



# Incisions

The Newsletter of the Philippine College of Surgeons

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

# 49th MIDYEAR CONVENTION SURGERY & UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE

**MAY 4-5 2023** SMX CONVENTION CENTER  
SM LANANG PREMIERE  
DAVAO CITY

HOSTED BY  
DAVAO SOUTHERN MINDANAO CHAPTER

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**PCS** MAY 4-5 2023  
49th MIDYEAR CONVENTION



### ON THE COVER



**PHASES OF CONTAGION**  
By DR. RICKY RIEGO DE DIOS

**Dr. Ricky Riego de Dios** or R2D2 as he is called by friends, is a General and Laparoscopic Surgeon from Mariveles, Bataan and currently practicing at La Consolacion University Hospital, ACE Medical Center Baliuag, Castro Maternity Hospital and Medical Center and Our Lady of Mercy General Hospital in Bulacan.

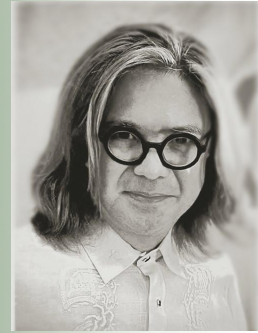
He is a visiting consultant at Bulacan Medical Center, a Diplomate of Philippine Board of Surgery, a Fellow of Philippine Society of General Surgeons, Philippine College of Surgeons as well as the American College of Surgeons.

He was a past President of PCS-Central Luzon Chapter. He is a member Board of Governors of PCS and is also in the Board of Directors of PSGS.

He is into abstract acrylic, watercolor and oil paintings which, according to him, he started as a hobby during the COVID pandemic lockdown. Title of his painting in this issue: *Phases of Contagion*.

# FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Marcus Jose B. Brillantes, MD, FPCS



## Lessons from the Pandemic

As the COVID-19 pandemic enters its third year, health authorities have called on countries to strengthen surveillance and bridge gaps in vaccination coverage to end the emergency and better prepare for future health crises. The U.S. intends to end the public emergency for COVID-19 on May 11, 2023 and other countries will likely follow suit.

Effective last February 1, 2023, the Coronavirus Tracker switched from LIVE to daily updates. A number of countries have now transitioned to weekly updates with no longer the need for immediate updates.

Over the past three years, the global statistics have recorded 682,798,511 reported cases, 6,821,650 deaths and 655,718,737 recoveries. There are 20,258,124 active cases as of March 22, 2023.

The pandemic underscored that no country or organization was fully prepared for the impact of the coronavirus pandemic including developed nations which were also marked by a melange of inequities.

Today, incidence rates are 20-30 times less than a year prior. But while the crisis hasn't completely resolved, we are currently in a much secure position.

The WHO has highlighted key elements in directing countries get to this place. One important point includes building and strengthening the COVID-19 global genomic surveillance which is key to tracking the evolution of the virus, as well as monitoring for other pathogens with pandemic potential.

*A crucial lesson learned from the COVID pandemic is the recognition of the need for global collaboration in strengthening genomic surveillance.*

Over the past three years, more than 1.2 million coronavirus genome sequences from 172 countries have been shared into global databases, a testament to the tremendous work and dedication of researchers around the world during the pandemic. Because of this, the WHO has coordinated the development of the 10-year global genomic surveillance strategy for pathogens with pandemic and epidemic potential 2022 - 2032. The initiative is powered by a vision to inform, coordinate and strengthen genomic surveillance efforts at country, regional and worldwide levels. Genomic surveillance is part of the broader surveillance and laboratory system, and its implementation should reinforce capabilities including sample collection, diagnostics, data sharing and analysis. The strategy aims to facilitate the connectivity between different disease control programs and surveillance networks. This interoperability will strengthen the cross-cutting essential public health laboratory

functions underpinning genomics holistically. The strategy places emphasis on the broad-scale goal, objectives and strategic actions needed. These are dependent on commitments from countries, agencies and the WHO for their implementation.

What other lessons can we derive from the global pandemic?

*We must to take mental health seriously.*

There was a rise in reported mental health problems that have been described as “a second pandemic,” highlighting mental health as an issue that requires addressing. Many psychiatrists and neurologists believe the number of mental health disorders that rose during the pandemic continues to increase as people grapple with such matters as work stress, job loss, isolation, and losing a family member to COVID-19.

*We have the capacity for resilience.*

During the pandemic in facing the relatively unknown threat of the novel virus, the PCS undertook efforts to protect both patient and the surgeons by enforcing safety measure guidelines. While each individual's situation is uniquely different, many have realized the possibility to be resilient during this health crisis. People have practiced self-care in a multitude of ways during the pandemic as they were forced to adjust to new work schedules, family routines, and the ability to cut back on socializing. Many sought out new strategies to counter the stress.

*Community is essential and technology has made this possible during the severe lockdown periods.*

The pandemic forced others to realize the importance of human social connectivity. We have managed to maintain social connections and continuing medical education with the use of technology to keep up to date. There can be no doubt that the establishment of communication and connectivity has been immensely beneficial on several levels.

*There is a need for proper regard for the unknown and respect for medical science.*

Humankind required this wake-up dose of humility. Scientists and non-scientists alike learned that a virus can be more powerful than calculated. This was evident in the manner knowledge about the virus has changed over time in the past 3 years as scientific investigation of it has likewise evolved.

*Conspiracy theories are still circulating concerning COVID-19.*

While the world has been battling a pandemic the past 3 years, it also has been combating an infodemic. A sizeable segment in society have retrogressed back on the trusted, traditional news media channels as the main providers of pandemic-related information and have become more inclined to believe conspiracy theories and misinformation churned out by the alternative social media.

A one-way ANOVA study by David de Coninck, et al. published last April 2021 revealed that the Philippines ranked the highest for beliefs in conspiracy theories and misinformation. Mean scores indicated that respondents from the Philippines ( $M = 5.83$ ), the United States ( $M = 5.19$ ), and Hong Kong ( $M = 5.03$ ) reported the highest scores with regards to conspiracy beliefs while respondents from same three countries [Philippines ( $M = 4.91$ ), Hong Kong ( $M = 4.06$ ), United States ( $M = 3.73$ )] reported the highest belief in misinformation.

The WHO has warned that COVID-19 is still in circulation and the virus has yet to settle into a predictable pattern. In addition, the WHO has cautioned that though testing rates have considerably decreased, it is crucial that countries maintain and continue to strengthen surveillance as the SARS-CoV-2 virus can still evolve.

We must focus on recovering losses and on rebuilding resilient health systems and being better prepared for future global health threats.



# FROM THE PRESIDENT

MARIA CONCEPCION C. VESAGAS, MD, FPCS, FACS



## P.S.B.

Three months of 2023 are nearly over as of this writing. As PCS President, I have attended chapter and specialty society inductions, countless meetings, met people I have not met before. All of these you will be able to read in the minutes of the meeting, as part of the President's update in "Across the Board". There are some matters, though, that need more elucidation to the Fellows, hence I am writing here, specifically about the "Physician's Act".

Republic Act 2382 or the Medical Act of 1959, and as amended in 1965 by RA4224 and in 1968 by RA 5946, is the foundation of medical practice in our country. It contains the curriculum, the schedule of examinations in the Physician Licensure Exams, etc. In the last 5 years or so, the College has been hard at work on the Physician's Act. Sometime in 2019, the Physician's Act, as submitted to Congress was on its second reading. It contained provisions that would have put specialty training and certification under the DOH, criminalization of malpractice, among others.

Dr. George Lim, then 2019 PCS President, spearheaded writing a law that was a "Physician's Act as written by physicians". He gathered the heads and representatives of the Specialty Divisions under the Philippine Medical Association namely: Anesthesia, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Radiology, Pathology, Pediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynecology and Surgery. The group met close to 4 months, every 2 weeks till nearly midnight at the PCS Building. Other groups were invited to ask their inputs, particularly the PMA and the PRC.

The 1959 Medical Act (as amended 1965 and 1969) was reviewed by the group and the work was divided into 4 working groups, each in charge of writing different sections of the bill. As the weeks progressed, each version underwent scrutiny, word for word, line by line, vis-à-vis the latest versions submitted by the groups. As PCS Board Secretary then, I attended

each meeting and would do final proof reading of the versions produced by the group. An audience was also sought with Congressman Angelina Tan who had filed a bill in Congress for amendment of the Physician's Act of 1959; likewise an audience was sought with Senator Lawrence Go, Chair of the Senate Committee on Health. A meeting was also held with the PRC Board of Medicine, the specialty divisions, other doctors' groups in the office of Dr. Angelina Tan. In January 2020, copies of the completed proposed bill, the output of the Specialty Divisions of the PMA, were submitted to different lawmakers: Congress Chairman Committee on Health, Speaker of the House, Minority Floor Leader; to the Senate Chairman Committee on Health, Senate President, Senate Minority etc., DOH Secretary, the PMA President, the PRC Chairman, the PRC Board of Medicine, among others.

Then Covid happened. The momentum the group had gained was put on hold as the pandemic gripped the world and our country in March 2020. The 18th Congress of the Philippines meanwhile tackled bills pertaining to the health crisis. This lasted till the end of the 18th Congress on June 1, 2022. By July 2022, the 19th Congress had now assembled and the bill was once again revived and hearings started.

The specialty divisions realized that, although indeed the bill needed to be seen by the Committee on Health, it was the Committee on Civil Service and Professional Regulation that had jurisdiction over bills covering professions in the Philippines. The group also noted that a large part of the bill being considered in Congress contained sections that were proposed by the specialty divisions. The lawmakers indeed had appreciated the input from the Specialty Divisions.

Dr. Lim again convened the Specialty Divisions group sometime in July 2022 to rewrite portions of the Physician's Act that could be improved based on



proceedings of various meetings with the PRC, PRBOM, PMA and others. A newer version was drafted and sent again to the different stakeholders as above.

During the 2022 PCS Annual Clinical Congress, Congressman Ciriaco Gato, Jr., chair of the Committee on Health and myself had a talk regarding this bill. I requested that the PCS be included in meetings and in hearings that the Congress Committee on Health would have regarding the Physician's Act. By 2023, the PMA had now arranged meetings with the Specialty Divisions, the PRC, the DOH, the CHED. In January 2023, meetings were held with Congressmen Gato, Golez, Miguel and Tan; Dr. Lim attended on behalf of the PCS. Another meeting was held in February 2023, convened by the PMA regarding the bill. Corollary to these, various exchanges were made via Viber and text messages between the PMA and the Specialty Division Heads. Zoom meetings were also arranged with members of the specialty societies in attendance.

By the first week of March 2023, an invitation was sent by the Congress to attend the Committee on Civil Service and Professional Regulation Joint with Committee on Health Hearing on March 22, 2023 at the Nograles Hall in the House of Representatives. This was a continuation of deliberation and approval of bills on the Physician's Act by which medicine would be governed, namely:

1. HB No. 688 – An Act Providing for a Physician's Act Repealing for the Purpose Republic Act No. 2382, as Amended, Otherwise Known as the "Medical Act of 1959" authored by Rep. Keith Micah "Atty. Mike" D.L. Tan
2. HB No. 1591 – An Act Expanding the Scope of Medical Practice through Providing Guidelines for Telemedicine Services, Amending Republic Act No 2382, or Medical Act of 1959, and For Other Purposes authored by Reps. Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Jude A. Acidre.
3. HB No. 6112 – An Act Providing for a Physician's Act Repealing for the Purpose Republic Act No. 2382, as Amended, Otherwise Known as the "Medical Act of 1959", authored by Rep. Ciriaco B. Gato, Jr.
4. HB No. 6137 – An Act Providing for a Physician's Act Repealing for the Purpose Republic Act No. 2382, as Amended, Otherwise Known as the "Medical Act of 1959" authored by Rep. Ray T. Reyes.

On March 22, 2023, the PMA, represented by President Minerva Calimag, PMA Vice-President

Hector Santos, PCP President Dr. Diana Payawal, the PCS represented by Dr. George Lim and myself as PCS President attended the hearing as resource persons. Other attendees were PRC Commissioner Dr. Jose Cueto, PRC Board of Medicine Chair Dr. Godofredo Dalmacion, members of the PRC Board of Medicine, the Department of Health, the Department of Budget and Management and others. Rep. Ciriaco Gato, Jr. MD chair of the Congress Committee on Health, Rep. Kristie Alexie Tutor, chair of the Committee on Civil Service and Professional Regulation, presided.

Discussions centered on the integration of the profession, the identification of the integrated national organization of physicians, the deletion of the malpractice provision, among others. The PRC presented several points regarding the proposed bill and emphasized that the training, accreditation and certification of specialists should remain with the specialty society, with government oversight by the PRC as it is currently being practiced. There were no objections from the floor regarding this provision.

After lengthy discussions between several congressmen, the PMA, the PRC, with input from the DOH, a motion was put forward and carried to create a Technical Working Group. This will be headed by Rep. Janette Garin to consolidate the discussed bills and formulate a final form of the Physician's Act to replace RA 2382 known as the Medical Act of 1959. It was announced, too, that this was the final hearing regarding the bill and henceforth, it would be the TWG that would be working.

Personally, I think it was a battle half won. The PCS had been working in the background for the Physician's Act. It was a long 5-year journey. The fact that we were invited to the Congress meant that indeed, the PCS was making a difference. The next hurdle is the TWG, and hopefully all suggestions will be remembered and put into the law. And if made into the law, next to be considered is the IRR – implementing rules and regulations of the law. As for now, we will face our battles as they come.

Earlier on the morning of March 22, 2023, I took a picture of Dr. Lim and myself in the vehicle as we made our way to Batasan. I sent the picture to our Regents' Viber group with a caption "for the country and future doctors." There is a well-known coffee advertisement that asks, "Para kanino ka bumabangon?" It goes on and asks, "Para sa sarili? Para sa pamilya? Para sa iyong mga minamahal? Para sa mga kaibigan? Para sa iyong trabaho?"

Noong umagang iyon, katulad ng mga nakalipas na umaga, bumangon ako...

PARA SA BAYAN.



# ACROSS THE BOARD

**Joselito M. Mendoza, MD, FPCS**



**1st BOARD OF REGENTS MEETING**  
**January 21, 2023 (Saturday); 8:00 am - 2:30 pm**  
**GT Singian Board Room, PCS Building, 992 EDSA, QC**

Part I – Oath Taking of Dr. Josefino I. Sanchez as Regent

Part II – Oath Taking of PSST Officers & Directors

Part III – Group Picture Taking – PCS Foundation Board of Trustees

Part IV – Group Picture Taking – PCS Board of Regents

Part V – BOR Recording of the Pambansang Awit

Part VI – Meeting Proper

The meeting was called to order at 10:50 AM with Dr. MCC Vesagas presiding followed by an Invocation led by Dr. DS Aison. The adoption of the Agenda was APPROVED, with the inclusion of the item on a Fellow's concern with Serious MD under "Other Matters".

Dr. CCVesagas, PCS President, welcomed the Regents to the 1st Board of Regents meeting. She mentioned the continuation of projects/activities conducted in 2022, particularly the simultaneous surgical missions, eFAP program and the focused practice designation, among others.

She also reminded the 2023 Regents of their Duties & Responsibilities. All Regents were provided copies of the Regents' Duties and Responsibilities.

## **PRESIDENT'S UPDATE**

### **1. PMA Meeting – January 13, 2023 – Re: Physicians Act**

The PMA scheduled a meeting last January 13, 2023, regarding the Physicians Act. In attendance was Dr. George G. Lim, Chair, Adhoc Com. on Physicians Act together with PRC and four (4) Congressmen (Gato, Miguel, Golez, Tan).

An update will be given next meeting. Meanwhile a meeting with the Presidents of the specialty divisions and PMA will be scheduled.

### **2 Nursing Law**

As discussed last year, the proposed Nursing Law, particularly the extent and limitations on the practice of nursing, was in question. The PMA is currently reviewing this.

### **3. PCS Motorcycle**

The BOR approved the purchase of a motorcycle and helmet for the PCS messenger. The PCS Building Committee was then tasked to come up with the guidelines on the use of the motorcycle.

### **4 AED Proposal**

The BOR approved the purchase of an Automated External Defibrillators (AED) including an ambu bag for use in the College. The PCS staff will be trained on its usage, and these equipment will be brought during official events.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Dr. JRC DeLeon reported on the current financial status of the PCS funds including fund placements. Update on Delinquent Fellows (279) showed 51 Fellows settled their arrears (14%).

Since eFAP launch last December 2022, a total of six (6) Fellows have so far subscribed to the program. All Regents were encouraged to subscribe and disseminate such program.

## **COMMITTEE ON CONVENTIONS**

Post-convention evaluation of the 78th Annual Clinical Congress last December 4-7, 2022 at the EDSA Shangri-La Hotel was discussed and problems encountered were offered remedies.

The Orientation of New PCS Inductees was held at the Convention site unlike previous years when it was held outside. This was noted by the BOR to be more convenient and effective and will continue there on.

The BOR also noted the big role of Docquity in monitoring attendance during sessions but will also look into borrowing PMA RFID gadgets for future conventions.

The committee will also formulate policies and guidelines as regards use of the Learning Centers.

For the upcoming 49th Midyear Convention with the theme: "SURGERY AND UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE" to be held on May 4-5, 2023 at the SMX Convention Center Lanang, Davao, the Committee is in ongoing discussions with the PCS Davao-Southern Mindanao Chapter on the details for the preparation. The BOR also approved the proposed registration fees for Convention attendees and Sponsorship packages including the Learning stations. Also, the UHC Summit and the PCS-PALES-ORNAP MIS Workshop will be held in conjunction with the 49th MYC 2023.

> 8



For the 79th Annual Clinical Congress on December 3-6, 2023 at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel with the theme: “COLLABORATIONS AND INNOVATIONS IN THE ERA OF GLOBAL SURGERY, the BOR approved the Proposed Registration Fees and the Joint Convention with the ASA (Asian Surgical Association).

## COMMITTEE ON SURGICAL EDUCATION

The BOR approved the free registration of the Lay Forum stakeholders during the 49th Midyear Convention on May 4-5, 2023, at SMX Convention Center Davao. Attendees to the Lay forum will be issued ID badges in advance.

Suggested topics for the 79th ACC were also noted by the BOR with additional instructions to the committee to invite a speaker from IRCAD who can lecture on choledochoscopy and CBD as a pre-convention session and Dr. Gustavo Matthews also as a speaker.

The Committee also informed the BOR that the total number of attendees to the 78th ACC last December 4-7, 2022 was 2368. Certificates of Attendance with CPD units (16) were already sent to respective participants.

As regards Primary Care Surgery, follow up of edited chapters for the Primary Care Manual is being done, target is to launch it during the PAFP Midyear Convention. Presentation of new guidelines will be done in the annual convention of PAFP (March). Also, coordination with PAFP regarding the schedule of symposia to be conducted for this year.

For the Sub-committee on Webinar, coordination with surgical specialties on their scheduled webinars is being done.

