical Congress - Topic: “Forum on Patient Safety Incidents”
- Cine Clinics: Laparoscopic Surgery video on Zero CBD Injury by Alfred Allen Buenafe

## Other Matters

1. Conduct of BOR elections – On-site (during the 78th ACC) and on-line
  - a) Schedule – on-site (Lubang Room):
    - December 4 (Sunday) – 1pm-3pm
    - December 5 (Monday) – 8am-3pm
    - December 6 (Tuesday) – 8am-12 nn
  - b) Schedule – online: December 4 (Sunday) 1pm up to December 6 (Tuesday) 12 Noon
2. The Application to PCS as Affiliate Society has been approved for the following
  - a) Philippine Surgical Infection Society
  - b) Philippine Wound Care Society

These Societies will be issued a Plaque in recognition of their affiliation; their flags will be displayed during the ACC and their Presidents will be included with the stage party and recognized during the Opening Ceremonies on December 4, 2022.

# COVID ENDGAME: Enter Endemic Phase

• Marcus Jose B. Brillantes, MD, FPCS, FPSGS •



COVID-19 has now raged worldwide for more than 2 years with a total of 527,971,809 cases reported and 6,284,871 deaths recorded (Johns Hopkins University, CSSE) since the beginning of the pandemic. In review, two years into the pandemic: from virology and epidemiology to therapy, vaccination, and policy, the vital role of the vaccines is firmly established as the most essential element in halting the spread of the coronavirus.

The commendable vaccination rate in our country implemented by the National Task Force Against COVID-19 has contributed to the containment of hospitalizations and preventing deaths in the populations affected by COVID-19. About 71 million Filipinos are fully vaccinated against the corona virus, 15.3 million have received one booster dose while over 945,000 have had their second booster shot. To date, the country remains under low-risk classification for COVID-19 despite the slight uptick of cases as the healthcare utilization rate remains less than 50%.

The COVID-19 situation in the Philippines is moving steadily toward the endemic phase as reported by an Infectious Disease expert from the Philippine General Hospital last July. And though the WHO has yet to declare that COVID has plateaued to the endemic phase, it is observed that Europe and the United States are starting to adopt policies as if this level has already been achieved: the virus is acknowledged as widespread, is significantly less fatal than it was in 2020, and is barely affecting public behavioral changes. These perceived endemic conditions are likely to continue through the year, unless immunity-evading, vaccine-resistant new variants emerge. The burden of severe disease currently remains low in Europe due to the lower average severity of the Omicron sub-variants and high levels of partial immunity.

The pandemic has affected surgical education and training in our country to a significant degree. The main impact to surgical residency training has been the overall reduction in the number of patients with its consequent decrease in operative cases and the conversion of face-to-face conferences into virtual meetings. Assessment of surgical candidates for Diplomate through written & oral examinations by the Philippine Board of Surgery was initially postponed at the peak of the

pandemic, with resumption the following year 2021 in a face-to-face format after acceptable COVID protocol adjustments were carried out. Hospital accreditation of surgery training programs via actual physical visitations by the PSGS were resumed only last March 2022. The transformation of CME events into web-based formats have resulted to better connectivity with an increase number of participants. But the difficulties encountered with virtual format in surgical education have brought about several novel challenges. In a post-COVID world scenario however, the model of blended learning is likely to remain.

Countries are now adopting and adjusting strategies in order to manage endemic disease. Many communities across the globe are beginning to be more at ease in living alongside COVID-19. As of August 2022, China is the only country bent in pursuing a Zero-COVID-19 strategy.

A new study from Yale published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) Nexus last July 2022 surmised that the endemic phase of COVID may be within reach in about two years. To better understand and predict the when and how COVID-19 could become endemic, researchers at Yale conducted studies on likewise coronavirus-susceptible mammals like rats. Through the collection and analysis of data on the viral reinfection rates among rodents, the investigators were able to develop a model of the potential trajectory of COVID-19 toward endemicity by 2024.

Public-health authorities around the world are considering short- and medium-term strategies for the timing and rollout of booster shots. A number of experts are recommending a fourth dose for the subset group considered at highest risk for severe disease, given recent studies highlighting the additional benefit provided.

It is difficult to estimate if and when a deadly new variant of SARS-CoV-2 will emerge. For this reason, the ongoing global rollout of COVID-19 vaccines are important to ensure the safety of the general population as well as imperative to protect individuals considered highest at risk. At this point however, the pandemic stage appears to be approaching a conclusion.

## COLLEGE NEWS

# PCS Fellowship Simplified

• Joselito M. Mendoza, MD, FPCS •

Membership to any prestigious medical or surgical organization involves the tedious task of gathering multiple certified documents from past trainings.

As a result, medical professionals continue to be dissuaded from completing their respective applications. So much is true in the situation of most Specialty Society Fellows under the umbrella of the Philippine College of Surgeons (ENT, OPHTHA, TCVS, PAPERAS, ORTHO, NEUROSURGERY, UROLOGY), especially for those who have been in practice for several years. Therefore, the Board of Regents of 2021 passed BOR Resolution No. 2021-01 on January 9, 2021, which allows the induction of Fellows accepted through the Simplified Application for Surgical Specialty Society Members during the monthly BOR meetings.

The requirements for this Simplified route have been trimmed down from 10 to 5 documents. Surgeons who are Fellows of their respective Specialty Societies for 3 years and above are eligible for this program.

Last year, there were 16 Specialty Society Fellows inducted Virtually considering the previous

restrictions on face-to-face meetings. With the lifting of these restrictions, 6 Fellows were inducted during the BOR meeting on August 13, 2022 held at the PCS building and another 10 inductees are scheduled for September 10, 2022 and one more on October 8. Seventeen (17) applicants opted to be inducted on December 4 during the PCS Annual Clinical Congress making a total of 34 Simplified inductees so far for 2022. Since there is no deadline for the Simplified Route, we may expect some more applicants for October and November inductions. Going back, the recent induction last August 13 possessed the same galore as the December Annual Convention Ceremonies; minus the processional walk, of course. The inductees sported their coats, ties and formal dresses and were later on gowned with their respective Togas. The program started a few minutes past 8 am with the Master of ceremonies --PCS Secretary, Dr Renato Montenegro -- delivering the introductory message aligned with the parable of the Prodigal son, with the Mother PCS welcoming back her Specialty Society Children. This was followed by my petition for Fellowship of the six inductees, as Chairman of the Committee on Membership. The PCS President, Dr. Ramon Inso then conferred the fellowship, after which all six inductees were introduced one by one. Special mention was the induction of the current President and Vice-president of the PUA, Philippine Urological Association. I then asked the new Fellows and all Regents present to join and renew their pledge to the PCS. Finally, the program was capped with the Closing remarks and inspirational speech by no other than our PCS President.

We welcome the following new Fellows from the Specialty Societies inducted last August 13.

Diosdado C. Limjoco, MD (Urology)  
Janet Viviana O. Perez, MD (Ophthalmology)  
Silvino Enrique B. Pineda, MD (Thoracic, Cardiac & Vascular Surgery)  
Genriech N. Reoyan, MD (Orthopedic Surgery)  
Aristotle Bernard M. Roque, MD (Urology)  
Jeffrey V. Roxas, MD (General Surgery)



# Who Is He?

## Meet the Keynote Speaker of the 48th PCS Midyear Convention 2022

• Karen Latorre, MD, FPCS •

A Visionary. A local success story. A Kapampangan.