## Proposed Committee Membership 2023

1. Proposed list of Committee Chairs, Members and Regents-in-charge for 2023 was presented, reviewed and approved.
2. The following re-alignments were identified:
  - Sub-committee on LMS – under the Cluster on CSE
  - Sub-committee on Critical Care & Nutrition–under the Committee on Trauma
3. Furthermore, two (2) new Ad-hoc Committees were created: Ad-hoc Committee on Internal Governance & Re-organization Chair: Jose Ravelo T. Bartolome, MD

Ad-hoc Committee on Professional Integration (under Committee on By-laws & Amendments)  
Chair: Esperanza R. Lahoz, MD

## OTHER MATTERS

1. PCSF Cancer Summit will be held on February 23-24, 2023; Crowne Plaza Hotel Galleria

The Summit aims to bring all specialties and invite hospitals who have Cancer programs together.

PCS will be provided a booth during the Cancer Summit. The booth will display fliers, videos, merchandises.

Our PCS Pres. Dra Connie Vesagas will be asked to give a closing message during the summit.

- 2 A Fellow's Concern – Re: SeriousMD.com Application

Dr. RA Madrigal mentioned a concern of a Fellow regarding the app —SeriousMD.com, which misrepresents the surgeon's field of specialization.

Board Action: To request the Fellow to formally write down his concern/complaint for this to be taken up formally.

Furthermore, the Committee on External Affairs will be requested to propose remedial measures in preventing such misrepresentation of a Fellow's specialization.

## 2nd BOARD OF REGENTS MEETING February 18, 2023 (Saturday); 8:00 am - 3:50 pm GT Singian Board Room, PCS Building, 992 EDSA, QC

**Part I** – Special Induction of Jacqueline Anne K. Joaquin, MD (PAPRAS Fellow) who was unable to attend the annual induction during the 78th Annual Clinical Congress.

## Part II – Meeting Proper

1. The meeting was called to order at 8:35 am with Dr. MCC Vesagas presiding followed by an Invocation led by Dr. Ma. Luisa D. Aquino. After approval of the Day's agenda, Dr. Vesagas welcomed Dr. Jorge M. Concepcion as the 2023 Board of Governors Chair.
2. Matters Arising from the Minutes
  - 2.1. Updated list of 2023 Committee Chairs and Members were enumerated and read by Dr. Vesagas then approved by the BOR.
  - 2.2. President's Update
    - 4.1. Adhoc Committee on Medical Act – January 31, 2023  
The updated version of the Physicians Act submitted by PMA to Congressmen Gato & Tutor was sent through the office of PMA President, Dr. Minerva P. Calimag.  
The cover letter initially written by Dr. George G. Lim, Committee Chair, was instead written by Dr. Calimag.
  - 2.3 Adhoc Com. on UHC – February 1, 2023
    - a) DOST Letter from Dr. Jaime C Montoya – Re: Research Study on “Cost Estimation of PhilHealth's Case Rates and Determination of Cost-sharing Schemes”  
  
Dr. Montoya informed the College that the research study has been postponed until further notice from PhilHealth, who is funding said study.  
  
Board Action: The PCS will pursue said study since the Committee has an allotted budget of Php1.5 M.
  - 2.4 Chapter Induction attended: Southern Tagalog Chapter – January 29, 2023; Abagatan Ti Manila, Alfonso, Cavite.  
  
The Master of the Knife award was given posthumously to the late Dr. Hernan Ang.



## Treasurer's Report

8.1. Dr. JRC De Leon reported on the current financial status and investments of the College. The Board APPROVED withdrawing the investment with AXA Philippines (Chinese Tycoon) and Insular Life Assurance once said investments mature and returning them to the College's coffers. The Committee on Finance will study where to invest the said money with better returns.

## Board of Governors

The Board noted the Composition of the 2023 Board of Governors with Dr. Jorge M. Concepcion, as Chairman

## Committee Reports

### 9.1. Cluster E – Socio-economic Matters

#### a) FINANCE COMMITTEE

The BOR noted the the Composition of 2023 Finance Committee members including tasks in setting up the e-FAP, (Expanded Fellows Assistance Plan) - an in-house program of the PCS designed to provide better benefits than other HMOs and at a lesser cost. Later, this will include provisions for Calamity or loan benefits. The program is ongoing and subscription to the program is being accepted thru the PCS Secretariat.

In cases where decisions must be made immediately particularly in transferring placements with higher yield/ interest rate, the Board APPROVED that this be brought to the attention of the Executive Committee for faster and prompt resolution/decision.

- Real estate investment outside Metro Manila. Interested Chapters can look for lots for sale- even, a 500 sqm. property and construct a building. This will encourage various PCS Chapters to be more active.
- The Finance Committee should be engaged in the preparation for the Annual Convention together with the Convention Committee to study the packages to give.
- Mr. JP Casas (PCS Financial Adviser) will conduct a Face to Face Financial seminar for our Fellows on the second half of this year.

#### b) PCS BUILDING COMMITTEE

The BOR approved the contract renewal of all tenants of the PCS building with corresponding yearly escalation of rental fees as proposed by the Committee.

The BOR recommended further study by the Committee regarding options for increasing Internet Connection speed in the building as a faster net connection is needed for the LMS program.

Guidelines for the use of the PCS acquired motorcycle plus the daily Route Form and purchasing of a motorcycle compartment were also approved by the BOR.

Upon proper review of the proposals submitted, considering the same specifications and brands of materials to use, the BOR approved the Committee's proposal to:

- Award Interior repainting (Inclusive of covered parking repainting) to JFrivaldo Constructions
- Award the waterproofing works to Z. Cordial Builders

#### c) JOINT FINANCE MEETING

- c.1. Joint PCS & ASA Convention  
Details on the holding of the ASA Convention during the 79 th PCS ACC are being discussed between the Committee on Convention, Finance, CSE and officers of ASA, Philippine Chapter.
- c.2. Learning Management System (LMS)  
Resource Generation Committee will formulate the following:
  - Registration Fee
  - Royalty Fee
  - Sponsorship Packages
- c.3. Fund-raising activities:
  - Explore Art– for further study
  - Surgeons in Couture V3: "Strut For-A-Cause" in partnership with AWSP.

### 9.2. Cluster A – National Programs

#### a) COMMITTEE ON HMO & RVS

1. The committee is working on the completion of the RVS migration to ICD 9 in preparation for the shift to DRG by PHIC.
2. The committee will meet with AMOPHI Sec General Mr. Carlos Da Silva to insist on the HMO's adoption of the 2020 PCS RVS.
3. We will adopt the same Complaint form of AMOPHI for concerns of PAHMOC - accredited Fellows
4. A masterlist of AMOPHI/PAHMOC-accredited Fellows will be posted in our PCS website for better access of Fellows. We have only 670-MOA accredited Fellows as of this time.

#### b) COMMITTEE ON TRAUMA

1. Participation - 49th Mid-Year Session on May 4-5, 2023 (Friday-Sunday) at the SMX Convention Center Davao to be hosted by the Davao-Southern Mindanao Chapter. The theme is "Surgery and the Universal Health Care"
- 1.1 Date and Time: May 4, 2023 (Thursday) at 2:30-5pm (Session 2 - Function Room 3)  
Title/Topic: "UHC: Trauma and Burn Care Surgery"
- 2 Participation - 79th Annual Clinical Congress on December 3-6, 2023 with the theme "Collaborations and Innovations in the Era of Global Surgery"
- 2.1 Proposed Title:
  - A. Uniformed Services University for the Health Sciences (USUHS) Experience – Eric Talens, MD
  - B. Laparoscopy in Trauma – Gretel Puson, MD (PGH) / Ismael Majani, MD (MIS-JBL)
  - C. Direct Peritoneal Resuscitation– Aireen Patricia Madrid, MD



### 3. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

1. Permission to conduct dry run during BOR meeting on March 18, 2023 (Saturday)

### 4 ATLS

- 4.1 ATLS Global Symposium on March 11-12, 2023 at Hilton Chicago – The BOR approved the participation of Dr. Raymundo Resurreccion.
- 4.2 ATLS Courses Schedule for 2023
  1. January 27-29, 2023
  2. February 24-26, 2023
  3. March 10-12, 2023
  4. March 24-26, 2023
  5. April 28-30, 2023
  6. May 26-28, 2023
  7. June 23-25, 2023

### PCS TRAUMA, INJURY AND BURN CARE COMMISSION (TIBC)

- National S.T.O.P. the Bleed to be participated is by all the PCS chapters, different hospitals and organizations.
  - Trainers will be trained and will be assigned accordingly before September.
  - Setting Guinness Book of Record for the nationwide S.T.O.P. the Bleed.
- Committee on External Affairs & P.R. to coordinate with the S.T.O.P. the Bleed during the Foundation Day Celebration.
- Digital Trauma Registry proposal for presentation to the DOH for funding. Target implementation of the system within this year at the four (4) Philippine Trauma Centers: Tondo Medical Center, Cotabato Medical Center, East Avenue Medical Center and Paulino J. Garcia Memorial Hospital in Cabanatuan City.
- S.T.O.P. the Bleed Program - adopted by the DOH-HEMB and already had MOA signing last December 28, 2022. Working for the request to DOH-HFEP (Health Facilities Enhancement Program) for funding of the equipment.
- PSST Fellowship and Alliance for Surgery of Trauma (FAST) training program already started – it's an interim program to populate the trauma centers of trauma surgeons.
- TIBCC session in the 116th PMA Annual Convention on May 15-18, 2023, at the Manila Hotel  
May 17, 2023 (Wednesday) at 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM  
Updates of the PCS-Trauma, Injury and Burn Care Commission  
(15-minute each lecture)  
Topic 1 : Philippine Trauma System  
Speaker : Teodoro J. Herbosa, MD, FPCS  
Topic 2 : DOH Philippine Trauma Center Program  
Speaker : Joel U. Macalino, MD, LIB, FPCS  
Topic 3 : Philippine Burn Centers  
Speaker : Gene Gerald S.J. Tiongco, MD, FPCS  
  
Chair : Esther A. Saguil, MD, FPCS

### c) COMMITTEE ON CANCER

The committee's new Chair is Dr. Robert B. Bandolon. The BOR approved the following non-PCS Fellows to act as panelists during the 49th Midyear Convention on May 4-5, 2023, at SMX Convention Center Davao; Hosted by PCS Davao-Southern Mindanao Chapter Panelists from Davao

- Jay-R R. Enojo, MD (non-fellow) – Uro-Onco Cancer topic
- Edelyn Badilla, MD (non-fellow) – Gyne-Onco Cancer topic

PCS Committee on Cancer also participated in the Philippine National Cancer Summit held last February 23-24, 2023, at Crowne Plaza Galleria

### d) SURE COMMISSION

National Surgical Outreach Day

- A simultaneous major surgery for charity in celebration of the 87th Anniversary of the Philippine College of Surgeons in September.
- In collaboration with Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists (PSA) and Operating Room Nurses Association of the Philippines, Inc. (ORNAP), PCS chapters, sub-specialty societies, training hospitals, medical mission groups and other organizations.

SPSA-PCS SURE Rural Surgical Outreach Program:

- Host Hospital: Gubat District Hospital, Gubat, Sorsogon
- Target launch is on March 1, 2023

### SURGICAL MISSIONS:

- Jan 16-17, 2023: PALES Surgical Mission at Conner District Hospital Apayao with PCS SURE /NLC/ CAR
- February 1-3, 6-7, 2023 (Multi-specialty Mission) – Our Lady of Peace Hospital, Parañaque
- February 10-11, 2023 (Major Pediatric Surgery Focused Mission/Freedom from Colostomy Mission) – Western Visayas Medical Center, Iloilo City
- March 14-17, 2023 (Multi-specialty Mission) – Maramag, Bukidnon
  - In collaboration with Senate spouses
- April 15-19, 2023 – Oriental Mindoro Provincial Hospital in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro
- May 20-25, 2023 – Abra
- June 13-16, 2023 – Agusan
- July 18-22, 2023 – AFP Camp in Sulu

2023 League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP) General Assembly on February 21-23, 2023, 5pm at the Manila Hotel. Attendees are Drs. Ramon S. Inso, Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas and Vivencio Jose P. Villaflores III (under PCS) while Drs. Beda R. Espineda and Marcus Lester R. Suntay (under WSFP).

### e) COMMITTEE ON SURGICAL INFECTIONS

- PSIS Surgical Infections Prevention Awareness Day (SIPA) in collaboration with PCS and ORNAP will be held on July 8, 2023. Format: Symposium in Hybrid /Virtual. Title: Changing Paradigms in Surgical Infections

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- For the 49th Midyear Convention on May 4-5, 2023, at the SMX Convention Center Davao, the Committee will hold a Panel Discussion on May 5, 2023 (Friday); 10:00-11:00 AM. Topic is “SSI Prevention Protocol in Low-resource Setting”.
- For the 79th Annual Clinical Congress at EDSA Shangri-la Hotel, the Committee will hold a Panel discussion on Hospital collaborations in SSI Surveillance.
- Progress report on Study: Analysis of KAP of Trainers and Trainees on SSI Guideline. Modifications in the study protocol are being undertaken to comply with technical and ethical review board requirements. Aim to submit the revised protocol end of February 2023.

### 9.3. Cluster B – Surgical Education

#### COMMITTEE ON CONVENTIONS

- I. 49th Midyear Convention – May 4-5, 2023 (Thursday & Friday); SMX Convention Center, Lanang, Davao City; Theme: “SURGERY AND UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE”

Host: PCS Davao-Southern Mindanao Chapter

#### PRE-CONVENTION ACTIVITIES:

- a) Golf Tournament
- b) Bike Event “Sikad Dabaw”, an advocacy Ride 2023, 60 & 30 km run
- c) BikersMD group (motorcycle) to coordinate with the Bicycle event

The Davao-Southern Mindanao chapter in coordination with the Committee is finalizing the details of the Convention proper, Welcome dinner, Fellowship Night, shuttle services and accommodations.

- II. 79th Annual Clinical Congress – December 3-6, 2023; Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City; Theme: “COLLABORATIONS AND INNOVATIONS IN THE ERA OF GLOBAL SURGERY” Discussions on a Joint PCS-ASA (Asian Surgical Association) during the ACC are underway.

- 2.1. The following are the BOR approved officers for the ASA Convention:

- a) Overall Chair – Dr. Jose Antonio M. Salud (ASA Council Member)  
Co-Chair: Dr. Maximo H. Simbulan, Jr. (PCS Chair, Com. on International Relations)
- b) Members – PCS Officers
- c) In-charge of scientific program: Dr. Miguel Mendoza
- d) Adviser – Dr. Alex A. Erasmo (ASA Council Member)

- III. 50th Midyear Convention – May 2 & 3, 2024

1. Chapter Bids received as of date
  - a) Northern Luzon Chapter – proposed venue: Plaza del Norte, Laoag City
  - b) Southern Tagalog Chapter – proposed venue: Taal Vista Hotel, Tagaytay City

### IV. 80th Annual Clinical Congress – December 8-11, 2024

#### COMMITTEE ON SURGICAL RESEARCH

##### 1. ERB – SOP TEAM

- The BOR approved the Quotation from Google workspace for the proposed domain name for ERB - pcs-phcierb@pcs.org.ph
- The BOR also approved the request to create a Viber group for ERB Team and set meetings.
- Participation – 79th Annual Clinical Congress on December 3-6, 2023, Edsa Shangri-La Hotel.
  - Champion of Champions Surgical Research Contest and Poster Presentation
  - Fellows free paper presentation
- Also approved was the Creation of the Sub-Committee on Translational Research / Surgical Innovation  
The Objectives:
  - To provide the necessary knowledge and skills essential in the transfer of basic clinical science to applied science and innovation
  - To provide assistance to Fellows and trainees who are interested in the conceptualization, development and creation of surgical innovations that will result in better surgical outcomes for patients
- National Surgical and Anesthesia Human Health Resource Study – For submission of final document.

#### COMMITTEE ON CONTINUING SURGICAL EDUCATION

1. For the 49th Midyear Convention on May 4-5, 2023, at SMX Convention Center Davao

Host Chapter: Davao-Southern Mindanao Chapter

Theme: “SURGERY AND UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE”

- Proposed General Objectives:
  - o Explore and understand the role of surgical specialists under the Universal Health Care (UHC).
  - o Discuss community-based strategies in quality healthcare delivery.
  - o Provide current and upcoming standards in the diagnosis and management of surgical conditions.

2. 79th Annual Clinical Congress on December 3-6, 2023, at Edsa Shangri-La

Theme: “COLLABORATIONS AND INNOVATIONS IN THE ERA OF GLOBAL SURGERY”

- BOR approved joint PCS-ASA (Asian Surgical Association) Congress

3. Sub-Committee on Primary Care Surgery

- Continuous follow up of edited chapters, authorship and finding replacement for the Primary Care Manual
- The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) will be applied before printing of the manual.
- Will finalize with PAFP re: plans for symposiums.

4. Sub-Committee on Webinars

- Recorded lectures from ACC 2022 will be uploaded on LMS platform based on topic and categories:
  - o Professional Development
  - o Surgical Education
  - o General Scientific



Also, tasked to communicate with sub-specialty societies, chapters and committees regarding their previous webinars for uploading online under different platforms of PCS.

5. PMA CPD Commission Meeting on January 25, 2023 at the PMA Board office
  - PCS TIBCC has given a slot for scientific session on May 17, 2023, at 3:00 – 4:00 PM during PMA Annual Convention on May 15-18, 2023, at the Manila Hotel.
  - Committee on Trauma updated and awaiting their plans.
6. 2023 PSO Annual Convention in September 2023
  - Invitation from PSO to participate in their Annual Convention received, meeting held last Feb 9 with the president of PSO present.
  - The PSO convention will be on Sep 25-29, with the first four days to be held virtually and the last day onsite, reserved for workshops.
  - PCS will be given a two-hour slot on the first day (Sep 25), from 6 to 8 pm.
  - Topic is on the role of surgery in cancer care.

#### COMMITTEE ON SURGICAL TRAINING

- The PCS Committee on Surgical Training proposes to have a separate “Interesting Case “ session for General Surgery and for the Subspecialties.

The committee would also like to request a NOTSS workshop for its members, a PCS initiative to develop the Post graduate (PGI) surgical curriculum as an off shoot of the CST session last 2022 ACC and a CST section in the PCS website.

#### 9.4. Cluster C – Membership Development

##### a) COMMITTEE ON MEMBERSHIP

1. PCS Fellows: The total number of Fellows = 2,976. The new Fellows who were inducted in 2022 was at a record-high of 97. The number of delinquent fellows is at 285 (representing 9.6%). The committee expects to hit 3,000 this year; hopefully, by the mid-year meeting.
2. The committee will continue to update the Members List that will include deciding on what to do with senior fellows who cannot be located/ contacted.
3. Simplified application for the subspecialty Fellows: Letters to inform the new set of officers of the Subspecialty Societies will be sent to formally inform and invite them to join the PCS through this simplified scheme.
4. The committee will post on a monthly basis in PCS social media platforms (FB Messenger, Viber community) a “5-minute read” entitled, “Members News: ICYMI”. This will consist of five 1 to 2-sentence news items each with an accompanying “clickable” link should the reader want to read some more on the details of said news item.
5. The Induction of Fellows in the Simplified Application for Fellowship will now be on a regular, quarterly basis - March, May (during the Mid-year meeting), September, and December (during the ACC) rather than monthly.
6. The Committee will inform selected subspecialty societies (e.g. PUA) that should they have at least ten (10) Fellows in the simplified program for Induction, the PCS may do the Induction during their respective Annual Conventions.

7. We will assign an Identification Number to PCS Resident Members (similar to the Fellow's PCS #) which will be replaced by the time they become Fellows. This is to facilitate their registration during PCS conventions.
8. During society conventions, to request that a booth be provided to the PCS (to collect PCS dues also, entice Residents from subspecialties.

##### b) Administrative Concerns

##### b.1. Results of the 2022 Performance Evaluation

As a result of their Outstanding & Very Satisfactory grades achieved for 2022, the following PCS employees will be receiving a salary bonus equivalent to their one-month's salary:

- Ms. Annette D. Tolentino
- Ms. Cora P. Ribao
- Ms. Evelyn Umali
- Mr. Alvin Jalimao

#### 9.5. Cluster D –

#### COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS & PUBLIC RELATIONS

The following Committee proposals were approved by the BOR:

1. Educational videos
  - Produce 2-minute instructional videos on Breast Thyroid, Gallbladder and Prostate (as instructed by President)– content to be discussed with subspecialty societies
  - To create a media concept like PCS YouTube channel
  - The Committee suggests creating 3 different libraries for videos, lectures, vlogs and start collecting videos for uploading in social media platforms
  - Request for a dedicated studio for the recording and will propose a supplemental budget for creating the videos
2. PCS 87th Foundation Day Celebration Activities
  - 3.1. Holy Mass
    - Either Veteran's Memorial Medical Center chapel or larger venue for more fellows to be able to attend
    - Planned simultaneous masses hosted by different chapters
  - 3.2. Foundation Week activities
    - Simultaneous Motorcade per Chapter to promote road safety – to be held after the 9 AM mass (in MM, starting point at Veteran's to QC Memorial Circle to Commonwealth then back to Veteran's for some snacks, live online streaming via zoom.
    - Possibly Invite celebrity big bike riders like Jay Taruc, Katrice Keirulf, etc
    - One PCS activity in assigned/volunteer chapter per day of Foundation Week
    - Fellows guesting in radio programs to make people aware of PCS Foundation Week
    - Hold a Bazaar at Veteran's Memorial Medical Center with booths per Chapter selling products/items from their chapter (with proceeds going to their chapter) for 2-3 days from Sunday to Tuesday

- Blood letting activity in all chapters on Monday.
- Operation Bukol with MMC, PMA on Thursday
- Simultaneous medical mission and lay forum with the Chapters on Wednesday
- Simultaneous major and medium surgeries involving chapters and subspecialties on Friday

#### **BOR approved the Fund Raising Activities:**

- To include “Art For-A-Cause” in collaboration with the SURE Commission
  - Fashion Show –fund raising dinner “Strut For-A-Cause” – in collab with AWSP
  - Manila Bulletin – to partner with for media mileage – PCS advocacies
    - 1 year marketing plan for PCS
- 3.3. Foundation Night Dinner
- simultaneous Foundation night dinner in respective chapters with live online streaming via zoom
  - suggestion to possibly hold the celebration not only with the officers but also with other fellows
4. Publications Sub-committee
- Will continue to come out with 4 issues of Incisions for 2023 (1st during first quarter of 2023, 2nd during PCS midyear convention in May 2023, 3rd during Foundation Week Celebration in September 2023, and 4th during PCS Annual Congress in December 2023)
  - needs updated Fellows emails to send e-copies.
  - possibly enter incisions into Word Press
  - consider giving free registration for one convention for Fellows (non-members of the committee) whose articles are accepted for publication
  - Include a section which will encourage interaction/participation of readers (ex. Some form of quiz, etc with the winner's name mentioned in subsequent issues and a prize given)
5. Other Matters
- Coordinate with PCS Chapters for Fellows to guest in local radio stations all year round to promote the PCS
  - Dr. Claveria to get in touch with UNTV for guestings by PCS Fellows
  - Setting up a PCS booth during the conventions of subspecialty societies Ex. Booth for Cancer Summit – show videos of surgical operations for thyroid CA, Breast CA, Colon CA, and Soft Tissue Tumors for the first day and other subspecialty procedures for the 2nd day
  - Create a vlog per chapter on their topic of interest (3 minutes duration)
  - Asean Colorectal Society and ASA participation of PCS

#### **COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS**

- 1st Issue of PCS Newsletter (Incisions) – will be an e-copy launch/available during the MYC.
- Whole page newspaper ad for the MYC 2023 from Manila Bulletin or Philippine Star
- PCS HYMN 2023, the updated version will be available by April 2023

- Still planning to proceed with a writing and editing workshops by end of May.

#### **COMMITTEE ON SUGICAL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (SICT)**

- Promotion of the PCS APP among Fellows- committee to message all Chapter Presidents to advise their members to download our Apps and register their mobile to have their PCS profile.

#### **COMMITTEE ON LMS**

The BOR approved additional Personnel – Based on PCS salary grade

- I.T/Full time DEDICATED for LMS
- Secretary Full time
- Video Editor
- Honorarium for Alvin Jalimao (I.T)

4 participants for the landing page contest were chosen and the prize divided among them, each will be awarded Php 5,000.

#### **COMMITTEE ON QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PATIENT SAFETY**

Approved topic for the Committee's session during the 49th Midyear Convention on May 4-5, 2023 at SMX Convention Center Davao

- Quality Assurance Initiatives of the PCS for UHC. (WHO Checklist, ZERO-BDI etc.)

**3rd BOARD OF REGENTS MEETING**  
**March 23, 2023 (Thursday);**  
**GT Singian Board Room, PCS Building, 992 EDSA, QC**

#### **1. BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

1. The Board noted some of the Governors' feedback/input regarding affiliate societies who now have created their own specialty boards and who will eventually apply for recognition as a subspecialty society of the College.
2. Letter from PhilHealth-Re: Issuance of Certificates of Good Standing  
The Board took cognizance of the new PhilHealth Memo Circular 2022-0029 which states that the Philippine College of Surgeons or any of its subspecialty societies recognized by the PMA, may issue Certificates of Good Standing.
3. The Board reminded the BOG regarding submission of the list of members in Good standing by the sub-specialty societies to be used as reference in the issuance of the PCS Certificate of Good Standing by the PCS National.

#### **2. COMMITTEE ON PATIENT SAFETY & QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The following were APPROVED by the BOR:

1. Participation - 79th Annual Clinical Congress on December 3-6, 2023 with the theme “Collaborations and Innovations in the Era of Global Surgery”



A 2-hour session on the following topics:

1. Presentation of all the results of WHO Modified Surgical Safety Checklist from ORNAP
2. Patient Safety and Quality Assurance Session

2. The BOR disapproved the creation of a Sub-committee on Quality Surgical Improvement Program, but instead APPROVED the creation of an Adhoc Committee as a Special Project for the Power Point program proposal on "How to Start Quality Surgical Improvement Program",

### 3. FINANCE COMMITTEE

1. eFAP Funding: Proposals for funding this program were suggested
  - a. Golf Tournament "Swing Fore-A-Cause" (pre-2023ACC)
  - b. Golf Tournament- (September 2023 Foundation Day)
  - c. Earnings from the Learning Management System (LMS)
  - d. Explore Art (September 2023- c/o Sure Commission)
  - e. Surgeons In Couture V3: "Strut For-A-Cause" in partnership with AWSP- (September 2023). i.e. fashion show- Dinner for a Cause, Ten Best Dressed Women, among others.
  - f. Other Fund-Raising Activities that the College can engage into:
    - Coffee Table Book- (to celebrate a milestone)
    - Movie Screening
    - Band Playing/Stand up Comedy
    - In-House Loan- a project which can help the Fellows finance expenses at a low interest rate. A separate Committee to handle processing.

### 4. BUILDING COMMITTEE

- a. Interior painting of the PCS building is 85% completed.
- b. Internet Connection
  - To purchase an internet repeater
  - To increase/boost the internet mpbs as needed. Currently, the College subscribes to Converge with 20mbps.

### 5. COMMITTEE ON SOCIALS & SPORTS

1. Swing Fore-A-Cause (Part 2)

As a result of the successful conduct of the 2022 Swing Fore-A-Cause held last December 2, 2022 at the Mount Malarayat Golf and Country Club, Lipa City, Batangas, the Committee is planning to conduct another tournament this year.

The BOR recommended coordination with the PCS Foundation Resource Generation Committee.

2. 79th Annual Clinical Congress Fellowship Night; December 3, 2023 (Sunday); Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City

Proposals:

- The Committee will follow the same program flow as last year.
- To possibly invite for topnotch talents.
- The Committee will request the Board for a 100% increase in budget for entertainment and raffle prizes.

### 6. COMMITTEE ON HMO , PHIC, RVS

- The BOR noted the Committee's meeting with AHMOPI Executive Director, Mr. Carlos D. Da Silva wherein the main agenda was the possible adoption of the current PCS RVS 20202.
- Also a master list of AHMOPI accredited Fellows will be posted in our PCS website for better access of the Fellows.

### 7. COMMITTEE ON TRAUMA

1. Participation - 79th Annual Clinical Congress on December 3-6, 2023 with the theme "Collaborations and Innovations in the Era of Global Surgery"  
To request the Committee on CSE for a 1 ½ hour session which incorporates the sessions of the Committee on Trauma, TIBCC and PSST.  
Board Action: APPROVED.
2. ATLS
  - Possible participation in the regional ATLS Research Contest on October 16, 2023 in Brisbane, Australia
  - To conduct a local trauma research paper contest, the winner of which will represent the Philippines in the said event. (Will post copy of Resident Trauma Papers Competition 2023 on June 12, 2023)

3. S.T.O.P. the BLEED

The BOR approved to schedule the Training the Trainor session on May 4, 2023; 4pm-

A Disaster Preparedness Simulation Exercise will be scheduled during the June 17, 2023 BOR meeting (lunch break)

### 4. BEST

The Committee is finalizing the script and video material for inclusion in the LMS.

### 5. BURNS Updates

- Preparing for the BURN CARE video for LMS
- Will focus on the topic of Safe Transfer for Burn Patients

### 8. TRAUMA, INJURY, BURN COMMISSION

1. The BOR approved the creation of a Committee on Special Vulnerable Group (geriatrics, pregnant women, children and people with disabilities) under the Hospital Care Cluster headed by Dr. Esther A. Saguil.
2. S.T.O.P. The Bleed program was placed under the Disaster Risk Reduction Cluster headed by Dr. Jorge M. Concepcion. Members are Drs. Joel U. Macalino, Andrew Jay G. Pusung, Aileen Patricia M. Madrid, Ma. Adela Nable-Aguilera, Charlie Gundran, Mahar Lagmay, DOH and PMA representative.
3. National S.T.O.P The Bleed to be conducted simultaneously in public schools during the PCS Foundation week celebration in September. All PCS chapters will be represented and trained to serve as the instructors to teach students nationwide.
4. Face to Face S.T.O.P. The Bleed during the PCS 49th Midyear Convention on May 4-5, 2023, at the SMX Convention Center Davao

## 9. COMMITTEE ON CANCER

- PCS Committee on Cancer will participate in the 2023 PSO Annual Convention (September 25-29, 2023). Participating surgical specialties: PSGS, PSCRS, and SOSF
- Cancer Brochures
  - To standardize the format of the Cancer Brochures
  - Will try to get in touch with the DOH for digital dissemination in Community Health Centers all over the country.
  - To distribute these to the PCS Chapters.
- To include a Disclaimer which states that the Cancer Brochures may be re-printed but not to be sold and also to indicate the date of publication.
- Radio Guesting

The Committee is planning to conduct a nationwide radio guesting to spread cancer awareness through radio stations with the widest reach of listeners.

To create PCS Tiktok videos on Cancer – to coordinate with Com. on External Affairs

## 10. SURE COMMISSION

1. SPSA-PCS SURE Rural Surgical Outreach Program
  - Host Hospital: Gubat District Hospital, Gubat, Sorsogon
  - Volunteer Practitioners:
    - o General Surgeon: Dr. Fitzger N. Banzuela
    - o Anesthesiologist: Dr. Jonathan Clark G. Zantua
  - Duration: 3 months
  - Deployment: March 1, 2023
2. SURGICAL MISSIONS
  - March 10-11, 2023 (multi-specialty mission) – Malaybalay, Bukidnon by Sui Generis Missions (Dr. Henry Chua, Mission Director)
    - o Done 92 surgical major procedures in 88 patients; Dental team with 66 patients.
    - o Outreach team gave 300 loot bags/gift packs.
  - March 15-16, 2023 (Multi-specialty Mission) – Bukidnon Provincial Hospital, Maramag, Bukidnon by World Surgical Foundation Philippines (WSFP) and PCS S.U.R.E. Commission in coordination with Northern Mindanao Chapter
    - o Done 78 major and 90 minor operations.
  - April 15-19, 2023 – Oriental Mindoro Provincial Hospital in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro by PCS SURE Commission, WSFP and PALES in coordination with PCS and PSA Southern Tagalog Chapters and PMA Local Component Society
    - o First initiative surgical mission by the Commission – part of the budget from the proceeds of the “Explore Art” Fund-Raising program last September 11-25, 2022, at the Pinto Art Museum.
    - o Done ocular last February 25 by Dr. Eric De Leon, Chair of PCS SURE Committee and PCS SURE Commission Engagement and Outreach Services Committee

- May 2023 – planning to have a surgical outreach after PCS Midyear Convention in Davao, in coordination with Dr. Benedict Edward Valdez
- The Board would also like to inform the Committee that an AV Fistula mission will be sponsored by PATACSI on May 4 at the SPMC,
- May 20-25, 2023 – Abra by the League of Municipality of the Philippines (LMP), PCS SURE Commission and WSFP
  - o March 7-8, 2023: ocular visit done.
- June 13-16, 2023 – Agusan – further details on the next meeting
- July 18-22, 2023 – AFP Camp in Sulu by GMA Kapuso Foundation – further details on the next meeting

## 3. NATIONAL SURGICAL OUTREACH

- A simultaneous major surgery for charity in celebration of the 87th Anniversary of the Philippine College of Surgeons in September.
- In collaboration with Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists (PSA) and Operating Room Nurses Association of the Philippines, Inc. (ORNAP), PCS chapters, sub-specialty societies, training hospitals, medical mission groups and other organizations.
  - Official t-shirts, scrub suits to be worn during the PCS surgical missions
- 4. March 9, 2023, at Conrad Hotel Manila: Exploratory meeting with Philippine Pediatric Society (PPS), Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists (PSA), Philippine Society of Pediatric Anesthesia (PSPA), Philippine Society of Pediatric Surgeons (PSPS) and World Surgical Foundation of the Philippines (WSFP) on the launching of “Colostomy Freedom Project” for children with neglected colostomies in the underserved areas.

## 11. COMMITTEE ON SURGICAL INFECTIONS

1. PSIS Surgical Infections Prevention Awareness Day (SIPA) in collaboration with PCS and ORNAP, will hold a Hybrid Symposium on July 8, 2023; Topic: Changing Paradigms in Surgical Infections
2. 49th Midyear Convention at the SMX Convention Center Davao May 5, 2023 (Friday) ; 10:00-11:00 AM, Committee session: SSI Prevention Protocol in Low-Resource Setting Hospitals
3. Multicenter Research Project Title: “Interim Report on Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Surgical Trainees and Trainers on Certain Aspects of Recommended SSI Prevention Protocols”

The protocol was submitted for technical review by the UP-PGH Department of Surgery and will be forwarded to the UPMREB in two (2) weeks.
4. Other Matters
  - 4.1 To create infographics related to Surgical Infections for dissemination.
  - 4.2 To schedule for media appearances to raise awareness and promote SIPA Day for 10 days of July.

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## 12. COMMITTEE ON CSE

1. 49th Midyear Convention on May 4-5, 2023, at SMX Convention Center Davao  
The BOR approved an additional session by SOSP-PCSDSM: Dr. Alex Lay Tan Memorial Lecture Fulfilling Alex's Dream: The Rebirth of Surgical Oncology in the Philippines  
Speaker: Dr. Rodney B. Dofitas  
Harvest of a Surgical Oncology Program  
Speaker: Dr. Laura Leano-Samonte  
Reactors are Drs. Samuel D. Ang, Shalimar C. Cortez, Nelson D. Cabaluna, Gemma Leonora B. Uy, Gerald T. Alcid, Dakila P. Delos Angeles, Karl T. Morales  
Response: Dr. Jennie Ang  
Chair: Dr. Jose Rhoel C. De Leon

2. 79th Annual Clinical Congress and ASA (Asian Surgical Association) on December 3-6, 2023, at Edsa Shangri-La Hotel Manila; Theme: "COLLABORATIONS AND INNOVATIONS IN THE ERA OF GLOBAL SURGERY"

The BOR APPROVED to invite the proposed international faculty with a budget of USD15,000 to cover their airfare and honoraria. In addition, we will invite faculty from the Asian Surgical Association (ASA).

## 13. COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

1. Activities for the 2023 Foundation Week (September 9 – 15, 2023)
  - 1.1. PCS Bazaar (Saturday, September 9 to Sunday, September 10, 2023)
    - VMMC's Covered basketball court as venue for bazaar and PCS chapters to set up booths.
  - 1.2 Nostalgic Car Show - September 9-10, 2023 (Saturday and Sunday)
  - 1.3. Holy Mass (9 AM, Sunday, September 10, 2023), VMMC Chapel
    - To invite nearby hospitals around the VMMC to attend the Holy Mass.
      - To inform the PCS Chapters to also conduct a Thanksgiving Foundation Week mass simultaneously.
  - 1.4. Golf – tee-off: after the mass – VMMC Golf Course
  - 1.5 PCS Motorcade (10 AM – 12 NN Sunday, September 10, 2023), by Bikers MD
    - To invite the Chapters bikers' group to conduct a simultaneous motorcade
  - 1.6. Blood Letting Activity (Monday, September 11, 2023)
    - To coordinate with the PCS Chapters and hospitals regarding the conduct of the nationwide blood donation activity
    - To prepare the list of participating hospitals as provided by the PCS Chapters
  - 1.7. Foundation Night Dinner - (Tuesday, September 12, 2023)
    - To conduct a simultaneous dinner with the PCS Chapters via online streaming.
    - To request the PCS Chapters to conduct an activity of their choice as part of the main activity

- To encourage all PCS Chapters to join the gathering and it is also a way for all to introduce their officers.
- Sub-committee on Foundation Day Chair and members will coordinate with the Committee on Awards (recipients of various awards) on the set-up and program of the Foundation Night dinner

- 1.8. Surgical Mission and Lay-fora (Wednesday and Thursday, September 13-14, 2023)
  - To be conducted in the PCS Chapters
  - To conduct a national S.T.O.P. the Bleed Program for public schools (in coordination with the TIBCC)
  - The PCS Chapters will have a trained instructor to teach the students
- 1.9. Simultaneous major and medium surgeries
  - To coordinate with the PCS Chapters and the subspecialties through their respective training programs

### 1.10. Fund Raising Activities

1. Art For A-Cause
  - To invite upcoming/newbie artists to join/sell their artworks in order to help and promote their art pieces
  - Proposed mechanics:
    - o To sell tickets and raffle-off one (1) artwork
    - o Each artist will donate one of their artworks.
2. Fashion Show
  - To inquire from AWSP if they are interested to take charge of the activity
  - To assist in promoting the fashion show in order to raise funds with AWSP as the recipient of the proceeds
  - To consider holding the fashion show during the Foundation Week (Thursday, September 13, 2023)
3. Manila Bulletin- to partner for media mileage
  - The PCS will provide the articles in order to update the public on the College's advocacies/activities which will help promote the College
  - Dr. Julyn Aguilar will be the point person for this project.
  - To invite the other publications and provide them with the same documents in order to reach out to a wider readership.