In a world of cutthroat business that relies heavily on connectivity and innovation now more than ever, one Kapampangan from humble beginnings went on to change the way Filipinos experience the Internet.

Mr. Dennis Anthony H. Uy is a Filipino businessman whose family established their roots in Pampanga. Born on June 1, 1966, in Fujian, China, the family lived in poverty for the most of his young life. The family then emigrated to the Philippines in 1977 with the help of his uncle Johnny Uy. At the age of 11, he worked as a cold storage handyman at Johnny's Supermarket, which is considered as the oldest general store in Angeles City and was run by his uncle.

Mr. Uy attended the Chevalier School for his high school studies and the Holy Angel University, where he graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering in 1992.

Among his earliest ventures, the then budding young entrepreneur sold Betamax and VHS tapes he sourced from Greenhills in San Juan which later led to him setting up Jack's Video, a Betamax and VHS rental shop with his brother in Angeles City. Recognizing that the technology eventually would become obsolete led him to terminate the business in the early 1990's. He later set up the Angeles City Cable and Television Network, a cable television provider which caters to Central Luzon.

His venture into the broadband and fiber optics business started when he founded ComClark Network and Technology Corp. in 1996. He later in 2007 founded Converge ICT his wife Maria Grace Uy. Since 2012, Converge has been a significant player in an industry once dominated by only two major providers: Globe and PLDT. In 2019, it was reported that New York private equity firm Warburg Pincus invested \$250 million in Converge to bolster its rollout and infrastructure plans. Converge ICT now has a massive reach, with their fixed broadband services now in more than 9.6 million homes in 440 cities and municipalities in the country. Converge has successfully introduced new technologies in the Philippine market, such as full-fiber optic networks, fiber-to-the-building solutions, and minimally-invasive micro-trenching installations. Converge ICT has focused on its goal of bringing technology to more households in the Philippines. The vast network upgrades also aim



to aid e-education and e-health service delivery for Filipinos, which has been crucial especially during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The company went public and announced their IPO in 2020, raising more than \$500 million in what is one of the Philippines' largest in recent years. Also in 2020, Mr. Dennis Anthony H. Uy received the Entrepreneur of the Year Award at the 11th Asia CEO Awards. Converge ICT also received the Circle of Excellence Technology Company of the Year award in the same event.

In 2021, Uy became a board member of Silicon Valley-based firm Axiado Corp., a security processor company involved in developing security technologies and per-system AI. Very recently in 2022, his company, Converge ICT, acquired the Alaska Aces basketball team franchise and he vowed to form a competitive squad that would give the league's major powerhouses a run for their money.

He has also expressed his vision to develop Angeles City, his hometown, as a technology hub similar to Silicon Valley. Today, Converge is widely acknowledged as a major competitor in the fast-paced technology high-speed internet wars among the tech giants in the country.

The Central Luzon Chapter proudly presents a storied and celebrated Kapampangan who is now shaping the way we experience technology in a world where interconnection and speed is most valuable.

Multi-awarded businessman Mr. Dennis Anthony H. Uy delivered his Keynote Address full of refreshing insights to the College during the 48th Philippine College of Surgeons Midyear Convention Opening Ceremonies held last May 5, 2022 at Clark Marriott Hotel.

# A Surgeon's Greatest Heartbreak

• Tamarah P. Cristobal, M.D., DPBS •



Patient X was a 7 year old boy who was happily walking on the sidewalk together with his bestfriend. Adorned with their team's basketball jerseys and a basketball in one hand, the spring in his steps were brought about by the excitement of his first summer basketball league and him meeting his father at the basketball court. It was just like any other ordinary day inside their village when a student driver , who mistakenly stepped on the gas pedal heavily, came speeding from the road, lost control of the vehicle, struck him and pinned him in between the car and a wall. His friend was unharmed and rushed to his aid and so did the driver of the vehicle, who unfortunately, happens to be their neighbor and a family friend. He was brought to our hospital alive, stable, but in great pain. He complained of abdominal pain but physically, there were no gross hematomas nor was his abdomen rigid. There was a slight tenderness on the epigastric area but it was soft nonetheless. He had no signs nor evidence of any type of fractures and his initial Chest Xray was negative for signs of pneumo/hemothorax. He was conscious and coherent, even asking for his father and telling us that he was waiting for him at the court. He remained calm and looked at me from time to time with his big doe eyes that bear a slight resemblance to Bambi's beautiful eyes. He was a very courteous little boy and I kept him company while awaiting the other tests and waiting for his parents.

I asked him about basketball and who his favorite player was and he told me it was Kobe Bryant. I asked if he was good at playing the sport and he said that he thinks that he is with a sheepish smile on his face despite the pain. He asked for water because he was so thirsty and that's when I noticed that his heart started to beat faster than it did when he first came in. I followed up his CBC and his Hemoglobin was just 70 and his abdominal scan looked to me like there was hemoperitoneum present.

I was a first year that time and my knowledge with CT Scans are just basic at most but I know what a normal scan looks like and that was not it and that we may have to do an emergency exploration. My

other senior that time was not convinced so we ended up sending the patient to the floors for a few hours and observing him up until we were alerted that he was falling in and out of consciousness and that he was having severe abdominal pain. His abdomen was as stiff as a board that was time that an order for an emergency laparotomy was made.

I scrubbed in on the procedure fearing the worse and upon opening up the peritoneum, a gush of blood spurted out like it was a fountain on display. For a first year like me, seeing the entire operative field in red is something that you just cannot forget. His injury was a mere 3cm single laceration to the liver. 3cm but the amount of blood that was lost in that tiny body during that time was a no brainer that he will be in a critical state post operatively. He was placed at the ICU and when he regained consciousness, he signaled if I can remove his ET tube and I said no and he just nodded. His parents were then allowed to see him and his father told him that when they get home, they will practice basketball so he can join the league again. He just nods and smiles all throughout their conversation and he held on to his mother's hand so tightly that his mother laughed and told him he's strong already. He gave them a smile, a wave, and a two thumbs up sign to his dad. After some time, I talked to his parents outside the room together with the driver of the vehicle who was as worried as they were.

In the middle of all the somber cries, the nurse came out of the room and informed me that the patient was coding. We performed CPR and it lasted way longer than the usual time frame because I refused to give up. It was only then when the father came in, tapped my back, and told me to stop and said it's ok and that they are letting him go. I refused for awhile and told him I'll give it a few minutes and still try but he was adamant that we stop. I took a step back and watched him and his wife talk to that little boy to say their final goodbyes and up to now I can clearly remember what they told their son,

“Anak, ok na kami. Pahinga ka na anak, ok lang samin ni mama. Thank you anak kasi pinasaya mo kami ng pitong taon. Paki sabi kay Lord pag kakita mo sa kanya thank you kasi binigay ka niya samin kahit sandali. Mahal na mahal ka namin.”

That was the first time when I called the time of death of a patient while crying. I had to get out of the room for a while to be able to compose myself because I was mad, devastated, and disappointed. I came back finding the driver of the vehicle kneeling in front of the parents asking for forgiveness and crying her heart out. The mother was just in shock and the father was just holding the hand of this wife and his one hand holding the shoulder of the woman kneeling in front of him asking for forgiveness.

After all the post mortem care, I started filling out the death certificate writing Hypovolemic Shock under the diagnosis with such a heavy heart. The child’s father, still with his swollen eyes and trembling hands, went up to me and shook my hand and thanked me for not giving up during the CPR. He thanked me for staying with his son right from the start, the operating room, up until his last breath. I wanted to refuse his gratitude because I felt that I did not deserve that appreciation. I felt guilty that I could have done better and spared this family a lifetime of heartache. I felt as guilty as the one driving the vehicle and I think I blamed myself for the longest time even if I was not the one behind the wheel.

It was a young life that could have been saved with better judgment that was not put into place. We had the power to make a certain call and move things faster but we failed to do so. I felt that I robbed that little boy of a future that he so deserved to experience and robbed that family of seeing him grow up to be someone remarkable. I always felt that he did not deserve to be taken away and that it was not our duty to make sure that he did for it was our job to ensure that he returns home safely to his family. I wish I could have done something more to make sure that things ended differently but all of it now is just wishful thinking and a reminder of one of the most painful moments that I have encountered as a surgeon that will stay with me for the rest of my life. It was very early on during my training when I had this type of heartbreak and as bittersweet as it sounds, it made me more aggressive as a clinician. It has been 10 years and I still could not get over it. I would like to think that I am one to show empathy

more than others but it is not how I wanted it to be developed inside of me.

They say that our heartaches makes us stronger because we learn from it and we grow from it. We make it as a benchmark of what not to do and what we should do in the future. Lessons come in all forms but at the expense of losing a patient is one of the hardest lessons that a surgeon can muster. It takes time for some of us to recover from things like this and for me, I don’t think I will ever get over this experience. Every single time I think about that little boy, I can’t help but tear up a bit and shed a tear or two for him and his family. Even as I am writing this, I had to stop for a few minutes because my eyes kept tearing up continuously.

People think that we bask in glory and adorn ourselves with all the praises and happy memories that our successful surgeries has given us. What they don’t realize is we each have our own little space inside our hearts and mind where the most painful and tragic moments of our surgical career is kept hidden and we all cry inside from time to time despite all our successes. People think that we keep a record of all our amazing streaks and surgeries but in reality, we care more for our morbidities and mortalities. Surgeons seem to look like very strong persons on the outside but deep inside, we hurt deeply for those who are taken away from us. It is because our passion to serve and operate is so astronomical that whenever we fail to achieve the results that we want, our hearts are crushed even without realizing or accepting it.

In a surgeon’s life, there will always be good days and there will also be bad days. More often than not, the bad days account more than half of his/her entire life but it is not so much felt due to the power of having just a single fleeting moment of success inside the operating room. We all have our own success stories and we hold on to those moments when we felt that we were at the top of our game.

A challenging procedure that was expected to be doomed right from the start and being able to execute every step flawlessly will definitely send any surgeon on a different kind of high that stays on for a few days. Coupled with a post operative scenario that ran an unexpectedly smooth course and that will definitely be a core memory that our brain searches for whenever we need a happy memory to keep us afloat during trying times. We all wish that we could

have those golden moments to treasure forever so we may bask in glory and continue living life to the fullest. But we know that God, in his infinite wisdom and power, does not allow anyone to experience such perfection throughout one's lifetime. If that was always the case, no one would make mistakes and we will never have gratitude even for the smallest of things because we know it will all work out perfectly all the time.

We may forget to feel pain, empathy, and humility if everyone was so perfectly molded and so He made sure to give us glitches from time to time to make us grounded and hold on to our faith. Sometimes, that glitch can be so powerful that even at your highest moment, just a snippet of that glitch crawling into our subconscious can send us suddenly into a pit of sadness. I think that for us doctors, the sad outweighs the happy times no matter how outnumbered those sad memories are. People think that doctors only care about those who were able to survive and that our happiness comes with a sense of pride for being a great clinician. What they don't know is behind closed doors, no matter how many successful operations we perform, those that stay with us for the rest of our lives will be the ones that did not make it out alive of our operating room or hospital.

Out of the 100 successful patients, the only face and scenario that we will always remember is the face of that patient that became our painful glitch. Even at the pinnacle of success, there will always be that one patient who will remain with us no matter how much we want to forget them. A thousand magnificent surgeries would still not be enough to make that memory of that certain person disappear. What's fascinating is that they are not relatives nor are they our closest friend. They happen to come across our lives for a short amount of time and yet, their loss is as great as when we lose someone very dear to us. The impact is enough to make us reconsider, learn, and accept that there are things in life that we can control but we somehow failed to do it and it ended up being our greatest and most painful lesson in our career.

Throughout the years, I have learned to occasionally free myself from thoughts about that fateful day some 10 years ago. I don't think I will ever forget it nor do I want to forget it. It has served as one of the greatest lessons of my life and I have that little boy to thank for humbling me during times when I feel that I am at my best that I should not be too complacent. His memory will always remind me to be passionate about what I do and

to always strive to be a better surgeon and teacher to the students. His memory has paved the way for me to be ardent about teaching students about the importance of handling trauma patients. His parents taught me about the beauty of a never ending love for a child and has made me treasure my own child more. I know a lot of surgeons have their own stories to tell about that one patient that changed their lives and I hope that they too find great learning and hope in their own ordeals. What I learned through all this is that we should never be too hard on ourselves especially when we know that we have given our best service. To always put our hearts at the same level as our minds because compassion and theory are useless without the other and they stronger when put together in action.

I want to think that he has been an angel of mine looking after me from time to time because whenever I feel doubtful about a case or too tired from all the work, I think about him and the promise that I made myself that I will always do better no matter what and from there, I regain my strength and move on. A few years ago when Kobe Bryant passed away, my first thoughts were about that little boy. He told me that he was his idol and I had a mental picture of him and Kobe just playing basketball in heaven with God by the bleachers cheering both of them on.

He lived for 7 years but just like what his father told him, he gave so much joy to all the people around him and it was such a pleasure to everyone to have known him for that short amount of time. That's when I realized that when we all pass, our deepest heartbreaks will not be defining who we are to those we left behind so we must not let it eat us alive. We treat it as one of life's greatest lesson and learn from it and mold ourselves into a better version of us. Though it may play a part in molding our character, we must focus on the positive lesson that it leaves us and make it a stepping stone into a more improved version of who we are. I would like to finish my article with a quote from a book called "When Breath Becomes Air" by neurosurgeon Dr. Paul Kalanithi:

"When you come to one of the many moments in life where you must give an account of yourself, provide a ledger of what you have been, and done, and meant to the world, do not, I pray, discount that you filled a dying man's days with a sated joy, unknown to me in all my prior years, a joy that does not hunger for more and more but rests, satisfied. In this time, right now, that is an enormous thing."  
-Paul Kalanithi

# SEA

• Vietrez David Abella, MD, FPCS, FPSGS •



The Author

“Somewhere beyond the sea, Somewhere, waiting for me,  
My lover stands on golden sands  
And watches the ships that go sailing;”  
(Beyond the Sea, as sung by Bobby Darin)

Although the Covid-19 pandemic has yet to be announced officially over by the World Health Organization that declared it last March 11, 2020, the river of life has breached through the dam of lockdowns and is slowly flowing back to its pre-pandemic course.