2. Manila Broadcasting Corporation (DZRH)
  - The College will continue participating in the radio program
  - Dr. Loyola to help and directly contact Mr. Henry Uri
3. Meeting with DOH MR-OPV SIA Campaign Meeting held on March 10, 2023.

The meeting was held to get the support of various medical societies and government agencies to help in the vaccination drive of the DOH. The DOH is soliciting the help of the groups in whatever way they can help. If vaccination is going to be done by a group, some of the

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supplies and vaccines can be provided by the DOH. For those who cannot do vaccination drives, support can be given by allowing the DOH to use the society logo in their campaign. Videos can be uploaded featuring the officers of the different societies campaigning for the vaccination of children

Board Action: APPROVED to provide the DOH the PCS logo in the videos.

#### 14. COMMITTEE ON LMS

1. Additional cash prize for the Landing Page participants, to receive Php5,000.00 for each winner. submitted last December 2022:
  1. Elkie Jualayba, MD – Ospital ng Maynila
  2. Gisella Marie L. Adajar, MD – Batangas Medical Center
  3. Jesly O. Gago, MD – UP-Philippine General Hospital
  4. Maxine Mendoza, MD – Asian Hospital and Medical Center

Board Action: APPROVED.

2. To revive the Landing Page contest during 79th Annual Clinical Congress on December 3-6, 2023, and requesting to have a higher cash prize and will be judged by our Board of Regents.
  - Plan to post like poster making contest during 79th Annual Clinical Congress
  - Plan to give to the one grand prize winner amounting Php 20K-25K

Board Action: APPROVED.

#### 15. COMMITTEE ON SURGICAL RESEARCH

1. Participation – 79th Annual Clinical Congress on December 3-6, 2023, Edsa Shangri-La Hotel. The theme “Collaboration and Innovations in the Era of Global Surgery”.

Proposed Board of Judges for the Champion of Champions:

- Ma. Stephanie Fay S. Cagayan, MD – OB
- Catherine S. Co, MD – Colon
- Sigrid Agcaoili, MD – CTRU of NKTI / URO

Board Action: APPROVED.

2. Ethics Reviewer Officers – ERB SOP TEAM
  - 1.1 Hiring of an Ethics Reviewer Officer
  - 1.2 To have a dedicated/permanent cellphone or landline number for administrative staff use only

Board Action: APPROVED

#### 16. COMMITTEE ON SURGICAL TRAINING

1. Academic Incentive

To schedule a deadline for the submission of the awardees based on the last in-service exam that is given for the year.

- 3 months after the last in-service exams (RITE and CERES)

Board Action: APPROVED

2. To send out letters to the PCS Chapters and Subspecialties informing them that there will be two (2) sessions for the Interesting Case Presentation during the 2023 ACC.
3. PCS initiative on developing a Postgraduate Surgical Curriculum

The committee will function as a whole to be spearheaded by Dr. Joy Jerusalem. The Committee will invite Dr. Warren Roraldo, Dr. Rannie Rabe-Baquiran and Dr. Cenon Alfonso as advisers.

To create curriculum and submit to CHED

Board Action: APPROVED

#### 17. COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

1. Search Subcommittee

1.1. Composition of Search Subcommittee, 2023 (By Rotation)

Chapters:

- |                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Metro Manila Chapter        | Dr. Ferdinand Y. Syfu  |
| • North Eastern Luzon Chapter | Dr. Jumer C. Cadelina  |
| • Cordillera Chapter          | Dr. Noli V. Velasquez  |
| • Panay Chapter               | Dr. Ryan Ed S. Comuelo |
| • Northern Mindanao Chapter   | Dr. Hanisah G. Guro    |

Subspecialty Societies:

- |           |                            |
|-----------|----------------------------|
| • PSGS    | Dr. Jaime B. Lagunilla     |
| • PSTS    | Dr. Rose Marie R. Lique    |
| • PATACSI | Dr. Nelson S. Bambalan     |
| • PUA     | Dr. Eli Paulino F. Madrona |
| • PSO-HNS | Dr. Candice Que Ansonge    |

(Note: The Committee stated that if, for whatever reason, the Chapter/Subspecialty President declines his membership to the Search Sub-committee, the next highest-ranking officer (should be a Fellow) will replace him/her.)

Board Action: APPROVED.

1.2. Appointment of Chair – Dr. Rose Marie R. Lique

Board Action: APPROVED.

2. Other Matters

2.1. New Sub-specialty Society – Surgical Oncology Society of the Philippines (recognized in 2022)

The Committee was informed of the recently recognized sub-specialty society of the College, the SOSOP.

The Committee expressed concern on the following:

- Affiliate societies creating their own specialty boards and applying for PCS recognition as a sub-specialty society
- If a Fellow who is not certified by these specialty boards, will this make him/her less qualified to perform such procedure?
- To set up guidelines for these new sub-specialty societies; will they have the same privileges as the



existing subspecialty societies? What guidelines does the College have for these new societies who will inevitably form their own examining boards? What is the impact on the composition of the Search subcommittee?

- Focus practice designation

## 18. COMMITTEE ON MEMBERSHIP

1. The Committee further discussed the optimizing and securing of the Master list of PCS Members as a priority. Emphasis was placed on how to address senior Fellows whose whereabouts cannot be verified. The following was suggested: Drop after 3 years of delinquency.
2. Currently, there are 192 Fellows with arrears. The Board mentioned that if a Fellow with arrears would still want to continue his fellowship after being dropped from the roster of members, he/she can apply through the Simplified Application of Subspecialty Society Members.
3. As the BOR approved the proposal to assign a registration number for the Resident Members (much like the PCS number for the Fellows), the committee discussed ways of increasing the participation of the residents during the PCS conventions.
4. The Committee discussed the issue of “non-PCS Fellows” being discouraged or prevented from being invited as speakers during PCS Conventions. While the College has preference inviting its own Fellows as speakers, inviting non-Fellows is also another way of encouraging them to apply for Fellowship.
5. Efforts to encourage delinquent fellows to update their status:
  - a. Easy-payment schemes
  - b. Engage the local PCS Chapter (of the delinquent Fellows)
  - c. Allow them to apply thru simplified route.
6. The PCS Directory of Fellows was discussed. Specifically, the issue of a Fellow being “searchable” on the internet was raised. It was suggested to coordinate with the appropriate PCS committee to (SICT) address how to make it easy for the public to access relevant information of the Fellows while maintaining security and privacy.
7. The Committee will (again) reach out to the local chapters for them to check on their senior Fellows who may have missed payment of the FAP especially in the last 2-3 years during the pandemic.
8. The issuance of new PCS Identification cards with the advantages and benefits (from industry and non-industry partners) attached to it was discussed.
9. The eFAP forms have been posted to our viber groups to increase awareness.  
It will also be disseminated during succeeding Chapter inductions.  
In addition, the Board APPROVED the special induction of Dr. Juan Agustin Coruña (orthopedics, during the Tripartite Conference on March 18, 2023 hosted by the Panay Chapter. Dr. Coruña was unable to join the induction ceremonies last December 2022 because of his flight cancellation back to Manila.

## 19. COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS

1. Full-page print media advertisement of the 2023 MYC either in Manila Bulletin or Philippine Star.  
Board Action: DISAPPROVED. May we request your Committee to communicate with the Manila Bulletin representative to discuss the possibility of having an

exchange deal as a long-term media partner. This will result to media mileage for the College.  
Also, please study the possibility of being featured in their Panorama Magazine.

2. To print copies of the 2023 MYC poster to be distributed to the different chapters & training medical centers  
Board Action: DISAPPROVED, as an alternative: Facebook Boost
3. Design an animated digital poster for the combined 2023 ACC & ASA Congress
  - Proposed Budget (to be taken from the approved committee budget for Marketing) – Php3,500 (payment for outsourced animator artist)
  - Proposed designs will be presented in the next BOR meeting in April  
Board Action: Poster should be ready in time for the MYC 2023
4. Ardent appeal to the BOR to please reconsider and allow printing of at least 800 copies of the 1st issue of Incisions to be distributed during the 2023 MYC  
Board Action: To print 500 copies in time for the MYC 2023 (by demand); this will not be placed inside the convention kit.  
Also, the Board suggested to instead distribute USBs instead of a convention kit. The USB will contain the eFAP, Incisions, PCS Directory. Printed copies of the convention flier containing the program will be distributed on-site.

## 20. COMMITTEE ON SICT

1. Renewal of contracts with Quatro Cantos approved by the BOR:
  - 1.1. PCS Mobile Application  
Amount: Php147,840.00
  - 1.2. PCS 49th Midyear Convention Online Registration including Payment Features  
Amount: Php77,000.00
  - 1.3. Renewal of PCS website  
Amount: Php87,360.00

## 21. COMMITTEE ON AWARDS

1. Reiterating the Committee suggestions relevant to the tasks of the Committee on Awards:
  - 1.1 The Metro Manila Chapter President not be included in the Committee. The reason for the inclusion of the MMC President (in 2014) was to familiarize the National Committee with the processes and criteria of the award, which was originally started by the Chapter in 2002.
  - 1.2 The Committee's attention has been likewise called on the MMC President's presence where the Outstanding Chapter Award is on the agenda.  
Board Action: APPROVED.
2. The Committee likewise requested that the criteria on Outstanding Affiliate Society and Specialty Society be reviewed to make it more relevant to the approved mission/vision statement of the society rather than competing on the same parameter with the Specialty Societies of the College.  
Board Action: APPROVED.

# Philippine National Cancer Summit Calls for Urgent, Collaborative Actions to Bridge Gaps in Cancer Care

February 28, 2023 - OVER 1,500 healthcare professionals, cancer patients, and business leaders gathered at the Philippine National Cancer Summit (PNCS) last Feb. 23-24, calling for a whole-of-society approach to advance the cancer care system in the country.

Held in line with the National Cancer Awareness Month, the Summit, organized by the Philippine College of Surgeons Cancer Commission Foundation (PCS CanCom), together with the Philippine Cancer Society and Cancer Coalition Philippines, brought together advocates and prime movers in the medical community, patient and survivor groups, academic and research institutions, industry partners, private sector, local government units, and key national stakeholders.

PCS CanCom Chairman Dr. Manuel Francisco T. Roxas said PNCS provided an opportunity to discuss how various sectors can communicate, complement, and collaborate to bridge gaps in cancer care, including the lack of accessible financing opportunities for cancer patients and siloed approach in addressing cancer. The two-day summit featured in-depth discussions for patients, healthcare providers, healthcare professionals, and finance and private industries.



“Through it all, we learned how important it was for us medical practitioners to listen to patients and to see their struggles with cancer beyond the clinics,” Roxas said. “For this Summit, we wanted the participants to go home with a clearer understanding that comprehensive cancer care requires a whole-of-society approach. That each one of us has a role to play in the implementation of a truly working NICCA.”

PNCS built on the impending implementation of the National Integrated Cancer Control Act (NICCA), which aims to boost cancer control efforts, improve survivorship and reduce burden to Filipino patients and carers. NICCA was signed into law following lobbying efforts led by the Cancer Coalition Philippines, supported by patient organizations.

Among the promises of NICCA is the establishment of Cancer Assistance Fund, which will provide financial

assistance for the screening, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of financially-challenged patients, and the expansion of benefits for cancer patients under PhilHealth.

Kara Magsanoc-Alikpala, founding president of ICanServe Foundation and vice president for internal affairs at Cancer Coalition Foundation, said despite challenges and delays in NICCA’s full implementation, efforts that led to the signing of the law are examples of collaboration that will provide inclusive and integrated services for Filipino cancer patients.

“If we don’t collaborate, we will always be stuck with pilot projects that will never scale. We have to map everyone’s initiatives and see how they are all connected. The more private and public groups collaborate, the wider and bigger the impact,” said Magsanoc-Alikpala, who also serves as a director at PCS CanCom. “We must step on the gas. No time for excuses.”

In a video message, Vice President Sara Duterte said “our collaborative efforts are important in ensuring better access to quality cancer care, especially to our kababayans who are unable to afford it.” Vice President Duterte also emphasized that a whole-of-society approach can lead to the development of new and better ways to address cancer and its impact to Filipino families.

Meanwhile, Health Undersecretary and OIC Dr. Maria Rosario S. Vergeire said the Department of Health will continue to implement programs to attain affordable and accessible services for cancer patients “through public awareness and people-centered care.”

Cancer is now the third leading cause of death in the country with over 153,000 new cases and 254 deaths reported every day. Breast, lung, and colorectal cancers are the top three cancer incidences, while lung cancer ranks first in mortality.





# The 78th Annual Clinical Congress

## Quality Surgery For All

• Rhoderick M. Casis, MD, FPCS •

The Philippine College of Surgeons held its 78th Annual Clinical Congress last December 4-7, 2022 at the EDSA Shangrila Hotel. This marked a significant milestone as it was the first Congress with a face-to-face component since 2020. The hybrid congress highlighted the need of the country to provide quality surgical care for our countrymen. This annual event by the Philippine College of Surgeons is meant to enhance our capabilities in providing quality surgical service to Filipinos and foster fellowship among the surgeons in the country. The College has grown to almost 3,000 Fellow members and is recognized internationally as the mother society of various surgical specialty and subspecialty societies in the country.

The theme of the Annual Clinical Congress was “Quality Surgery for All.” With the theme, the PCS aimed to “discuss ways to ensure the highest standard of care for surgical patients through desired healthcare outcomes consistent with current professional standards.” The congress was venue to provide surgeons, residents, students of various surgical specialties and allied professionals with new concepts and knowledge that will help them in their practice and in training future doctors and surgeons that our country greatly needs. Various subspecialties and component societies participated in this momentous activity which catered to the needs of the different participants for them to get the most benefit out of the time that they will sacrifice to attend the congress.

The PCS invited various prominent local and international experts in surgery to share their knowledge and experience to help our surgeons, residents and students to understand the various concepts of surgery. The speakers were carefully chosen from various prominent local and international surgical societies based on their knowledge and expertise. The diverse topics discussed ranged from new technologies in surgery to defining quality in

surgery. Various surgical subspecialty topics were also discussed to provide a venue for surgeons and residents with a special interest in particular subspecialties of surgery.

The PCS Annual Clinical Congress 2022 provided the year-end event of inducting its new Fellows into the College during the Opening Ceremonies. The G. T. Singnian Lecturer was Dr. Domingo Alvear. The Annual Congress witnessed the induction of its new fellows and the election the new Board of Regents for the year 2023.

Philippine College of Surgeons Foundation Inc.  
Philippine College of Surgeons  
78TH ANNUAL CLINICAL CONGRESS  
QUALITY SURGERY FOR ALL  
DECEMBER 4-7, 2022  
EDSA SHANGRI-LA HOTEL  
MANDALUYONG CITY, PHILIPPINES  
PCS Secretariat Landline:  
(632) 8927 4973 to 74 / 8928 1083 / 8929 2359  
Email: secretariat@pcs.org.ph Website: pcs.org.ph  
SCAN ME

# Short Update on HMO that a PCS Fellow Must Know

• Domingo C. Sampang, MD, FPCS •

For every fellow to understand, there are two existing groups of HMOs in our country. One is Association of Health Maintenance of the Philippines, Inc. (AHMOPI) and the other is Philippine Association of HMO Companies (PAHMOC).

The following are the HMO members of AHMOPI:

HMO members:

1. ASALUS CORPORATION (INTELLICARE)
2. AVEGA MANAGED CARE, INC.
3. CARITAS HEALTH SHIELD, INC.
4. FORTICARE HEALTH SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL, INC.
5. GETWELL HEALTH SYSTEMS, INC.
6. HEALTH MAINTENANCE, INC.
7. HEALTH PLAN PHILIPPINES, INC.
8. INSULAR HEALTH CARE, INC.
9. MEDICARD PHILIPPINES, INC.
10. MEDICARE PLUS, INC.
11. PACIFIC CROSS HEALTH CARE, INC.
12. VALUE CARE HEALTH SYSTEMS, INC.

NON HMO members:

1. COCOLIFE HEALTH CARE (A DIVISION OF UNITED COCONUT PLANTERS LIFE ASSURANCE CORPORATION)

On the other hand, the following are the HMO members of PAHMOC:

1. ASIANCARE HEALTH SYSTEMS, INC.
2. CAREHEALTH PLUS SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL, INC.
3. CAREWELL HEALTH SYSTEMS, INC.
4. EASTWEST HEALTH CARE, INC.
5. IMS WEILTH CARE, INC.
6. KAISER INTERNATIONAL HEALTH GROUP
7. LIFE AND HEALTH HMP, INC.
8. MAXICARE HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
9. MEDOCARE HEALTH SYSTEMS, INC.
10. OPTIMUM MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, INC.
11. PHILHEALTH CARE, INC.
12. WELLCARE HEALTH MAINTENANCE

At present, all the professional surgical fees paid for by these HMOs are based on the 2009 RVS(Relative Value Scale) Manual.

In 2020, the PCS Committee on HMO under the leadership of Dr Fernando Lopez (Chairman on Committee on HMO) and Dr Joselito Mendoza (PCS Regent-in charge) updated and revised the 2009 RVS using the 2015 Modified Scheme based on a point system devised by all representatives of each specialty society under the PCS. This was used in scientifically computing for the relative value units (RVUs) thus increasing the RVUs of each procedure from different cutting specialties. New procedures especially breast and laparoscopic cases were also included in this Revised RVS of 2020.

The revised Manual was presented to AHMOPI and PAHMOC in 2020. Initially, one group was receptive to the revision but eventually, both PAHMOC and AHMOPI held the proposal at bay because of the pandemic. They also argued that their clients have already been made to understand in their contracts with the HMOs, that the surgical fees are fixed which are based on the existing 2009 Manual. Changing the rates in the midst of their contracts and with their customers having paid only a certain premium, would mean losses for the HMOs.

The Committee proposed to the HMO groups that the revised RVS manual be applied only to the 20 most common general surgical procedures and the most common surgical procedures of other surgical specialties. These procedures will have multipliers from at least 50-100. Expectedly, both could not agree on the multiplier. The committee proposed the higher multiplier but the HMO groups wanted the lower one.

At a certain point, the committee decided to conduct a survey involving all Fellows of PCS to ask if they would approve that the PCS Board of Regents insists to the two HMO groups that they adopt the revised 2020 Manual of RVS. The result showed an overwhelming approval from the Fellows. However, this did not materialize because of the arguments presented by the HMOs in relation to the PCS proposal. We are at a deadlock.