Here in the Philippines, the bustle in once-desolate book and school supplies stores have signaled the resumption of classes. Public utility vehicles have come out in full force, recreating the monstrous traffic jams of three years ago.

“Somewhere beyond the sea,  
He’s there watching for me.  
If I could fly like birds on high,  
Then straight to his arms I’d go sailing.”

In my provincial home, I picked through the rooms vacated as quickly as they were occupied. I recalled how more than two years ago my husband and I made the snap decision to drive our children home, as the Metro Manila lockdown, to abate the rapid spread of the illness caused by the SARS-Coronavirus 2, loomed.

At that time, we were going into our third year of empty-nesting, that had started 8 years before when we sent off our eldest for high school in the big city. Though planned, the heartbreak of physical parting was relived every time we would send our child away to school, some 500 miles over the sea.

As we prepared each child in turn for life in the city, we consoled ourselves that we were exposing them to the world, to gain knowledge and networks, and eventually be independent of us.

Back home, we started simplifying our routines for a household of two. As we downsized possessions, we gave out the clothes, toys, and books that our kids had outgrown. It had become a post-vacation tradition of mine to spend an hour or so to go through their rooms, take mental snapshots, and sort out their things into piles of to-go and to-keep.

We welcomed the disruption to our simplified routines by the hasty return of the kids. One moment, we were planning trips to the metro; the next was the most unplanned two years of our lives as the world grappled with the unknown.

We had sent off kids but welcomed strangers. Suddenly our vocabulary and worldview diversified. What were routine mealtimes became debating platforms, some ending with one misunderstood kid storming out.

I’d look out across the table to lock eyes with my bewildered husband, clearly baffled by the transformation of his darling daughter who used to engage him in witty banter, now an eloquent defender of the multiple causes she had fiercely taken on.

These two quarantine years reminded me and my husband that our children were not our children, and certainly not the teen-agers who had left home for high school. They had morphed into their own persons, oftentimes with thoughts and ideas foreign to ours. Suddenly, we parents were not the sun in their lives anymore; we had dimmed like the waning moon, to be outshined by their peers, their advisers, their workmates.

“It’s far beyond a star,  
It’s near beyond the moon, I know beyond a doubt  
My heart will lead me there soon.”

I thought my tears for partings had already dried up, thirteen years from the time we sent our firstborn to the city. I thought that those two precious years of having them back unexpectedly through the pandemic, with day-to-day interactions over meals, chores, or the occasional dine out, checking them in their rooms as they attended on-line classes, streamed movies with friends, or conducted organization meetings: I thought I had gathered enough momento- memories to steel my heart. We welcomed strangers, then sent out sons and a daughter who had become co-equals in our family unit. As soon as we realized that our children were already adults, we had to learn to engage them as such. Now, we talk about their plans, their careers, their relationships. It turns out, we had more to learn from them, than they did from us.

“We’ll meet beyond the shore, We’ll kiss just as before.

Happy we’ll be beyond the sea, And never again I’ll go sailing!”

I remind myself that these little partings are but preparation for the big one, when we parents shall sail off beyond the sea, beyond the cosmic horizon. I pray that this will not happen sooner. Besides, the work day is just beginning.

# Command Responsibility of the Executive

• **Benjamin Herbosa, MD, FPCS, FPAPRAS** •

Outgoing President of the PAPRAS, 2021-2022

Chief of Section, Plastic Surgery, Makati Medical Center, 2021-2024

National Secretary, Oriental Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery

APRAS Founding Member and Council of Delegates 2022



This would have been a Father's day issue were it not for the timing of the issues made and when these articles are to be published and circulated. Also dependent if the author is male or female. But whatever it is, this topic holds true for all genders claiming to be a Leader.

The Father (or a Mother for the matter of whoever runs the leadership at home) is the person who holds the key position to put things in order or perspective. Many concerns are abound other than being a husband or a wife if she is the one responsible in keeping the household. The Head needs to play multiple roles as a Father, an employer to the house staff, a General Manager at that to everyone that includes the people that work for them like the driver, gardener (if you have a garden), pest control expert, mechanic (presuming if one has a driver then there is a car), etc. Certainly, a myriad of works that entails full coordination of all personnel that revolves around the activities of just about each person's concern. Then comes those of the children's necessities. Though, this setup is mindful of whatever social class someone belongs to, this applies to every life, knowing that one belongs to a type of work and is obviously a National. Despite being self employed, one is committed to being "A Part" of a system.

Now comes issues on institutional processes with which a small Society, like PAPRAS or even the PCS, will have an intense management perspective in tandem with emerging technologies like 5G networking and artificial intelligence. Robotic Surgery is here and it relies very much on accepted terms fueled by learned skills. These ideas and elements are all mentioned for a congregation to prosper, move ahead or simply survive. As the government starts to work on "linking" all departments to private and public sectors as well, everything shall need to leverage and utilize "smarter" software apps which are aimed at "existence for and in the future".

On a rather bigger scale, relating to a scenario that I am in, running a society remains a challenge. It is because its establishment is not just processes as the key but it also entails institutional strength. This valiant stand may be based on focused regulatory, legal, technical and professional schema. Any private group (as the national society I work for) needs to be quaterbacked with correct delegations to gifted individuals who will run the departments namely finance, scientific committee, accreditation, and legal smoothly. Dedication, honesty, sincerity, proactivity and competency are the basic necessities to become the crucial decision-maker and the ultimate arbiter of conflicts when awash with egos and superegos. Succession planning should be in place as well. Sound governance is the requisite to a successful miniaturized setting in as much as credible fiscal consolidation program which is sought after in any national government. Our organizations remain a microcosm of the Philippines with all its major outfits whether private or public in enterprise.

Now comes what is truly essential. Moral ascendancy that weaves through ethical standards and personal integrity to the highest order is vital. Morality to me is the elemental ingredient or tool that will certainly solidify any structure knowing the proclivity for correct choices that shall swivel and steer the organization to its rightful journey and not just driven by self interest.

A final comment would be now that globalization is in place, there are local imperatives with which structural and infrastructural stabilities should be mandated. This will certainly be used eventually when global assertiveness and competitiveness come into play. As we work on these basic building blocks from every little corner of our lives, everyone should help with these movements as we nation-build and complete the final pieces of the puzzle of our country. Build on and build more!

## • ASSOCIATION NEWS •

### PUA highlights of 2022

The pandemic and its subsequent recurrent surges have not been kind to any specialization, let alone any profession. With the recent lifting of the COVID19 restrictions, The Philippine Urological Association (PUA) has slowly adapted from a purely virtual platform to hybrid learning sessions and get-togethers. The association seemed to be brimming with this undercurrent of excitement as the events we had come to know and love were slowly coming back into the fold. Colleagues, friends and family we had only seen through zoom were now within an arm's reach once more.