Last year, 2022, the committee negotiated with the HMOs and Fellows who signed the Universal Service Agreement (USA) entered into a MOA where the multiplier for RVS cases was increased by 15 points but still using the 2009 RVS. So ward cases now have a multiplier of 135 from 120 and suite rooms from 140 to 155. Additional benefits are the retention of the Php 600 consultation fees which expired for non-PCS Fellows since the easing of the pandemic, and a corresponding Php 100-150 increase of daily rounds fees for admitted, non-operated surgical patients.

Take note that all Fellows must have signed the new Universal Service Agreement (USA) starting 2022 onwards in order to avail this 15 point increase in the multiplier and other benefits. Those who have signed in 2020 and 2021 are already invalidated.

In one of the recent dialogues between the committee and the President of all the HMOs, the proposal to adopt the Revised 2020 RVUs was again raised. However, the counter argument of the HMOs was that, if the Revised 2020 Manual is approved by the Philippine Health Insurance Company (PHIC), only then will they agree in applying it to the different surgical procedures.

The PCS Committee furnished a copy of the revised 2020 Manual of RVUs to Philippine Health Insurance Company (PHIC) for consideration. However, PHIC was quite indifferent in acting on the proposal because of their already existing case rates. The assigned RVS units do not apply to PHIC anymore. With this predicament, we are being pushed to the wall.

With the Universal Health Care Law, Philhealth is now gearing towards Disease-Related Groupings and is now shifting from RVS to ICD codes. Philhealth is also reminding us on its guidelines on enterolysis. The Memorandum on Medical Evaluation Guide on Claims for Enterolysis as Primary or Secondary Procedure Annex J of March 7, 2011 states that enterolysis, defined as surgical division of intestinal adhesions with RVS code of 44005 and RVU of 450 shall only apply to severe adhesions and/or with concomitant sign and symptoms of intestinal obstruction under the following conditions:

1. Enterolysis is the primary procedure performed (e.g. Enterolysis for intestinal obstruction due to post-operative adhesions)

- a. Final diagnosis in the operative record should indicate previous history of surgery if present (e.g. intestinal obstruction due to post operative adhesions).
- b. Description on the extent of adhesions should be stated in the operating room record (e.g. generalized adhesions involving majority of small intestines).

2. Adhesiolysis/Enterolysis is performed as a secondary procedure (e.g. Total Abdominal Hysterectomy RVU 200) with incidental findings of severe adhesions involving the sigmoid colon due to endometriosis) when any of the following are present:

- a. Multiple, dense and severe adhesions (more than one quadrant)
- b. Adhesions cover the primary site (ovarian malignancy covered by intestinal adhesions)
- c. The procedure adds considerable time to the operative procedure by at least two (2) hours from the usual duration of the operation of the primary procedure; and,
- d. Increased risk of morbidity and mortality to the patient (patient developed significant hypotension or blood loss during surgery)

The intra-operative findings that required the performance of enterolysis should be reflected in the OR record (e.g. severe adhesions covering the sigmoid colon). Health care providers may be requested to submit claim Form 3 or Clinical abstract if necessary for the evaluation of claims for Enterolysis (RVS44005) by Philhealth Regional Offices-Benefit Administration Section (along with the operative room technique when data in the OR record does not sufficiently reflect the above mentioned criteria).

Last month, the Committee met with the leadership of AHMOPI to possibly adopt the 2022 RVS for 2023. Salient points were explained and AHMOPI seemed receptive to our request. Let's just keep our fingers crossed for a positive outcome.

Rest assured that the PCS Committee on HMO is doing its best in prioritizing the welfare of each Fellow from different cutting specialties. Let us remember that the HMOs are here to stay. But the Committee will continue to engage with them with the best interests of our fellows, our utmost concern.



# COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS, 2023

## COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS:

Chair: Ponciano M. Bernardo Jr. MD  
Commissioners: Vicente Q. Arguelles, MD  
Roman L. Belmonte Jr., MD  
Willie N. Lagdameo, MD  
Francisco Y. Arcellana Jr., MD

## CLUSTER A: NATIONAL PROGRAMS (Trauma, Cancer, Outreach Services, Infection Control)

Head: Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas, MD

## COMMITTEE ON HEALTH MAINTENANCE ORGANIZATION (HMO) (INCLUDING PHIC)

Chair: Fernando L. Lopez, MD  
Co - Chair: Edmundo R. Mercado, MD  
Members: Joselito M Mendoza, MD  
Abdel Jeffri A. Abdulla, MD  
Jose Y. Chua Jr., MD  
Mary Geraldine B. Remucal, MD  
Jose Christopher Sanchez, MD  
Carlos E. Ejercito Jr., MD  
Domingo C. Sampang, MD

Society: Richard John C. Pecson, MD (POA)  
Representatives: Jardine S. Lua, MD (PUA)

Regent-in-Charge: Josefino I. Sanchez, MD

### Tasks:

- To review PCS-PAHMOC & PCS-AHMOPI MOA due to expire.
- To come up with a certificate to be issued to Fellows for purposes of AHMOPI and PAHMOC accreditation.
- To finalize collation of RUVs of surgical procedures
- To re-negotiate the RVS with PAHMOC and AHMOPI

## AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON UHC:

Chair: Enrique T. Ona, MD  
Co-Chair: Jose Antonio M. Salud, MD  
Members: Antonio S. Say, MD  
Vivencio Jose P. Villaflor III, MD  
Esperanza R. Lahoz, MD  
Ramoncito C. Magnaye, MD  
Joselito M. Mendoza, MD  
Teodoro J. Herbosa, MD  
Rey Melchor F. Santos, MD  
Enrico P. Ragaza, MD  
Jose Rhoel C. De Leon, MD  
Roberto A. Chacon Jr., MD

Regent-in-Charge: Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas, MD

## AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON PHYSICIANS ACT

Chair: George G. Lim, MD  
Members: Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas, MD (PCS)  
Alan T. Koa, MD (PSP)  
Efren J. Domingo, MD (POGS)  
Peñafrancia C. Cano, MD (PSA)  
Diana A. Payawal, MD (PCP)  
Karin Estepa-Garcia, MD (PAFP)  
Florentina Uy-Ty, MD (PPS)  
Imarzen V. Elepaño, MD (PCR)

Regent-in-charge: Esperanza R. Lahoz, MD

## COMMITTEE ON TRAUMA (NATIONAL TRAUMA PROGRAM)

Commission Director: Teodoro J. Herbosa, MD  
Chair: Jorge M. Concepcion, MD  
Co-Chair: Maria Cheryl L. Cucueco, MD  
Members: Chandler E. Andrade, MD  
Maria Concepcion O. General, MD

Regent-in-Charge: Orlando O. Ocampo, MD

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON ATLS

Chair: Raymund F. Resurreccion, MD  
National Director: Enrico P. Ragaza, MD  
Members: Jorge M. Concepcion, MD  
Warren M. Roraldo, MD  
Andrew Jay G. Pusung, MD  
Jennifer Tan, MD (By Invitation)

## SUBCOMMITTEE ON BEST

Chair: Halima R. Romancap, MD  
Members: Aileen Patricia M. Madrid, MD  
Edgar A. Palacol, MD  
Andrew Jay G. Pusung, MD  
Maria Benita T. Gatmaitan, MD

## SUBCOMMITTEE ON BETTER

Chair: Aileen Patricia M. Madrid, MD  
Member: Joseph T. Juico, MD  
Edgar A. Palacol, MD  
Andrew Jay G. Pusung, MD  
Maria Benita T. Gatmaitan, MD  
Rolando F. Dela Cruz, MD

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON BURNS

Chair: Ma. Adela Nable-Aguilera, MD  
Members: Edmundo R. Mercado, MD  
Maria Redencion Abella, MD  
Gene Gerald SJ. Tiongco, MD  
Nikki Eileen S. Valencia, MD  
Kathrina Victoria B. Angeles, MD  
Lora Mae A. De Guzman, MD  
Leo Angelo D. Doble, MD  
Gerald Marion M. Abesamis, MD  
Trishalyn Mae M. Correa, MD (By Invitation)

Regent-in-Charge: Jose Joven V. Cruz, MD

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON CRITICAL CARE & NUTRITION

Chair: Jesus Fernando B. Inciong, MD  
Members: Alexander S. Quilaton, MD  
Eduardo C. Ayuste Jr., MD  
Joseph T. Juico, MD  
Romarico M. Azores Jr., MD  
Aileen Patricia M. Madrid, MD  
Danilo C. Del Rosario, MD

## COMMITTEE ON CANCER (NATIONAL CANCER PROGRAM)

Commission Director: Manuel Francisco T. Roxas, MD  
Chair: Robert B. Bandalon, MD  
Members: Ida Marie T. Lim, MD  
Jose Modesto B. Abellera III, MD

# COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS, 2023

Alex S. Sua, MD  
 Shalimar C. Cortez, MD  
 Ralph Lazarus R. Rapacon, MD (BOG rep.)  
 Aldine Astrid A. Basa, MD  
 Catherine S. Co, MD  
 Anthony Q. Yap, MD  
 Catherine SC Teh, MD  
 Bennie Dick C. Catangay, MD  
 Gerald T. Alcid, MD  
 Marie Dione P. Sacdalan, MD  
 Jose Rhoel C. De Leon, MD  
 Lauralee L. Samonte, MD  
 Ma. Dulce L. Consuegra, MD  
 Rose Belle E. Sucgang, MD  
 Alfred Phillip O. De Dios, MD

Regent-in-Charge: Manuel Francisco T. Roxas, MD

## COMMITTEE ON SURE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES (National Program on Outreach Services)

Commission Director: Beda R. Espineda, MD  
 Chair: Rhoderick C. De Leon, MD  
 Co-Chair: Rouel Mateo M. Azores, MD  
 Members: Enrique Hilario O. Esguerra, MD  
 Miguel C. Mendoza, MD  
 Vincent Paul C. Olalia, MD  
 Raymund Andrew G. Ong, MD  
 Eric SM. Talens, MD  
 Alan L. Ramos Jr., MD (BOG rep)

Regent-in-Charge: Dures Fe E. Tagayuna, MD

### Tasks:

- To set-up/formulate data base needed for the project on Task Shifting
- To oversee initial state of the Tash Shifting program in cooperation with the PAFP and PCS Sub-committee on Primary Care Surgery
- To study the implementation of the Adopt-A-Hospital Program
- To continue the National Surgical Outreach Program
- To implement the PCS-SPSA Scholarship Program

## COMMITTEE ON SURGICAL INFECTIONS (National Infection Control Program)

Chair: Esther A. Saguil, MD  
 Co-Chair: Miguel Gary D. Galvez, MD  
 Members: Maria Cielo G. Ampuan, MD (PSCRS)  
 John Melden M. Cruz, MD  
 George Robert L. Uyquiengco, MD  
 Renato R. Montenegro, MD  
 Eduardo T. Aro Jr., MD (PSTS)  
 Justine Andrea P. Molina, MD (PAPRAS)  
 Nilo T. Paner, MD (Ortho, By Invitation)  
 Gabriel F. Naig, RN (By Invitation)  
 Rosario G. Dumangon, RN (ORNAP President)

Regent-in-Charge: Jose Joven V. Cruz, MD

### Tasks:

- To consider compliance of hospitals to antibiotic stewardship.
- To review the manual on Antibiotic Prophylaxis

- To collaborate with Pfizer on the Surgical Infection project in coordination with the surgical specialty societies

## CLUSTER B: SURGICAL EDUCATION

Head: Vivencio Jose P. Villaflor III, MD

## COMMITTEE ON CONVENTIONS

Chair: Vivencio Jose P. Villaflor III, MD  
 Members: Joselito M. Mendoza, MD  
 Jose Rhoel C. De Leon, MD  
 Esperanza R. Lahoz, MD  
 Alfred Phillip O. De Dios, MD  
 (CSE & Physical Arrangements)  
 Julyn A. Aguilar, MD  
 (Publications & Documentations)  
 Ferdinand Y. Syfu, MD  
 (Socials & Sports; ACC 2024)  
 Alfred Q. Lasala II, MD (MYC 2023)  
 Andrei Cesar S. Abella, MD (ACC 2023)  
 Maria Cheryl L. Cucueco, MD (MYC 2024)

## COMMITTEE ON CONTINUING SURGICAL EDUCATION

Chair: Alfred Phillip O. De Dios, MD  
 Members: Andrei Cesar S. Abella, MD  
 (ACC 2023 & Primary Care)  
 Alfred Q. Lasala, MD (MYC 2023)  
 Ma. Rica M. Lumague, MD (Postgrad Course)  
 Jeffrey Geronimo P. Domino, MD  
 (Regular member)  
 Raymond Joseph R. Manzo, MD (Webinars)  
 Leonardo O. Ona III, MD (Regular member)  
 Maria Cheryl L. Cucueco (MYC 2024)  
 Ferdinand Y. Syfu, MD (ACC 2024)

Regent-in-Charge: Esperanza R. Lahoz, MD

### Tasks:

- To coordinate with the Sub-committee on Website
- To identify the Chairs for the MYC 2024 and ACC 2024

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON MYC 2023:

Chair: Alfred Q. Lasala II, MD  
 Members: Jan Andrew D. Bueno, MD  
 Nicola Rafaela Tison, MD  
 Aileen Patricia M. Madrid, MD  
 Jeffrey Jeronimo P. Domino, MD  
 Billy James G. Uy, MD  
 Domingo C. Sampang, MD  
 Maria Cheryl L. Cucueco, MD  
 Andrei Cesar S. Abella, MD  
 Ferdinand Y. Syfu, MD  
 Leonardo O. Ona III, MD

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON ACC 2023:

Chair: Andrei Cesar S. Abella, MD  
 Members: Maria Cheryl L. Cucueco, MD  
 Alfred Q. Lasala II, MD  
 Leonardo O. Ona III, MD  
 Manuel S. Tesoro Jr., MD (CDO)  
 Karen D. Mascardo, MD (Batangas)  
 Katherine M. Panganiban, MD

# COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS, 2023

Rene Ronson G. Ang, MD  
Joseph Roy F. Fuentes, MD  
Edmund Cedric A. Orlina, MD  
Benedict Edward P. Valdez, MD (Davao)  
Albertson R. Gumarao, MD  
Banny Bay C. Genuino, MD (Baguio)  
Josil R. Cruz, MD  
Jon Paolo C. Chua, MD (PSGS rep)

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON MYC 2024:

Chair: Maria Cheryl L. Cucueco, MD  
Members: Nicola Raphaela R. Tison, MD  
Jan Andrew D. Bueno, MD  
Billy James G. Uy, MD  
Francis M. Roque, MD  
Edmund Cedric A. Orlina, MD  
Raymond Joseph R. Manzo, MD

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON ACC 2024:

Chair: Ferdinand Y. Syfu, MD  
Members: Roel C. Peña, MD  
Raymond Joseph R. Manzo, MD  
Joan S. Tagorda, MD  
Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, MD  
Billy James G. Uy, MD  
Jose Paolo C. Porciuncula, MD  
Omar O. Ocampo, MD  
Rannie R. Baguiran, MD

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON MYC 2025:

Chair: Raymond Joseph R. Manzo, MD

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON ACC 2025:

Chair: Omar O. Ocampo, MD

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON WEBINARS:

Chair: Raymond Joseph Manzo, MD  
Members: Christine G. Fausto, MD  
Amabelle A. Moreno, MD  
Francis M. Roque, MD  
Edmund Cedric A. Orlina, MD  
Anthony L. Dofitas, MD

## Plus: Representatives from the sub-specialties

### Tasks:

- To monitor and coordinate schedule of webinars, conventions and CPDs in coordination with the surgical specialties.
- To provide the surgical specialties and Chapters the guidelines on the conduct of webinars
- To update the CPD requirements as an accredited provider

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON PRIMARY CARE SURGERY FOR FAMILY PHYSICIANS

Chair: Andrei Cesar S. Abella, MD  
Members: Maria Cheryl L. Cucueco, MD  
Alfred Q. Lasala II, MD  
Leonardo O. Ona III, MD  
Alfred Phillip O. De Dios, MD

## COMMITTEE ON LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)

Chair: Warren M. Roraldo, MD  
Members: Marie Dion S. Sacdalan, MD  
Michael M. Lawenko, MD  
Raymond Joseph R. Manzo, MD  
Alvin G. Jalimao - I.T  
Aireen Patricia M. Madrid, MD  
Peter S. Quiaoit, MD  
Fernando A. Melendres, MD  
Gerald Marion M. Abesamis, MD  
Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, MD  
Christine G. Fausto, MD  
Banny Bay C. Genuino, MD  
Jose Modesto B. Abellera III, MD  
Halima R. Mokamad, MD  
Shiela S. Macalindong, MD  
Karen B. Latorre, MD  
Shiela Jane Lampa-Garcia, MD (By Invitation)  
Deejay Pacheco, MD (By Invitation)  
Christelle Anne M. Almanon, MD (By Invitation)

Regent-in-Charge: Orlando O. Ocampo, MD

## JOINT ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

Chair: Edgar A. Baltazar, MD  
Co-Chair: Alfred H. Belmonte, MD  
Members: Robert C. So, MD  
Jose Y. Cueto Jr., MD

Regent-in-Charge: Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas, MD

Sub-specialties: Chairs of Accreditation Committee

## COMMITTEE ON SURGICAL RESEARCH

Chair: Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, MD  
Co-Chair: Jose Modesto B. Abellera III, MD  
Members: Clarence Pio Rey C. Yacapin, MD  
Esther A. Saguil, MD  
Jose Benito A. Abraham, MD  
Mayeen D. Fernandez, MD  
Ida Marie T. Lim, MD  
Raymond Joseph R. Manzo, MD  
Jennifer Ann C. Mercado, MD  
Maila Rose L. Torillo, MD  
Apple P. Valparaiso, MD  
Francis M. Roque, MD  
Anthony R. Perez, MD  
Vilma Jane S. Yacapin, MD  
Gemma Leonora B. Uy, MD  
Rodney B. Dofitas, MD  
Ma. Concepcion L. Cruz, MD

Regent-in-Charge: Ma. Luisa D. Aquino, MD

### Tasks:

- To embark on the creation of the PCS ERB/national research center
- To update the National Surgical Manpower Study



# COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS, 2023

## COMMITTEE ON SURGICAL TRAINING

Chair: Andrew Jay G. Pusung, MD  
 Co-Chair: Jesus Fernando B. Inciong, MD  
 Members: Amihan A. Banaag, MD  
 Ma. Amornetta J. Casupang, MD  
 Joel C. Celaje IV, MD  
 Janix M. De Guzman, MD  
 Natasha E. Elazegui, MD  
 Genevieve P. Evangelista, MD  
 Raymund Andrew G. Ong, MD  
 Hilda M. Sagayaga, MD

Plus: Juan Alejandro Sotto, MD (PSTS)  
 Vicente Francisco Q. Firmalo, MD (PAPRAS)  
 Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, MD (PSGS)

Residents Group: Gerson Contreras, MD (PSOHS)  
 Brayan Geoffrey Arce, MD (PURA)