Early in the year, the initial wave of hybrid learning opportunities began for our residents in training. With the support of the executive council and its different committees, the Urology Laparoscopic Workshop and the Masters in Stone workshop were both hosted at the PUA office. An online lecture was made available for all our 100+ residents in training while a limited number were invited for the hands-on portion. Similarly, other hybrid events have also come into play such as the Philippine Continence Society's hands-on urodynamics lecture at Veterans Memorial Medical Center and the Philippine Society of Urologic Oncology's series of live surgery workshops. A live surgery is broadcasted to each of the training institutions where residents are gathered to do the hands-on portion under the guidance of a PSUO member. The most recent of which being their neobladder workshop.

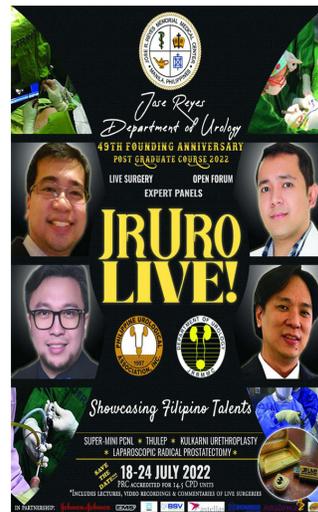
The different training institutions have also been hard at work, showcasing their homegrown talents with their peers through a multitude of learning activities. The quarterly EJUVAS lecture series continued with a forum on Prostate Cancer (hosted by Veterans Memorial Medical

Center) in the first quarter, and a forum on gender affirmation surgery and care (hosted by V Luna Medical Center) for the second quarter. The University of Santo Tomas celebrated the 50th anniversary of UST Urology Week with an online postgraduate course focused on genitourinary cancer management and a hybrid Urolympics Endoscopic competition for all the other training institutions. Similarly, Veterans Memorial Medical Center has also conducted a successful postgraduate course on Supine PCNL and offered a hands-on stone workshop on their hospital grounds. Last but not the least, the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center recently held their 49th Urology Week featuring their postgraduate course showcasing various live surgeries of key figures in different subspecialties.

Yearly traditions we have known and loved have also managed to make their comeback. This June, we were proudly reinstated TAYONAMAN 2022, the yearly Digital Rectal Exam and Prostate Cancer Awareness event conducted on Fathers Day across all Urological Training Institutions. Last but certainly not the least, the annual Midyear Convention made its grand comeback last June in Tagaytay City. Residents and fellows alike were treated to 3 days of learning, fun and camaraderie that easily reminded us all how truly magical it feels to be in each other's company. There were a number of forums and symposiums for the participants, as well as a day dedicated to non-urological topics that were of interest for both old and new members. New residents were inducted with the Pokemon-themed body painting competition, new fellows were inducted and at the end of the day, everyone celebrated with a grand fellowship night filled with good food, singing and dancing.

Just within the past 7 months, the association as a whole has been thriving in learning activities and the return of annual practices we have all come to know and love. Although the pandemic has brought about a wave of change, we are proud to say that we have successfully surfed through this wave to welcome a new normal. We have learned to embrace the virtual platform

and use this to our advantage to enhance our old practices. With less than half a year left, the list goes on and on for the number of activities that await our members: Post-graduate courses, hybrid workshops, competitions, a gala night and even our annual convention! We are proud to say that the boys (and girls) of the Philippine Urological Association are definitely back.



# Metamorphosis of PALES Basic Laparoscopic Workshop

• Domingo Sampang, MD, FPCS •

For the last few years mankind has been challenged by the unforeseen difficulties. The impact of Covid 19 pandemic on the lives of people is immeasurable and nobody expected this widespread struggle to persist.

However, good thing to know is that people are resilient enough to adapt to this global turmoil. Not only, the medical & surgical practice were affected but also the training as well. This is why the Philippine Association of Laparoscopic and Endoscopic Surgeons heed to the needs of these exigent and changing times. One of these is the PALES Basic Laparoscopic Workshop which is under the Committee on Training and Workshop that adjusted to the present needs of the MIS surgeons of the land.

Historically in 1991 there were 2 independent and separate MIS Societies that were formed. Philippine Association of Endoscopic Surgeons (PAES) was founded by Dr Serafin Hilvano and the Philippine Society of Laparoscopic Surgeons(PSLS) initiated by Dr Kim Shi Tan. It was in 2006 when it merged to become what is now known as the Philippine Association of Laparoscopic and Endoscopic Surgeons(PALES). Until now it continues to evolve and fits to the demands of each individual MIS surgeons of our country. One of its main trusts is its dedication in the advancement of laparoscopic & endoscopic surgeries thru excellence in surgical education, training and research. The PALES Basic Laparoscopic Workshop is one of the means of building the foundation of Minimally Invasive Surgery in our country as it also assess the laparoscopic aptitudinal proficiency of an MIS surgeon. Initially, the Basic Laparoscopic Workshop was annually conducted at Veterans Memorial and Medical Center and was later on transferred to Philippine Center for Advanced Surgery(PCAS) in 2016.

It is primarily consisted of 3 phases. Phase 1 comprises the Fundamentals of Minimally Invasive Surgery, Phase 2 constituting the Clinical Applications of MIS and last but not the least Hands On the various surgical skills and drills applied to basic laparoscopic procedures.

The first two phases were conducted virtually. Phase 1 was conducted last June 6, 2021 whereas Phase 2 was run virtually last Nov 18, 2021. The final phase was done on face to face format last April 3, 2022 at the Philippine Center for Advanced Surgery.

The metamorphosis of PALES Basic Laparoscopic Workshop was based on the following:

1. ADAPTATION
2. ADDITION
3. TRANSFORMATION
4. MODIFICATION
5. EXTENSION OF SCOPE
6. POST WORKSHOP FOLLOW UP

For ADAPTATION:

1. The didactics were online and virtual
2. Phase 1 & 2 didactics were opened to the public consumption
3. Didactic series were free of charge
4. Phase 3 was charged only 40% of the original workshop fee

For ADDITION:

- I. There were incorporation of new topics.  
PHASE 1
  1. Zero MIS-USE
  2. Principles of Ultrasonic Energy

PHASE 2

1. Laparoscopic Stapling
2. Introduction to Basic Endoscopy

II. There were also incorporation of new procedures.

PHASE 3

1. Laparoscopic Appendectomy
2. Bowel Anastomosis using lap stapling

III. Distribution of free handbook of PALES Basic Laparoscopy

For TRANSFORMATION:

1. The use of Porcine Organs instead of live swine model that decreased the costing and registration fee of Phase 3
2. Laparoscopic Trainer box utilized animate objects
3. Performing the 3 basic Laparoscopic procedures

For MODIFICATION:

1. Skills and drills were applied to specific Lap procedures
2. Twist in some operative procedures
3. Performing the 3 Basic Lap Procedures
4. Laparoscopic Stapling procedure

For EXTENSION OF SCOPE:

1. There was a collaboration between PUA/PES/PURA and PALES on Basic Laparoscopic Workshop entitled URO-LAP 2022. This was held last March 26, 2022 at the Philippine Urological Association Office composed of Didactics and Hands on workshop. A total of 75 urologists participated in the didactics and 60 surgeons attended the hands on workshop.