Regent-in-Charge: Dures Fe E. Tagayuna, MD

### Task:

- To share best practices in surgical training including the NOTSS program

## CLUSTER C: MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Head: Joselito M. Mendoza, MD

## COMMITTEE ON ETHICS & JUDICIAL MATTERS

Chair: Alfred H. Belmonte, MD  
 Members: Ramon L. de Vera, MD  
 Ma. Rica D. Mirasol-Lumague, MD  
 Gabriel L. Martinez, MD  
 Jose Vicente T. Prodigalidad, MD  
 Alejandro C. Dizon, MD  
 Atty. Jesus M. Disini Jr. (by invitation)

Regent-in-Charge: Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas, MD

## COMMITTEE ON BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS

Chair: Emmanuel D. Loyola, MD, LIB  
 Members: Teresita R. Sanchez, MD  
 Hector M. Santos Jr., MD  
 Servando Sergio DC Simangan Jr., MD  
 Emmanuel D. Loyola, MD (BOG Rep)  
 Roy Joseph T. Trinidad, MD  
 Darius R. Pariñas, MD  
 Atty. Jesus M. Disini Jr. (by invitation)

Regent-in-Charge: Joselito M. Mendoza, MD

## Ad-hoc Committee on Professional Integration

Chair: Esperanza R. Lahoz, MD  
 Members: Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas, MD  
 Rodney B. Dofitas, MD  
 Ramon S. Inso, MD  
 Jaime Lagunilla, MD  
 Ma. Luisa D. Aquino, MD  
 Orlando O. Ocampo, MD  
 Rex A. Madrigal, MD  
 Dures Fe E. Tagayuna, MD  
 Renato R. Montenegro, MD

## COUNCIL OF SURGICAL SUBSPECIALTY BOARDS OF THE PHILIPPINES

Chair: Jose Benito A. Abraham, MD  
 Vice Chair: Rodney B. Dofitas, MD (PBS)  
 Secretary: Catherine Y. Asedillo, MD (PBPRAS)  
 Members: Isagani Garin, MD (PBO)  
 Pedro L. Lantin III, MD (PBU)  
 George A. Sy, MD (PBNS)  
 Bayani B. Tecson, MD (PBPS)  
 Christopher C. Cheng, MD (PBTCVS)  
 Hermogenes J. Monroy III, MD (PBCRS)

Regent-in-Charge: Orlando O. Ocampo, MD

## COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

Chair: George G. Lim, MD  
 Members: Jose Antonio M. Salud, MD  
 Antonio S. Say, MD  
 Ramon S. Inso, MD  
 Jorge M. Concepcion, MD (BOG Rep)  
 Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas, MD  
 (PCS President)

## COMMITTEE ON MEMBERSHIP

Chair: Renato R. Montenegro, MD  
 Co-Chair: Jose Ravelo T. Bartolome, MD  
 Members: Paul Anthony L. Sunga, MD (PCSMMLC)  
 Anita C. Tarectecan, MD (PSGS)  
 Chris Ryan R. Cruz, MD (PAO)  
 Samuel Vincent G. Yrastorza, MD (PUA)  
 Peter S. Quiaoit, MD (POA)  
 Julyn A. Aguilar, MD (POA)  
 Ronald Allan D. Cruz, MD (AFN)  
 Racel Ireneo Luis C. Querol, MD (PATACSI)  
 Lora Mae A. De Guzman, MD (PAPRAS)  
 Carlo Angelo C. Cajucom, MD (PSCRS)  
 Darwin S. Salonga, MD  
 Rolando L. Canivel, MD

Regent-in-Charge: Joselito M. Mendoza, MD

### Tasks:

- To come up programs for the welfare of the Fellows.
- Enhanced recruitment of members.
- To come up with programs that will make the members feel the relevance of the PCS.
- Promote inclusivity.

## COMMITTEE ON AWARDS

Chair: Alfred H. Belmonte, MD  
 Co-Chair: Jose Antonio M. Salud, MD  
 Members: Maximo H. Simbulan Jr., MD  
 Stephen Sixto Siguan, MD  
 Eduardo R. Gatchalian, MD  
 Alejandro C. Palines, MD  
 Josefina R. Almonte, MD  
 Roy Joseph T. Trinidad, MD (BOG Rep)

Regent-in-Charge: Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas, MD

# COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS, 2023

## Task:

- To review/re-visit criteria for the Outstanding Chapter and Outstanding Subspecialty Society and Outstanding Affiliate Society

## SEARCH SUB-COMMITTEE

Chair: Roy Joseph T. Trinidad, MD (BOG Rep)

Members: Raymond Joseph R. Manzo, MD  
Ma. Rica M. Lumague, MD  
Anita C. Tarectecan, MD  
Harry G. Longno, MD

## COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERNS

Chair: Vivencio Jose P. Villaflor III, MD

Members: Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas, MD  
Jose Rhoel C. De Leon, MD  
Joselito M. Mendoza, MD  
Jose A. Solomon, MD (Chair, PCS Building Com.)  
Atty. Jesus M. Disini Jr. (By invitation)

## CLUSTER D: EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Head: Domingo S. Bongala Jr., MD

## COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Chair: Rhoderick M. Casis, MD

Members: Emmanuel D. Loyola, MD, LIB (Legislative Liaison)  
Edgar M. Palacol, MD (Rep from STC)  
Julyn A. Aguilar, MD (Chair, Publications)  
Eli Paulino F. Madrona, MD  
Dale C. Avellanosa, MD  
Neil C. Mendoza, MD (Foundation Day)  
Marcus Jose B. Brillantes, MD (Media Liaison)  
Roel C. Peña, MD  
Ricardo DL. Riego De Dios, MD  
Raymund Andrew G. Ong, MD  
Edwin P. Villanueva, MD  
Robert B. Bandolon, MD  
Apollo D. Trinidad, MD  
Carlo Angelo C. Cajucom, MD  
Omar O. Ocampo, MD

Regent-in-Charge: Domingo S. Bongala Jr., MD

## Task:

To engage and partner with another or the other subspecialty society/ies in its activities. Examples: For March—Colorectal Cancer awareness month – partner with the PSCRS; June – Prostate – partner with PUA; August – Lung, partner with PATACSI in the form of advocacies, education or SURE Activity.

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

Chair: Emmanuel D. Loyola, MD, LIB

Members: Cong. Maricel Natividad-Nagaño, MD - ophtha  
Rodolfo G. Tuazon Jr. MD  
Eli Paulino F. Madrona, MD  
Benedict Edward P. Valdez, MD  
Samuel D. Ang, MD  
Ernesto C. Tan, MD  
Dale C. Avellanosa, MD  
Benedicto S. Joson Jr. MD

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON MEDIA LIAISON

Chair: Marcus Jose B. Brillantes, MD

Members: Christopher C. Cheng, MD  
Rouel Mateo M. Azores, MD  
Isaac David E. Ampil II, MD  
Benjamin G. Herbosa, MD

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON PCS FOUNDATION DAY

Chair: Neil C. Mendoza, MD

Members: Dennis H. Littaua, MD  
Rhoderick M. Casis, MD  
(PCS-MMC External Comm.)  
Briccio G. Alcantara, MD  
George Byron L. Ferrer, MD  
Pauldion V. Cruz, MD  
Joselito G. Tantoco, MD (Representing PCS CLC)  
Froilan U. Dacumos, MD  
(Representing PCS STC)  
McArthur Conrado A. Salonga, MD  
(Representing PCS CEVC)  
Hannah Angela D. Acosta, MD  
(Representing PCS DSMC)  
Jennifer Cristy C. Lorenzo-Broqueza, MD  
Emmanuel M. Esteban, MD  
James Ronaldo A. Claveria, MD  
Maria Glenda D. Zilmar, MD  
George Vincent Habacon, MD (by invitation)

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON ASEAN SUMMIT & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Chair: Maximo H. Simbulan Jr., MD

Members: Shirard Leonardo A. Adiviso, MD  
Jose Y. Cueto Jr., MD  
Rolando M. Reyes, MD  
Alfred H. Belmonte, MD  
Jose Antonio M. Salud, MD  
Enrico P. Ragaza, MD  
Alejandro C. Dizon, MD

## COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS

Chair: Julyn A. Aguilar, MD

Members: Marcus Jose B. Brillantes, MD  
Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, MD  
Karen B. Latorre, MD  
Rhoderick M. Casis, MD  
Tamarah P. Cristobal, MD  
Domingo C. Sampang Jr., MD

Regent-in-Charge: Joselito M. Mendoza, MD

## PCS NEWSLETTER

Editor-in-Chief: Marcus Jose B. Brillantes, MD

Members: Rhoderick M. Casis, MD  
Karen B. Latorre, MD  
Vietrez PD. Abella, MD  
Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, MD  
Jose Benito A. Abraham, MD  
Domingo C. Sampang, Jr., MD  
McArthur Conrado A. Salonga Jr., MD (BOG Rep)  
Tamarah P. Cristobal, MD

# COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS, 2023

## PHILIPPINE JOURNAL OF SURGICAL SPECIALTIES

Editor-in-Chief: Theodor S. Vesagas, MD  
 Co-Editor: Catherine S. Co, MD  
 Associate Editors: Ma. Luisa D. Aquino, MD  
 Ida Marie T. Lim, MD  
 Adrian E. Manapat, MD  
 Jose D. Quebral, MD  
 Ricardo Jose T. Quintos, MD  
 Gemma Leonora B. Uy, MD  
 Alfred Phillip O. De Dios, MD  
 Editorial Edgar A. Baltazar, MD  
 Consultants: Charo A. Coloma, MD  
 Rogelio G. Kangleon, MD  
 Mark R. Kho, MD  
 Stephen Sixto Siguan, MD  
 Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas, MD  
 Carlo Angelo C. Cajucom, MD  
 Manuel Francisco T. Roxas, MD  
 Jose Fernando C. Syquia, MD  
 Jose Modesto B. Abellera III, MD  
 Alvin B. Caballes, MD  
 Arnold S. Angeles, MD  
 Francisco C. Manalo, MD  
 Ferri David Paloyo, MD  
 Eduardo R. Gatchalian, MD

Regent-in-Charge: Joselito M. Mendoza, MD

## COMMITTEE ON PCS SICT

Chair: Michael Mapalad, MD  
 Co-Chair: Ronan Chris J. Inso, MD  
 Members: Narciso F. Atienza, Jr, MD  
 Marwin Emerson V. Matic, MD  
 Katherine M. Panganiban, MD  
 Leonardo O. Ona III, MD  
 Anthony L. Dofitas, MD  
 Banny Bay C. Genuino, MD  
 Ivan Clark E. Flores, MD  
 Ernest Solomon L. Estanislao, MD  
 Jose Paolo C. Porciuncula, MD

Regent-in-Charge: Joselito M. Mendoza, MD

### Tasks:

- To set-up on-line learning for Fellows and rural surgeons
- To oversee e-transaction, mobile app, etc.

## COMMITTEE ON PATIENT SAFETY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Chair: Jorge M. Concepcion, MD  
 Members: Gaudencio I. Abratique, MD  
 Sir Emmanuel S. Astudillo, MD  
 Alfred Allen E. Buenafe, MD  
 Rolando A. Chiu, MD  
 Jeffrey Jeronimo P. Domino, MD  
 Raymund Joaquin F. Erese, MD  
 Albertson R. Gumarao, MD  
 Jose Ravelo T. Bartolome, MD  
 Mark C. Berces, MD  
 Plus:  
 Liaisons from the subspecialty societies:  
 • Euvin Paul G. Lagapa (AFN)  
 • Marcelino T. Cadag (POA)

- Brian Christopher U. Ang (PAPRAS)
- Joseph Roy F. Fuentes (PSCRS)
- Ma. Rebecca Abes-Servera (PAO)
- Marcus Lester R. Suntay (PSPS)
- Eduardo T. Aro, Jr. (PSTS)

Regent-in-Charge: Rex A. Madrigal, MD

## TWG ON STANDARDS OF CARE:

Head: Alejandro C. Dizon, MD  
 Members: Domingo S. Bongala, Jr., MD  
 Jorge M. Concepcion, MD  
 Rex A. Madrigal, MD

## CLUSTER E: SOCIO-ECONOMIC MATTERS

Head: Jose Rhoel C. De Leon, MD

## COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Chair: Rouel Mateo M. Azores, MD  
 Members: Kaye P. Jimenez, MD  
 Miguel C. Mendoza, MD (Chair, Comm. on FAP)  
 Jose A. Solomon, MD (Chair, PCS Building Comm.)  
 Narciso F. Atienza Jr., MD  
 Sherry O. Cunanan, MD  
 Napoleon B. Alcedo, Jr., MD  
 Vivencio Jose P. Villaflor III, MD  
 Deogracias Alberto G. Reyes, MD  
 Mr. Jose Patricio "JP" Casas (By Invitation)  
 Joselito M. Mendoza, MD

Regent-in-Charge: Jose Rhoel C. De Leon, MD

### Tasks:

- To set up the eFAP application; policies on PW and online payments; study other options (multi-system)
- To create programs - for the welfare of /which will benefit the PCS members across all Specialty societies – example – Expanded FAP
- To find sustainable source/s of funding for these challenges or assistance to the fellows with some financial participation from the fellows

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON PCS BUILDING

Chair: Jose A. Solomon, MD  
 Co-Chair: Jose Ravelo T. Bartolome, MD  
 Members: Ricardo D. Riego De Dios, MD  
 Vermie L. Garcia, MD

Regent-in-Charge: Dexter S. Aison, MD

### Tasks:

- To increase bandwidth of internet; implement biometrics for admin and security guards.
- To update the guidelines on the use of the College's motorcycle
- To oversee the training the PCS staff on the use of the AED

## COMMITTEE ON INTERNAL AUDIT

Chair: Maria Cheryl L. Cucueco, MD  
 Members: Alfred Q. Lasala II, MD  
 Alfred Phillip O. De Dios, MD



# COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS, 2023

Leonardo O. Ona III, MD  
Ida Marie T. Lim, MD

Regent-in-Charge: Dexter S. Aison, MD

Outsourcing of an internal auditor- more frequent monitoring of financial operations of the College

## COMMITTEE ON SOCIALS & SPORTS

Chair: Ferdinand Y. Syfu, MD  
Co-Chair: Noel C. Evangelista, MD  
Members: Dale Avellanosa, MD  
Roel Pena, MD  
Raymond Joseph Manzo, MD  
Vincent Paul C. Olalia, MD  
Ronald M. Yutangco, MD  
Raquel Caroline D. Malimas-Labro, MD

Regent-in-Charge: Alberto P. Paulino Jr., MD

## COMMITTEE ON FELLOWS' ASSISTANCE PLAN

Chair: Miguel C. Mendoza, MD  
Members: Julyn A. Aguilar, MD  
Roberto M. De Leon, MD  
Josefino C. Qua, MD  
Emmanuel F. Montaña Jr., MD  
Erwin Emeterio L. Isla, MD  
Roy Joseph T. Trinidad, MD

Regent-in-Charge: Josefino I. Sanchez, MD

Task:

To create programs - for the welfare of /which will benefit the PCS members across all Specialty societies – example – Expanded FAP

## COMMITTEE ON HOSPITAL STANDARDIZATION AND ACCREDITATION

Chair: Alejandro C. Dizon, MD  
Members: Rey Melchor F. Santos, MD  
Alvin B. Marcelo, MD  
Gavino N. Mercado Jr., MD  
Orlando O. Ocampo, MD  
Jose Ravelo T. Bartolome, MD  
Vivencio Jose P. Villaflor III, MD

Regent In-Charge: Rex A. Madrigal, MD

## Ad-hoc Committee on Internal Governance & Re-organization

Chair: Jose Ravelo T. Bartolome, MD  
Members: Rowena Muñoz, MD  
Kay P. Jimenez, MD  
Edgardo R. Cortez, MD  
Vivencio Jose P. Villaflor III, MD  
Jose Rhoel C. De Leon, MD  
Joselito M. Mendoza, MD  
Dexter S. Aison, MD

Regent-in-charge: Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas, MD

# Forever Young

• Tamarah P. Cristobal, MD, DPBS •

“Doc, kung ikaw po ba nasa lagay ko, sa edad ko, magpapagamot ka pa ba or eenjoy mo nalang anong oras natitira sayo?” This was the most baffling question that was ever asked of me by a patient. For someone who speaks fast and answers queries rather confidently, this question was met with a 10 second silence followed by a soft sigh. I know I had to answer in a professional manner and give the patient the advantages of what going thru the complete treatment could entail for her health and that’s what I did. I said yes after the 10 second silence but in all honesty, the mind lag was me thinking of the perfect way how to tell and convince her what I was trained to do as a medical professional.

My patient is an elderly patient, who, in her early 70s, presented with no comorbidities and is still very active for her age. She had a very big mass on her left breast and when I say big, it could be the queen of all the T4 tumors. It has been there for about a year and out of fear, she purposely did not seek any medical help up until it was causing her grave discomfort and she has come to terms that it could be malignant. I performed a core needle biopsy and true enough, it was Invasive Ductal Carcinoma. When I broke the news to her, she was surprisingly very calm as if she already knew it way before I even read the report. It was the look of someone who already know what to expect and has accepted it and just needs someone to read her the official report and confirm what she already knew all along. I then referred her to a medical oncologist after receiving the rest of the breast panel results and other laboratories for neoadjuvant treatment and she was then advised to undergo the necessary neoadjuvant treatment with plans of surgery after. She came back to my clinic after meeting with the oncologist and told me that she’s refusing to do anything as of the moment. She said that she came back to my clinic just to thank me personally for giving her the courage to go through with the biopsy.

“Bakit naman po mommy, sayang naman po maaga pa para mag give up kayo kasi kayang kaya po yan.”

And then she gave me that answer to which I was dumbfounded. She then went on to say that she

will just use her money to travel with her family and create better memories than spend it on something that will create morbid memories of her undergoing chemotherapy and radiotherapy. She said that she has a lot of grandkids that she seldom sees and that she would love it if she can start spending more time with them and visiting them abroad and bring them to Disneyland so they can remember her fondly as the fun and cool lola and not the sick lola. Her answer tapped on the non medical side of me. It gave me a pinch of reality check that if I was in her shoes, I probably would also not follow my own advice and make the most out of my remaining days like what she would do, because let’s face it, her plan is very appealing as well. I would imagine doing the things that I never did with the people I love most and visiting the places that’s on my bucket list creating wonderful memories before I go. We all know how tedious and tiring going thru the sessions are and though we are experts on that field, it makes it easier for us to recommend and advise it because we are not the ones getting the treatments. If we are also diagnosed at that age, most of us would probably think of the same thing even if we are too ashamed to admit it.

Just like any other surgeon, decisions by patients such as this really gives me a big dose of disappointment. I’m sure a lot of us think that those who refuse the treatments who have the means to do so have a little cowardly shadow lurking behind them. For me, knowing is better than not knowing because you can always do something about it and I am always a firm believer that the unknown enemy is more terrifying than anything else. Knowing what you have equips you with the opportunity to face it headstrong because you know what you are dealing with and you have been given the gift of knowing how to win your battle. I was frustrated with her decision because to me it felt like she was giving up even before she starts the war.