For POST WORKSHOP FOLLOW UP:

Participants who completed the 3 Phases of Basic Laparoscopic will be followed up on October 2022 and April 2023 after 6 months and 1 year respectively to assess the effect of Basic Laparoscopic workshop in their skills, practice and surgical outcomes.

The Committee on Basic Laparoscopic Workshop is also contemplating in transforming the Basic Laparoscopic Workshop (BLW) into Basic Laparoscopic and Endoscopic Workshop(BLEW) in the future by giving emphasis and importance also to basic surgical endoscopy.



# PAHPBS Committed to Quality

• Karen Latorre, MD, FPCS •

Quality management is our lifeline in healthcare, and this is especially evident in the management of complex HPB diseases. Evidence-based guidelines, expert consensus and recommendations consistently show that the best outcomes in HPB care are achieved whenever expert teams work together in collaboration, employing a multidisciplinary approach. In so doing, adherence to quality standards and seeking continuous improvement becomes a way of life.

Why should quality management be placed in such an important position? As we know, if an organization does not have awareness of quality management then its services will never be of any great worth and significance. If we are to be of any significance in nation-building and health care service delivery, we need to consistently hone our skills and broaden our horizons, translating theories into action.

Quality is achieved by daily continuous accumulation and honed through dedicated work. Therefore, quality awareness is very important. By raising our own awareness to the highest level, our teams will be able to do an excellent job. Quality management is not just in lip service; the key is implementing it into practical daily action. We must find ways to constantly evolve ourselves, upskill, learn, and consistently pursue quality health service delivery; and the most basic condition for pursuing the highest level of quality is the pursuit of excellence.

Digging from the depths and what challenges we have now with our current health care delivery systems, with continuous excavation, continuous thinking and reflection, we can get better and better on the road of pursuing this goal.

We must be open to the possibility that future gains in healthcare outcomes will be in a different form other than patients simply living longer. One important aspect— is quality. Because it is not just the total years of life that matters, but also the total years of life the patient lived in good health. Quality as well as quantity should be a motivator for us as health care providers.

Looking at our current starting point, and recognizing the challenges in our service delivery systems, political, socioeconomic, and geographical concerns, it is easy to be discouraged. Our fee for service care systems and frequently overwhelmed government facilities are well entrenched; there are plenty of vested interests with lots of fragmentation getting in the way. But we have what it takes within us to be at par with our contemporaries internationally, this much is clear.

There is still plenty that is good about our system though— there is Hope for as long as like-minded individuals come together for a greater good united in an organizational goal. We shouldn't be deterred. There are reform directions already underway; and lots of heroic good practice on the ground despite the disincentives within our systems.

We as an organization have carried out a variety of quality management work and activities through our organization, from our numerous scientific webinars, symposia, and Fellows Forum, with the process of Certifying and Training top quality HPB Surgeons integral to the PAHPBS programs.

The PAHPBS continuously strives to educate, innovate, and raise the standards of HPB care in the country. We accomplish these goals with the advantage of our strategic partnerships locally and internationally. Always keen to be on the cutting edge, for this year's biennial International Symposium entitled "HPB Standards of Care and Beyond" on December 1-2, 2022 at ACE Hotel and Suites, we focus on high-yield focused topics in Biliary Surgery and Quality Standards in HPB. The Committee on Surgical Education of PAHPBS has prepared a scientific program full of relevant topics and has invited Local and International Faculty, leaders in HPB care here and abroad. It is an official Pre-Congress activity of the Philippine College of Surgeons Annual Convention entitled "Quality Surgery for All". Everyone is invited and welcome to join!

For registration and other inquiries, you may contact us through email: [secretariat@pahpbs.org](mailto:secretariat@pahpbs.org) and SMS/Call: +639760248723.



## • CHAPTER NEWS •

# Outreach Program for Mangyans in collaboration with PCS, OMMS, IBP and ORNAP held in Mindoro

• Melvin Tan, MD, FPCS •

“The life of a man consists not in seeing visions and in dreaming dreams but in active charity and in willing service.” – *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

From the excerpts above come the selfless service of the members of the Philippine College of Surgeons – Southern Tagalog Chapter headed by its President, Dr. Mervin I. Tan, Oriental Mindoro Medical Society, Integrated Bar of the Philippines, and periOperative Registered Nurses Association of the Philippines – Oriental Mindoro Chapter when the organizations spearheaded a joint medical and legal mission for the Mangyan beneficiaries held in Sitio Basal, Dulangan 3, Baco, Oriental Mindoro last March 5, 2022.

The medical and legal mission helped at least 100 Mangyan families. Moreover, the Mangyan beneficiaries were provided free medical check-up, legal consultation, hair cut services and distribution of gift packs which consist of a pair of slippers, rice, sardines, hygiene kits and other grocery items.

Dr. Mervin I. Tan, the recently inducted President of the PCS – South Luzon Chapter, thanked his colleagues especially Dr. Lorman Goco, President of the Oriental Mindoro Medical Society, as well as the other doctors, nurses, and lawyers who dedicated their time and effort for the success of the said activity. He added that they specifically selected the Mangyan families residing at the foot of Mt. Halcon due to their limited access for their health care needs. Moreover, Dr. Tan added that this medical and legal mission accomplished in collaboration with the listed organizations is just one of the several projects that the PCS, OMMS, IBP and ORNAP plans to accomplish for Oriental Mindoro this year.



# Mangyan and nature, highlights of 2022 PCS & PSGS - Southern Tagalog Chapter Induction and Turn-Over Ceremonies in Baco, Oriental Mindoro

• Melvin Tan, MD •

Inspired by their selfless service and renewed appreciation for nature, the Philippine College of Surgeons held this year's Officers and Board of Directors Induction – Turnover Ceremonies and Awarding of the Master of the Knife at Infinity Farm Resort, Mangangan, Baco, Oriental Mindoro, February 25-26, 2022.

Known as the premier food basket of the MIMAROPA region, the 2022 PCS – Southern Tagalog Chapter chose the municipality of Baco, Oriental Mindoro due to its lush green nature situated at the foot of Mt. Halcon where the Indigenous People of Mindoro called Mangyans also thrive. The doctor-participants of this activity came all the way from the various areas of Luzon from Batangas, Cavite,



Laguna, Quezon, and Mindoro. The 2-day event enabled the participants to join both in the Induction - Turnover Ceremonies as well as in the other activities prepared such as tree planting, river clean up drive, and medical mission and gift-giving for Mangyans in Baco, Oriental Mindoro.



Being one with nature, on February 25, the surgeons spearheaded the tree planting activity in Mangangan, Baco wherein a total of 50 Apitong seedlings were planted. A River Clean-Up Drive was also undertaken along the rivers of Baco. The participants worked hand in hand collecting the litters and other thrash flowing through the riverbanks.



A gift-giving for 50 Mangyan families residing in the area culminated the activity for the day. Beaming with gratitude, each family received rice, grocery items and hygiene kits courtesy of the PCS – Southern Tagalog Chapter.