Part of knowing that you are battling something is mustering up the courage to stare at fear in its face and giving it a run for its money. But after hearing her reasons, I know I can only do so much and that I have given her all the information that she needed to be able to come up with a conformed decision. And

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if her decision is to go with her plan, then as her doctor, I need to respect her decision and wish her the best and give her the assurance that if she changes her mind, all her doctors are just standing by for her. She left my clinic teary eyed and expressed gratitude again for everything that I have done for her and that was the last time that I heard of her.

After some time, her reason gave me a new understanding about courage and strength. My initial thought is that she probably is not a strong person to be able to handle her disease and everything that came along with it. But after contemplating and trying to understand her decision, I came up with the realization that is she is far stronger and fearless that I gave her credit for. At first, it seemed that she rejected the possibility of a cure and to some it may seem like it's a type of failure on that person's part. After hearing her reason, I now view her rejection not as a failure.

Failure is giving up entirely. Everyone gets rejected somehow and it's how they handle it that determines where they will end up. Her decision was not based on her giving up, but it was based on her accepting the possibilities that lie ahead and refusing to be defeated by fear and still live her best life. She accepted her diagnosis and embraced it for what it is, and knowing what little time her age could still offer her, she chose to step away from her worries and live life to the fullest despite those trepidations. For fear does not stop death but it can stop our lives if we chose to be swallowed by it. She gave me a new meaning of what being strong should be and that courage comes in a lot of forms. It takes a lot of it to let something go than to hang on to it. In her case, her letting go did not mean that she was ignoring her situation nor was she in denial of it. She accepted what it is, exactly as it is, without fear. And coming up with a plan that she thinks would make her life more meaningful and making the most out of it. It made me appreciate her more and thank God that from time to time, He gives us patients that teach us new things that no books nor journals could ever do.

I still hope that I get to see her one of these days even if it means just to check up on her and if she crossed off a lot of things from her bucket list including her much awaited Disneyland trip, because of course, why not? As Walt Disney once said, growing old is mandatory but growing up is optional. And if she will be remembered fondly by her grandkids, that would be a new item on my bucketlist as well and live forever young in the hearts of those I will leave behind. Our patients show us gratitude most of the time but let's not forget to give them back the same gratitude that they bestow upon us because for all we know, they could be teaching us important life lessons along the way. To end my piece I would like to share a line from a poem by Charles Bukowski:

" We are here  
to laugh at the odds  
and live our lives  
so well  
that death will tremble  
to take us"

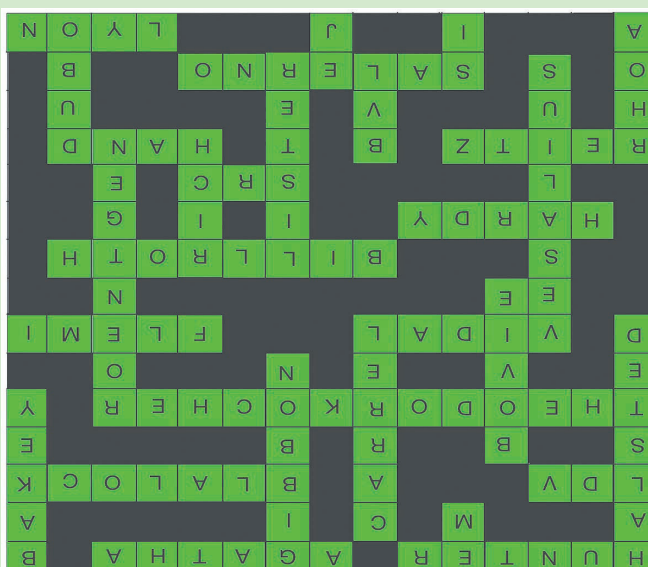
## Answers to the Crossword Puzzle

1. HE INTRODUCED THE GERMAN RESIDENCY TO U.S. AND INTRODUCED THE USE OF RUBBER GLOVES IN SURGERY. HE MADE FUNDAMENTAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SURGERY OF THYROID, BREAST AND GASTROINTESTINAL SURGERY. (Joseph Lister)
2. A SPECIALTY WHERE IT'S FIRST RESIDENCY PROGRAM IN THE WORLD BEGAN IN 1970 AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI. (Emergency Medicine EM)
3. PIONEER CARDIOTHORACIC SURGEON WHO DEVELOPED EXTRA-CORPOREAL CIRCULATION (HEART LUNG MACHINE). (JOHN GIBBON)
4. HE PERFORMED THE 1ST CAROTID ENDOARTERECTOMY IN 1953. (DE BAKERY)
5. HE DID THE 1ST END TO END VASCULAR ANASTOMOSIS. HIS TECHNIQUE MADE TRANSPLANTATION A TECHNICAL POSSIBILITY. (Carrel)
6. A PHYSICIAN WHO DEVELOPED ELECTROCAUTERY IN BOSTON IN 1920. (ROVIE)
7. DISCOVERED X-RAYS IN 1895. (WILHELM K. ROENTGEN)
8. FOUNDER OF MODERN HUMAN ANATOMY. HE MADE MAJOR ADVANCEMENT OVER THE LONG DOMINANT WORK OF GALEN. (Andreas Vesalius)
9. FATHER OF ASEPTIC SURGERY. (Joseph Lister)
10. AUGUST GOTTLIER
11. A DISORDER OF A STRANGULATED HERNIA IN WHICH ONLY PART OF THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE BOWEL IS AFFECTED. (August Gottlieb Richter)
12. DES HE WAS THE FIRST TO ADMINISTER TOTAL PARENTERAL NUTRITION IN 1968. (Rhoades)
13. INITIAL OF THIS GERMAN SURGEON WHO WAS ACKNOWLEDGED AS THE FATHER OF MODERN RESIDENCY SYSTEM. (BVL Bernhard Von Langenbeck)
14. ST HE PERFORMED THE 1ST ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSMECTOMY IN 1951. (Dubost)
15. THE MODERN FORM OF METRIC SYSTEM AND THE MOST WIDELY USED SYSTEM OF MEASUREMENT. (S.I.)
16. ENGLISH PHYSICIAN WHO POPULARIZED VACCINATION (1749-1823). (Edward Jenner EJ)

DOWN (ANSWER)

1. FATHER OF EXPERIMENTAL SURGERY. (John Hunter)
2. NUN WHO BECAME A SURGICAL SAINT AFTER HER BREASTS WERE ORDERED TO BE REMOVED BY ROMAN GOVERNOR. (St. Agatha)
3. INITIAL OF THIS KNOWN ARTIST/PAINTER WHO MADE 779 DRAWINGS OF THE HUMAN BODY. (LDV) LEONARDO DA VINCI
4. HE MADE BASIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PATHOGENESIS OF SHOCK. PIONEER AND INNOVATION IN THE FIELD OF CARDIAC SURGERY. (Aired Bialock)
5. PIONEER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THYROID SURGERY RECIPIENT OF NOBEL PRIZE IN 1909. (Theodor Kocher)
6. HE PERFORMED THE 1ST HUMAN PORTACAVAL ANASTOMOSIS IN 1903. (Vidal)
7. NG SURGEON WHO DISCOVERED PENICILLIN IN 1928. (FLEMING)
8. IT MEANS AN EYE IN THE OLD ENGLISH (SCOTLAND, NORTHERN ENGLAND AND ARCHAI) (E.E.)
9. HE PERFORMED THE 1ST SUCCESSFUL GASTRECTOMY. HE WAS THE ONE WHO STATED THAT "AN OPERATION ON THE HEART WOULD BE A PROSTITUTION OF SURGERY". (Theodor Billroth)
10. PERFORMED THE 1ST SUCCESSFUL HUMAN LUNG TRANSPLANTATION IN 1963. (Hardy)
11. INITIAL OF THIS SPANISH NEUROSCIENTIST, PATHOLOGIST AND HISTOLOGIST SPECIALIZING IN NEURONATOMY AND ACKNOWLEDGED AS THE PIONEER OF MODERN NEUROSCIENCE. (SRC) Santiago Ramon Canal
12. HE PERFORMED THE FIRST HEART LUNG TRANSPLANTATION IN 1982. (Reitz)
13. THE FIRST HUMAN RADIOGRAPH PERFORMED BY ROENTGEN. (Hand)
14. (His wife's left hand)
15. PART OF WESTERN EUROPE WHERE THE 1ST LEGITIMATE DEGREE PART OF FRANCE WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1000AD. (Salem)
16. PART OF FRANCE WHERE THE 1ST LAPAROSCOPIC CHOLECYSTECTOMY WAS PERFORMED BY MOURET IN 1987. (Lyon, France)

ACROSS (ANSWER)





# Volunteerism: What it Takes to Do

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



This article is being written before the national elections. But everything happened so quickly and I had no chance to complete it. This topic has preoccupied my work in this lifetime and thought I'd probably should say a thing or two about this advocacy of mine. It is not for the weak, for the undedicated and the undecided. It's been a popular trend nowadays that if you don't earn from an endeavour, then trash it.

A few months back, I was really pondering about what we need to do not just as health care workers but as concerned citizens. Meaning, other than what we should do other than medical services we provide for a pandemic is to serve the country the best we can.

To think out loud at a time we find ourselves on this crossroad, our real contribution to society should really be on Volunteerism. Politicking seems to be one of them but it always gets its ugly head poking on everyone's affair. This is not to mention finding yourself working for or, as a politician, representing that person when you have nothing to contribute and stand in agreement in his or her position. This entails honesty without need for critical thinking. In addition, social media has been too weaponized and demonized by disinformation and fake news.

I have worked with the Cleft Missions since 1997 after the conclusion of my post graduate stint with the Consortium 1 of the Plastic Surgery Training Programs. As a graduate you are encouraged to do this mission work in any capacity you can. This is either you do it by yourself or join and travel to far flung areas and serve the unfortunate. The shortfall

of the latter is of course being away from family and comfort zones for many days to weeks. But this is the dedication to work notwithstanding the taxing effort to be ready to do 12-hour surgeries daily for several days in a row. But the concept of it is sharing time, effort and expertise to alleviate lives and families from their plight.

To elucidate further, to tender your services for free and at your expense is the ultimate sacrifice one can proffer. This can also mean rendering your work or time second- fiddle to someone better than you. Stepping aside to allow somebody else to lead as a libation (especially political) for a person better than you. This is the greatest self-respect to me; when someone can step back and let another step forward unabated with false pride and ambitions. There are just too many of those who get gratification with self-service and believing most of the time it is the right move.

This article will be published months after; subsequent to the psephology. Until that time when people stop thinking "what's for them or what's in it for them" will this nation get its act together. Being truthful and responsible to relegate to self instead purely symbolizes self-sacrifice as the epitome of community service at its finest. It should be a genuine concern to provide and contribute.

The message should be clear - Always be there to help. Thus, Volunteer yourself for something truly worth loving and living for, to inspire by example. Otherwise, give way.

# Surgeon's Sojourn-The Making of a Surgeon

Message to the Graduating Residents of the Department of Surgery, Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center  
December 12, 2022, Luxent Hotel, Quezon City

• Roberto A. Sarmiento MD, MHA, FPCS, FPSGS •

I wish to thank the department chairperson, Dr. Ida Lim for the invite. It is both a pleasure and an honor to be your graduation speaker. This is a homecoming for me ever since I finished my surgical residency in this institution more than 25 years ago. I was privileged to have Dr Alex Erasmo your immediate past chairman as my Training Officer when I graduated as Chief Resident in 1994. Dr Robert Domingo -thank you for the kind introduction. Dr Domingo was the chief resident when I was a budding first year resident. One of my assignments from the chief was the regular changing of the bed sheets and cleaning of the surgery quarters located at the rear end of the operating room complex. Time flies.

In the book, *The Making of a Surgeon*, the author's father, a lawyer, said to his son: "Bill if you are smart, when you grow up, you will be a doctor, those bastards have it made!" Dr. Bill Nolen became a doctor, a surgeon. He went through general surgery residency training at Bellevue Hospital in New York, a hospital recently made popular by the Netflix series *New Amsterdam*. Dr Nolen underwent rigorous training in general surgery, later becoming Chief Resident and Department Chair and assumed other prestigious positions. Indeed, he had it made.

## Part One

### GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Becoming a surgeon does not happen overnight, the neophyte goes through an extremely difficult process to be a surgeon. The journey begins when the worthy "one" is awarded a hard to get slot in a medical school where acceptance, means that you have labored to achieve sobresaliente grades, aced the medical school qualifying examination and like the Dr Nolen -have affluent parents ( a lawyer) who will fund your tuition fee, allowances, dormitory or condominium accommodation , books and

gadgets. After these four years of diligent study, the would be surgeon graduates as a Doctor of Medicine. A year in internship prepares the doctor to become a full pledged physician but only after passing a grueling four day physicians licensure examination mind you Last October, only 5,958 examinees (64%) passed the PLE by the PRC.

The journey continues when the novice has to vie for very limited vacancy position in a selected residency surgery program. I remember during our time that only four new residents were accepted out of the more than eighty applicants. Jose R. Reyes Memorial Hospital has been one of the preferred institutions because of the patient load, clinical material, renowned mentors and variety of cases, conditions which are ideal for training. Bonus and salary in government hospitals are additional perks compared to the dismal remuneration for our counterparts in the private hospitals receive.

The present structured surgery training program is fashioned after a model by the great William Halstead. It is characterized by a gradual progression of responsibility and functions in a multitier set up, this has replaced the traditional apprentice type model. The five-year PSGS surgical curriculum following this model. consists of 45 months rotation in general surgery and 15 months rotation in the subspecialties. This is guaranteed to mold the trainee into a well rounded surgeon. Regular preoperative and postoperative, morbidity/mortality, tumor board, journal clubs conferences are the required didactics.

The meeting of the minds at Fe Del Mundo Hall are experiences one never forgets. In front of the consultants, interns and clerks, you are tasked to present and discuss cases. You better be prepared to answer the most intimidating questions from the "insultants" otherwise you open yourself to criticism and ridicule. There are lessons learned

here. These encounters are not meant to bring you down but to push you up... Later, you will realize the question and answer, probing and interrogation you get are very important not only when you take the diplomate examinations but more important is when you are handling your private patients. The gems of wisdom imparted to you will always come in handy and you will be glad you went through these “trying” times.

Aside from the conferences, research output is mandatory. Dr Alex used to caution us that if you copy from one author that is plagiarism but if you copy from several authors that is research! Seriously, in most competitive fellowship programs, research output is the deciding edge for admission. Published research are eye catching details of your CV.

I noted during the residents party that your residents have presented at the American College of Surgeon’s Convention, way to go, so good, congratulations!

Duties, operations, conferences, research what more?

Every year the surgical resident is expected to perform well in the CERES and the RITE as basis of promotion and gauge of learning of the trainee. When I was a second year resident and on the early morning of the scheduled RITE, I did an emergency close tube thoracostomy on a stab wound patient. The tube output was around 500 cc, this was around 3 am and my seniors and me were busy cramming for the examination. At the ward, I released the tube clamp and another 300 cc of blood was drained. Alanganin timing since our team knew for a fact that if we do the thoracotomy we will not be ready for the RITE scheduled at 8 am at the Makati Med. At 6 am, Dr Alberto Roxas arrived and we endorsed the patient to him. He was our training officer at the time and required all residents to take the examination, reason why the consultants go on duty during the RITE. On the way out, I saw Dr. Alberto Roxas personally driving the patient on a wheelchair stat to the operating room.

Inspired by his heroic gesture, we garnered 90 percentile ranking in the RITE. During the post op conference when the case was discussed, I remember Dr Roxas saying how he missed the operations during his days of residency.

As you can see, a lot is expected from the trainee. This discipline requires sacrifice, skill, always thinking and deciding, being tough physically and mentally.

The adrenaline rush and feeling of excitement of your first appendectomy, the sadness of an anastomotic leak morbidity, problematic patients and sleepless nights hound you. Uncertainties and frustrations abound. Bowel sounds and farts have become music to the ears.

I vividly remember a multiple stab wound patient who I operated and did a colostomy. Despite numerous attempts to construct a pouty ostomy somehow, I miserably failed. As expected there was a problem fitting the colostomy bag and secretions would leak on the sides. I monitored this problematic patient and personally changed the ostomy bag prn. I hid patient in the far end of the ward so that my seniors wouldn’t notice. I prayed that the abdominal distension would lessen and probably the ostomy would pout and improve. I was so embarrassed and scared when the patient later transferred to UST as a private patient of Dr. Erasmo I remembered hiding from and avoiding Dr. Erasmo for at least two weeks. Another instance I cannot forget is during my rotation in neurosurgery, when in trying to impress Dr Rafael our charismatic and enigmatic neurosurgeon, I made a positive film of a contrast carotid angiogram of a brain injury patient. I proudly showed him the plates, he examined it and asked who did it? I said I made it and I even suggested that he use it for his teaching class. Dr Rafael was strangely quiet during our rounds. Assuming I scored some pogi points, I accompanied him back to his car. Before he shut the door he whispered “ you are still stupid”. And suddenly, we are business as usual. Dr Armand Crisostomo assisted me on my first case of hernia Lichtenstein repair, and seeing my hesitation, he patiently coached me and later remarked -bilisan mo na Bob, manonood pa ako ng NBA !. I am, you are, we are forever grateful to OUR dedicated mentors.

#### **Surgeon’s Sojourn-The Making of a Surgeon**

Elementary school	7 years
Junior to Senior HS	6 years
Premed	4 years
Medical school	4 years
Internship	1 year



All in all, the surgeon devotes at least 27 years para magpakadalubhasa na isang surihano. (this does not include sub specialties and super specialty training). That is one third of his lifetime considering that the average life span of a Filipino is 75 years ! Surgical education is non-stop!

## **Part Two**

### **ADVISE TO YOUNG SURGEONS, KUDOS and GODSPEED!**

It is said that a difficult road often leads to a beautiful destination. A full pledged Fellow -Surgeon has its rewards. For instance at Mother Seton Hospital where I am medical director for the last twelve years and chair of the credentials committee, specialists who are board certified are welcomed to apply, stocks and hospital shares are not required. Similarly in Bicol Medical Center a government hospital in Naga City and the biggest hospital in the region, which offers medical specialist positions only to Board certified applicants. Medical Specialist II entry level with a decent salary grade is not bad, enough to cover expenses for your young family, car amortization, utilities and clinic rent.

After Surgery residency, you come to realize that you are starting all over again. You have the option of going to sub specialty or immediately engage in private practice. Many chose to go to the first option of additional training like what I did, I took an extra fellowship in head and neck surgery, the extra experience is a distinct advantage. Or you may decide to go to private practice right away.

That is fine too -you have a head start over your batchmates and perhaps get the latest model of Honda Civic faster- both literally and figuratively. Whatever your choice is, persevere and exert your best effort and you will be surely rewarded.

My ten cent worth of advice, make your services affordable and short of being frugal, live within your means. Don't fall in the trap of ordering everything you see in lazada and then maxing your credit card. This may lead you to unfairly overcharging your patients, lose loyal patients and may turn off potential clients. Develop your patient base, they are your endless source of referrals.

Always be cordial and courteous with your colleagues.

Congratulations to the program, to the department chair, training officer and the rest of the faculty, you are very true with your Mission and 20/20 or clear with your vision.

Congratulations to the trainors and trainees.