The next day, February 26, became another busy day for the participants. Mervin I. Tan, MD, FPCS, this year's PCS – Southern Tagalog Chapter Incoming President, formally started the Induction Ceremonies by celebrating a Thanksgiving Mass followed by the Induction and Turn-over Ceremonies proper. In his Inaugural Address, Dr. Tan initially thanked his fellow surgeons, PCS Officers and Board of Directors for their support in the success of the Induction and Turn-over Ceremonies. Moreover, Dr. Tan, emphasized in his speech the importance of maintaining the high standards set forth by the College in line with professionalism, community involvement, and interest of his colleagues.

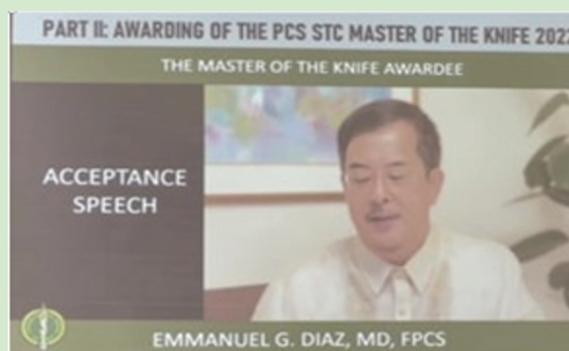


Furthermore, the following roster of surgeons completed the 2022 PCS – STC Officers and Board of Directors namely: Dr. Sylvia S. Abanto – BOD Batangas, Dr. Arvin Briones – PCS STC Past President for 2021, Dr. Manuel Ng – PCS-STC Treasurer, Dr. Randy Melo – BOD Laguna, Dr. Michael Lawenko – PCS STC Vice President, Dr. Rolly Reyes – PCS Past President, Dr. Ramon Inso – PCS National President for 2022, Dr. Dr. Maria Conception Vesagas – PCS National Vice President, Dr. Annette Tolentino – PCS National Executive Secretary, Dr. Ethelmay Romero – PCS STC Executive Secretary, Dr. Froilan U. Dacumos – PCS-STC Governor



2022, Dr. Mandy Caraos – Taal Lemery Batangas, Dr. Aldrin Cuasay – PCS-STC Past President, and Dr. Ronan Inso – BOD Laguna.

Considered also as the most awaited part of the program, the Master of the Knife 2022 Award was given to Dr. Emmanuel G. Diaz, FPCS. Dr. Diaz received the much-coveted framed Balisong where his name is inscribed. Plaques of Appreciation and gifts were also distributed to the outgoing officers and speakers before the end of the program. //JPA



# Task Sharing Model: Addressing the Scarcity of Neurosurgeons in the Bicol Region

• Lynne Lourdes N. Lucena, MD, FPCS, FAFNI •

At the start of the 21st century, a lot of medical and surgical advancements were seen booming in the first world regions like the USA and Europe. Scientific discoveries in procedures, medications and equipment were all centered in these areas making the access to both medicine and surgery much easier than the rest of the world.

As mentioned, the global workforce in surgery and medicine are also concentrated in these countries. There is a glaring disparity in the worldwide distribution of surgical care and the tremendous deficit in neurosurgical workforce in LMIC cannot be emphasized enough.

In many Southeast Asian and Sub-Saharan African countries there are approximately 0.01 neurosurgeons per 100,000 population, where the expected ratio is approximately 1/100,000.<sup>1,2</sup> Every year, an estimated 22.6 million patients suffer from neurological diseases or injuries that need the services of a neurosurgeon, of whom 13.8 million require surgery.<sup>3</sup>

The Philippines is among the LMIC countries in South East Asia. An archipelago of 7107 islands with 103 Million people, presently served by 130 neurosurgeons mainly distributed in the capital city of Manila. The ratio highlights the deficit at 0.126 neurosurgeon per 100,000 population. The country needs 900 more trained neurosurgeons to address the burden of neurosurgical cases especially traumatic brain injury.

There is an increasing trend in road traffic injuries worldwide and in the Philippines—the motor vehicle accidents increased from 65,000

cases in 2005 to 110,000 cases in 2017, all occurring in Metro Manila alone.

I am a board certified neurosurgeon serving the Bicol Region which is more than 400 km away from the capital city of Manila. Bicol has a population of 5.8 million and has two government hospitals with 250-300 bed capacities. I am the only full time board certified neurosurgeon serving both hospitals. There is one visiting board certified neurosurgeon and two other neurosurgeons who are not board certified serving mainly private hospitals. The main bulk of neurosurgical cases are in the government institutions and these are mostly traumatic brain injuries.

Around 1200 cases of traumatic brain injuries are seen per year and 6 percent are surgical. There were incidents wherein simultaneous neurosurgical surgeries were to be done on an emergency basis. Because of the scarcity of specialists, I adopted the task sharing model to help address this gap in the neurosurgical workforce.

Task-shifting or task-sharing (TS/S), which involves the delegation of certain medical responsibilities to less specialized health care workers are employed in many countries where specialist surgeons are scarce, hence surgical tasks are delegated to non-specialists, such as general practitioners or non-physician clinicians.

In the Philippines, the Philippine College of Surgeons is the umbrella society of the surgical field whereas the Philippine Society of General Surgeons are specifically for the general surgeons. The neurosurgeons who are board

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certified and have become fellows are members of the Academy of Filipino Neurosurgeons Inc.

The task sharing/shifting models have somehow been used even in the past in various neurosurgical and general surgery training institutions. There is a number of months when the general surgery resident will rotate under the neurosurgical service and assist in neurosurgical procedures. If the neurosurgical team is very limited, then procedures like craniotomy and craniectomies for epidural and acute and chronic subdural hematomas are taught to the general surgery rotators. Hence during duty days, the general surgery rotators who are deemed capable, responsible and skilled may be performing the emergency neurosurgical procedures for the traumatic brain injuries while the neurosurgery residents are performing tumor and vascular surgeries at the same time.

In our institutions, I have one general surgery rotator every three months as part of an accredited General Surgery training program. The resident has to be at least in second or third year. This rotator assists me in all neurosurgical procedures in the first month and makes progress notes/histories/ referral notes to all in-patient neurosurgical patients in the wards, surgical ICU and the peripherals (medical/pediatrics/orthopedics/ENT wards).

Everytime we make rounds, there are teaching sessions wherein a specific neurosurgical entity is discussed especially traumatic brain lesions. Every neurosurgical procedure when the resident assists is a time for learning and discussions regarding the cases. The resident should have read about the case prior to the procedure. There are post operative, Surgical ICU and Pre operative conferences where the rotator should be able to discuss about the cases in the neurosurgical service.

In the second month, if the resident rotator is deemed capable and knowledgeable, has the surgical skills, shows great responsibility towards the patients and has initiative and enthusiasm, I start teaching craniotomy and craniectomy for

EDH/SDH. I can give a simple epidural case as the first operative procedure for the rotator while I assist.

On the third month, the rotator who has satisfied the skills required and has generally good outcomes (less mortality and morbidity) would be allowed to perform the emergency procedures for traumatic brain injuries under my guidance whether through Viber (internet app) or direct supervision by my being present in the hospital /vicinity.

At the end of the rotation there is an evaluation and grading system based on the skills/patient care/knowledge of the rotator.

Those general surgery residents who have finished their rotation with me and had good grades, satisfactory outcomes and evaluated as competent are allowed to continue doing the emergency trauma surgeries for the service patients. All patients admitted are referred to me first for the final decision on the management whether surgical or non surgical.

In a recently concluded unpublished study entitled Task-Shifting and Task-Sharing in Neurosurgery: A Retrospective Cohort Study in the Philippines by Faith C. Robertson, BS, Richard C. Briones, MD, William B. Gormley, MD, MPH, MBA, Ronnie Baticulon MD, Kee B.Park,MD,Andrew Leather MD,and Lynne L. Lucena MD which was conducted at two institutions where I am using the task sharing model, these were the results:

- There was no significant difference in surgical mortality rates between groups (overall 19.1%, neurosurgeons 20.2%, TS/S 17.9%,  $p=0.675$ ).
- There were also no significant differences between delta-GCS from admission to discharge (mean decrease of 9.98 points for neurosurgeons, 9.46 for TS/S,  $p=0.70$ ) or lowest in-hospital GCS to discharge (mean increase of 0.18 points for neurosurgeons, 0.29 for TS/S,  $p=0.71$ ).

- TS/S patients has a significantly shorter length of stay (17.3 days vs 24.4 days,  $p < 0.05$ ).
- Pneumonia was the most common surgery-associated complication (19.6% of cases), but there was no significant difference between groups (neurosurgeons 16.8%, TS/S 23.2%,  $p = 0.24$ ).

Very few data have been gathered to document and evaluate these task sharing/shifting models for neurosurgery. However, the practice has been there long before in the Philippines to address the scarcity of neurosurgical manpower especially in the provincial areas.

After graduation from the general surgery residency, the general surgeons whom I have trained to do the emergency neurosurgical procedures for trauma do not perform these surgeries in their private practice. Instead they have been adept in assessing neurosurgical emergencies and stabilizing them for referrals to the centers where I work. In places where internet is available, they communicate with me through Viber app and I give them advise on how to address the emergency and we work together to be able to give the patients the best available neurosurgical care there is.

For the past 20 years that I have been the only full time board certified Neurosurgeon in Bicol, I have trained more than 50 general surgery residents to do emergency burr holes, craniotomies, decompressive craniectomies and elevation of skull fractures and duraplasties to help our service patients suffering from traumatic brain injuries. These general surgeons have their own private practice now in various parts of the country and some of them have even gone to specialize in other surgical fields like thoracic and cardiovascular surgery, hepatobiliary surgery, surgical oncology, plastic surgery, and transplant surgery. I have been able to convince one resident to go into Neurosurgery and he has finished his training now but needs to pass the Board certifying exams. Another resident is applying to a neurosurgical program right now. I am fervently hoping that not only will I be able to recruit more residents to go into the



neurosurgical field but also in the end, I will be able to improve the neurosurgical service in our Bicol region.

Teaching and sharing knowledge while mentoring residents to be skilled and responsible is the only way to go. Neurosurgery is my passion and my means to serve my country and I will continue in this crusade to help our indigent neurosurgical patients as long as I am able to.

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# PCS MMC at 30 years: looking back and forging ahead

• Joan Tagorda, MD •

The PCS Metro Manila Chapter celebrates its 30th Founding Anniversary this 2022. For the past three decades, PCS-MMC has been true to its mission in providing continuing professional development activities for its member surgeons, collaborate with other societies in providing social and educational services to the constituents of Metro Manila, and continues to strive to be relevant and responsive to the needs of its Fellows and Trainees.

The webinars on Research Training started with the “International Research Collaboration in the era of Global Surgery: Concepts and perspectives from a High-Income Country (HIC) and Low- and Middle-Income Country (LMIC)” which was conducted in February in collaboration with PSGS-MMC, right after the Induction of the new Board of Directors under the leadership of Dr. Leonardo O. Ona, III. This activity was followed by the 2-part “Critical Appraisal of Research Evidence” which was attended by almost 750 participants both in-person and online. In May, the yearly Basic Research Methodology Course was conducted online for the first time and has attained almost 650 participants.

During the first half of 2022, several Continuing Professional Development webinars were instigated which includes “Managing Inadvertent Bleeders in Laparoscopic Surgery”, “Where are we now? COVID19 Updates,” “Revisiting Skin and Soft Tissue Infections”, “Battling Ancient Yet Fatal Threats: Rabies & Tetanus Management”, and “Scar Wars: Wound Care & Scar Management”. This series of

educational webinars culminated in the Annual Post-Graduate Course with the theme “Surgical Infections In Focus”. This is a 3-part webinar discussing nosocomial infections, complicated intra-abdominal infections, and soft tissue and other infections that are commonly encountered in surgical practice.

The chapter also participated in the PCS Cancer summit by conducting an online lay forum on Prostate Cancer and Colorectal Cancer. In addition, several members joined the PCS Golf Tournament at the Royal Northwoods Golf Course as a social and fellowship event.

Forging forward to the next 30 years

The start of the year-long 30th Anniversary activities of the PCS-MMC commenced with a Breakfast Celebration with the past Chairpersons of PCSMMC and the members of the PCS Board of Regents last July 21, 2022 at the Club Filipino in Greenhills, San Juan. The first President of PCS-MMC Dr. Modesto O. Llamas giving a special message along with Dr. Ramon S. Inso, the 2022 PCS President.

Indeed, PCSMMC has come a long way, and in the words of Dr. Leonardo Ona III, “through thick and thin, “pawis at tiyaga”, selfless and thankless endeavors have translated to better understanding of knowledge, capacity building, social consciousness and camaraderie for all. Let us start celebrating the fruit of the past 30 years and brace ourselves as we move forward to the next thirty.”



# Central Luzon-Host Chapter PCS 48th Midyear Convention 2022 *Tailored Approaches to Surgery*

• Karen Latorre, MD, FPCS •

These ever-changing times indeed call for tailored approaches in response to different situations. As the wave of the Covid-19 Omicron surge that affected the earlier part of 2022 gradually subsided, it became increasingly evident that the time was ripe for a return to limited face-to-face activities by midyear. Hence, the 48th PCS Midyear Convention with the theme “Tailored Approaches to Surgery” was held last May 5-6, 2022 in a hybrid online format.

Hosted by the Central Luzon Chapter, the Midyear Convention consisted of limited on-site Pre-Convention activities in several key locations in Central Luzon, limited face-to-face Opening Ceremonies and Fellowship Night in

the Clark Marriott Hotel Ballroom, and a purely online scientific program that delegates were able to access through digital platform. This allowed the PCS to have a gradual return to normal activities while still observing important health and safety protocols.

The Board of Regents and Officers of PCS National and several other dignitaries of PCS and delegates convened in Clark Marriott Hotel in May 4-5, 2022 for Pre-Convention activities and the much-awaited chance to once again have face-to-face solemn Opening Ceremonies. Finally, it was a chance to safely and joyously meet once again in the spirit of camaraderie and fellowship for PCS.



PCS National President Dr. Ramon Inso delivering his Remarks during the Opening Ceremonies