"If the student is ready the teacher will appear" The teacher maybe in the form of a lecture by your idol surgeon, reading a new journal article or simply assisting and observing an operation. Problem-based and self-directed learning is the norm in residency versus the spoon feeding style in your classroom era that you have been familiar with. Read to lead!

Congratulations to the incoming chief resident and promoted residents always remember the Peter Principle "In a hierarchy, you are soon elevated to your level of incompetence" Be humble and accept your inadequacies but at the same time be ready to meet the challenges and the additional responsibilities. Make it a habit to teach the younger residents , this will force you to read more, after all you cannot teach or give what you don't have...

To the family of the graduates, you are equally congratulated and commended for the support and understanding you have given to guarantee the success of these residents.

William Osler said and I quote "Surgery is a jealous mistress, and those who would win her favors must not worship any other shrine" Often hospital work takes precedence than your dinner dates and family gatherings etc. trust me your husband or wife would rather sleep than watch Wakanda Forever. Don't worry. Take comfort in the fact that starting tomorrow as now, your partner is already unemployed and you can have him 100 percent!

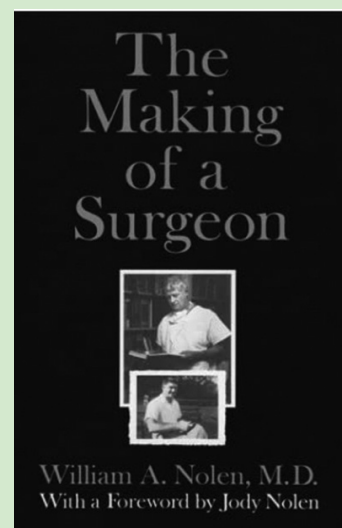
Graduates take and PASS the diplomate exam. It is said the chain is as strong only at its weakest link. Passing the examination by the Philippine Board of Surgery is your link to endless possibilities and opportunities. It is your ticket to big times!

Last Wednesday during the PBS induction ceremonies, it was reported that the national passing

rate was 54% and I noticed Jose Reyes has a total of nine inductees, the highest number of Diplomates inducted from a single institution, a record feat! Galing!!! Cheers to a promising and exciting future ahead to the new Diplomates and the next seven Diplomates for 2023!

In the ending of the book “The Making of a Surgeon”, on the last day of his stay in the hospital, Dr Nolen was given an informal send off by the staff but it seems everyone was busy with the hospital daily routine. Alone, he packed all his things and he rammed them in the trunk of his car. While in the parking lot, he took one last look at the hospital, was melancholic but was suddenly asked

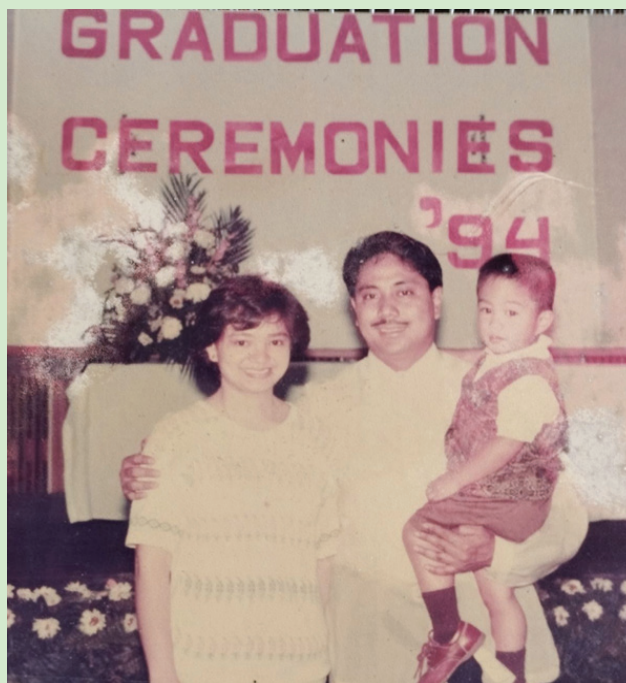
PS: The book, *The Making of a Surgeon* was a gift given to me by my ex-girlfriend and now my first Lady Marilou when I was an intern at East Avenue Medical Center. Truly behind a successful man is a woman and mistress (surgery as a vocation) in front.



by a young resident, “excuse me sir?” May I know where is the department of surgery?

The journey continues...

Congratulations to the graduates and your family. You certainly have it made! Merry Christmas and enjoy the holidays that you truly deserve!



Taken during my graduation in General Surgery in 1994. With me is my wife who is also a graduate of Dermatology at Jose Reyes and my son Rob J, who is now a neurology fellow at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada.



# Association of Women Surgeons of the Philippines (AWSP)

## In Full Support of the National Cancer Summit 2023

The Association of Women Surgeons of the Philippines (AWSP) participated in the Philippine National Cancer Summit 2023 entitled, *Bridging Gaps in Cancer Care through 3Cs: Communication, Complementation, Collaboration*. This year marked the Cancer Summit's return to a physical convention format at the Crowne Plaza Galleria, Manila, last February 23 and 24. For the AWSP session, held on Day 2 of the convention, the discussion centered on Options in the Surgical Management and Reconstruction of Breast Cancer. Women with a breast cancer diagnosis should not feel that it automatically meant disfiguring surgery and altered self-image. There are many ways of skinning a cat, as there are quite a number of options in managing breast cancer. The session was masterfully chaired and moderated by no less than Dr Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas, incumbent President of the Philippine College of Surgeons and AWSP Trustee. Dr Joan S. Tagorda, general surgeon and Chair of the UERMMC Department of Surgery, eloquently presented the various surgical options in breast cancer management, while plastic and reconstructive surgeon Dr. Maria Redencion B. Abella discussed the various options of breast and chest wall reconstruction following mastectomy. Indeed, the speakers were able to convey that breast cancer is a disease that we can overcome, especially with early detection and treatment.

The Philippine National Cancer Summit is a project of the Philippine College of Surgeons- Cancer Commission Foundation together with the Cancer Coalition Philippines and the Philippine Cancer Society, Inc.

Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, MD, FPCS, FPSGS



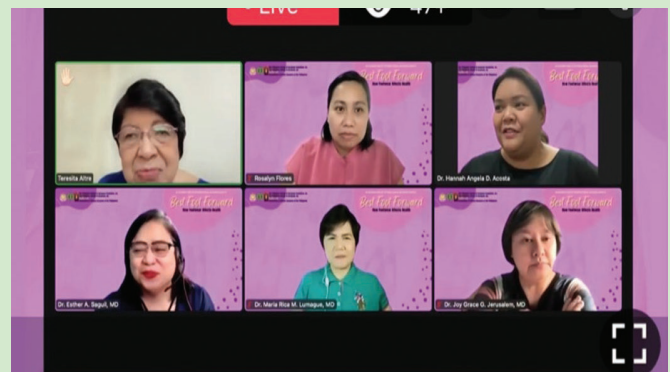
In photo: Dr. Ida Lim, Dr. Reden Abella, Dr. Connie Vesagas, Dr. Esther Saguil and Dr. Joan Tagorda

## Celebrates Women's Month With Webinar

In commemoration of International Women's Month, the Association of Women Surgeons of the Philippines together with the Philippine College of Surgeons and the Philippine College of Surgeons Foundation, conducted a webinar most suited for the ladies, entitled *Best Foot Forward: How Footwear Affects Health*. Dr Rosalyn P. Flores, a Pediatric Orthopedics and Ilizarov and Limb Deformity Surgery Specialist, gave an entertaining and comprehensive review of how our choice of shoes impacts our health and lifestyle. Dr Teresita D. Altre, pioneering female orthopedic surgeon and first female President of the Philippine Orthopedic Association, served as reactor for the session, sharing her vast knowledge and valuable insights on the topic. What followed was a very lively open forum on the great debate between the choice of form versus function, ably moderated by Dr Hannah Angela D. Acosta, AWSP Trustee and Breast Surgery Specialist. Dr Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, AWSP Board Secretary, served as Master of Ceremonies. The philosophy of TIIS GANDA may have been a pervasive dogma in the past, but with the right footwear, ladies can be GANDA without the TIIS.

The webinar was held last March 25, 2023 via Zoom and Docquity, garnering a total of 70+ live views across platforms and 1939 views on Docquity.

Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, MD, FPCS, FPSGS





# History of Neurological Surgery in the Philippines

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

The first recorded neurosurgical operation in the Philippines dates back to 1878 and was the neurosurgical procedure of trephination. It was written in a "Program of Operations", a document found in the archives of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery (established in 1871) at the University of Santo Tomas, the oldest existing university in Asia which was founded by Royal Decree by the King of Spain in 1611.<sup>1</sup>

## Pre- Second World War

The cranial operations at this point in time were mainly neurotrauma cases done by general surgeons who had the opportunity to observe and train in the United States. Such was the case as Dr. Jose Ignacio V. Abuel, a general surgeon who further studied Neurosurgery at Harvard from 1923 to 1925 performed the first craniotomy for the evacuation of a subdural hematoma in 1928 at the Philippine General Hospital. Dr. Abuel was the first Filipino neurosurgeon to introduce ventriculography as a diagnostic tool and also brought home the technique of pneumoencephalography to localize intracranial lesions.<sup>4</sup>

In the 1930's, Andres T. Zavalla, another general surgeon went to train in Neurosurgery under Dr. Walter Dandy at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore.

He came home and performed the first craniotomy for the excision of brain tumor in the country in 1941.<sup>2</sup>

## EARLY PIONEERS 1930'S



Figure 1: Dr. Jose Abuel, pioneer neurosurgeon (8)

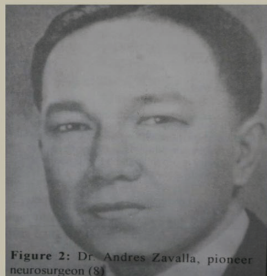


Figure 2: Dr. Andres Zavalla, pioneer neurosurgeon (24)

Dr Jose Abuel and Dr Anton Zavalla

## Post Second World War

The Philippines started to have modern neurological surgery after WW II when the United States Army established the 4th General Hospital at Fort William McKinley (now Fort Andres Bonifacio). Col. Fritz Cramer, from the New York Neurological Institute and a US Army consultant in neurosurgery for the Far East established a section in Neurological Surgery at this hospital. Dr. Romeo H. Gustilo, a young medical officer in the Philippine Army had the opportunity to get exposed to neurosurgical work treating war injuries in this institution. This led him to pursue neurosurgical residency training under the tutelage of Dr A. Earl Walker at the Johns Hopkins Hospital until 1950.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Victor A. Reyes, a surgical resident under Dr. Zavalla at the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) got inspired and went for further neurosurgical training in 1946.

He was mentored by Michael Scott Sr. at University of Pennsylvania, Gilbert Horrax at Lahey Clinic in Boston and Wilder Penfield at the Montreal Neurological Institute in Canada. After completing five years in residency, he became the first Asian to be certified by the American Board of Neurological Surgery in 1951.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Howard Naffziger, a US Army senior consultant for neurosurgery in the Far East did the first cerebral angiogram at the University of Santo Tomas Hospital during his multiple visits to the Philippines between 1947-1948.<sup>1</sup>

The first section of neurological surgery in the Philippines was established in the Department of Surgery, Santo Tomas University Hospital in 1950 followed by another one at the North General Hospital (now Jose R. Reyes Memorial Hospital) just a few months after. Both sections were chaired by Dr. Romeo H. Gustilo. Upon his return to the Philippines in 1952, Dr. Victor Reyes also established the section of neurological surgery at the Philippine General Hospital.

This was followed by the establishment of a section also at the Armed Forces of the Philippines by Dr. Melchor Javier in 1954.<sup>1</sup>

The first locally trained neurosurgeon in the Philippines was Dr. Faustino Domingo Jr. who finished in 1959 under the mentorship of Dr. Victor Reyes.<sup>3</sup> He went for further training in Neurology at the University of Wisconsin with Dr. Francis Forster and at the Lahey Clinic under Dr. James Poppen.<sup>2</sup>

In 1961, 8 neurosurgeons, mostly newly returned from training in the USA, founded the Philippine Society of Neurological Surgeons (PSNS) with the aim to develop more training programs in neurosurgery, establish accreditation boards and promote quality neurosurgical care in the Philippines. The founding members were Drs. Homobono Aldaba, Benigno Aldana, Roger Baisas, Henry Cube, Romeo Gustilo, Melchor Javier, Victor Reyes and Mariano Torres.<sup>1</sup>

The Philippines is the first country to have a neurosurgery service in Southeast Asia.<sup>5</sup>

In the 1960's, Dr. Leopoldo Pardo Jr. who trained at Baylor University is credited to have done the first transsphenoidal surgery for pituitary adenoma in the country. He was part of the neurosurgery section of the PGH.<sup>3</sup>

The PSNS was able to publish a local scientific journal in 1965. As the society continued to accept more fellows, they sought to establish criteria to be able to promote neurosurgical education for future trainees. The Philippine Board of Neurological Surgery was founded in 1975 with Dr. Romeo Gustilo as the Chair and Dr. Victor Reyes and Dr. Renato Sibayan as the other two board members.



PSNS Members in 1965

The PSNS started to host international conventions. Dr. Gustilo was a founding member of the Asian Australasian Society of Neurological Surgeons (AASNS) which was established in 1967. Under his leadership both as President of the AASNS and as Congress Chair of the Asian Australasian Congress of Neurological Surgery (AACNS), the PSNS hosted the 5th AACNS in Manila at the Philippine International Convention Center on November, 1979.

In 1976, the first formal structured neurosurgery training program was started at the University of the Philippines- Philippine General Hospital. Mentors included Dr. Roel Romero as Division Chief, Drs. Ramon Suter, Renato Sibayan, Victor Reyes and Faustino Domingo Jr. Dr. Camellia N. Posoncuy, the first Filipina neurosurgeon who trained in Switzerland under Professor Gazi Yasargil joined the faculty as soon as she returned to the Philippines. The first resident graduates of the UP PGH training were Drs Norman Bitanga and Antonio Rafael.<sup>2</sup>

In 1999, the PSNS evolved into the Academy of Filipino Neurosurgeons, Inc. (AFNI) which is the present society of board-certified neurosurgeons in the Philippines.

The Philippines has 142 fellows of the AFNI though there are already 212 graduates of 10 training institutions for Neurosurgery. They are distributed all throughout the country but some areas are still underserved. The ratio is 1:800,000 population at this time and the future of Neurosurgery in the Philippines is still getting brighter.

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# The Time has Come for the Philippine Surgical Infection Society

• Miguel Gary Galvez, MD, FPCS •

It is not common knowledge, but the seminal events leading to the creation of the Philippine Surgical Infection Society were set in motion in 2016 by erstwhile PCS president, Dr. Gabriel Martinez. An invitation came for a representative from PCS to participate in talks on developing a Surgical Infection Society in the Asia Pacific, to complement similar organizations in Europe and in North America. Dr. Esther Saguil, who was then PCS Chair of the Committee on Surgical Infections was enjoined to explore the potential of the collaboration, with meetings held with Asian counterparts. It became evident that to be an effective participant in the SIS-AP, as the organization was called, the Philippines had to organize one to lead efforts in infection prevention and control in the surgical arena. It was a surprise to the other delegates in the SIS AP meeting that the Philippine participants shared the same passion in finding practical, effective, and efficient ways of preventing surgical site infections such as promoting the antibiotic stewardship, encouraging the use of prophylactic antibiotics, not to mention the promotion of proper hand washing and skin preparation. It was only a matter of time that a society dedicated to infections in surgery would come into fruition.

The development seemed slow, as there was still some hesitation even among the surgeons as to its role in the general scheme of things. Was a separate society really needed, or could the individual affiliate society take on the infectious aspects of surgical care? However, the persistence and perseverance, the efforts have paid off, as other organizations concerned with infection prevention and control (IPC) who had always considered the operating room as the last frontier, welcomed champions among surgeons. Finally, surgeons were REALLY involved.

The creation of the PSIS had its champions within the PCS too, notably the Presidents and Regents

who whole-heartedly supported the endeavors. The Society, which was officially registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission in 2018, is a non-stock non-profit organization that envisions a unity of purpose – get the surgeons, nurses, infectious disease specialists, and other stakeholders to rally in reduction of infections in surgery through implementation of guidelines and protocols. The Covid pandemic certainly placed IPC in the spotlight, and the role of the PSIS was further cemented in operating rooms nationwide.

The shining moment of PSIS came in the form of former President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's Executive Order Number 971, otherwise known as the Creation of the Surgical Infection Prevention Awareness (SIPA) day in June 23, 2020. SIPA Day, which is celebrated every second Saturday of July, aims to remind everyone of the need to prevent infections in surgery, ensure quality outcomes, and prevent increasing antimicrobial resistance. This year, the Society was officially welcomed as an affiliate society of the PCS. Truly, a momentous occasion that validates all the years of efforts and spurs us to further pursue our advocacy in every corner of the country.

We, in PSIS, have realized early on that we are not alone in this fight against surgical infection. We welcome members - stakeholders in surgery, whose main qualification is a desire to keep surgery safe and infection-free, and a commitment to educate those in the medical profession and the public about surgical infection – its prevention and management. We also hope to generate data on infectious complications to further provide guidance on our next steps in mitigation of surgical infection.

Join us in our quest to keep infections at bay. We look forward to working with CHAMPIONS.



# Getting More and Giving More

• **David Limlingan Alagar, MD, FPOA** •  
*President, Philippine Orthopedic Association*

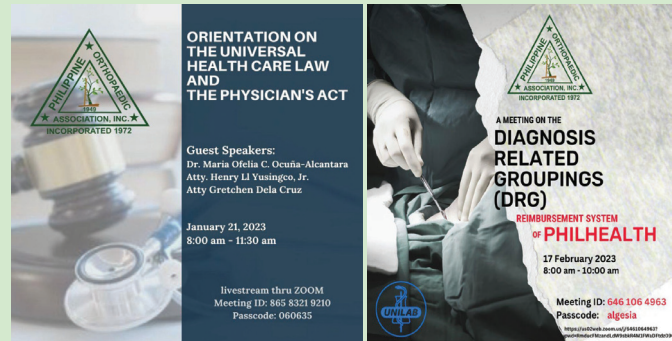
When you have more of something, you'll have more to share to others.

This year, the Philippine Orthopedic Association has given this phrase an interesting twist with a deeper impact and significance.

More than the usual “getting more training, education, and opportunities for advancement” for its members, and for society in general, the POA has set its sights this 2023 on “getting more involved in national health policies”. Having a good grasp of the details of the laws and its implementing rules and regulations will allow better planning and utilization of resources by stakeholders, including orthopedic surgeons. Specific laws in mind are the Universal Health Care Law and the proposed Physician's Act of 2023.

The POA started the year with an orientation of both legislations for its fellows, given by members of the staff of lawmakers together with lead government agency representatives involved in its creation and implementation. How will these affect my orthopedic practice? What is expected from me? How can I help in its implementation? These are just a few of the questions expounded and given clarity during the activity.

At the same time, workshops and town-hall type discussions with PhilHealth were conducted related to the transition from an All-Case Rate system of reimbursement to a Diagnosis Related Grouping



method. All these activities were meant to maximize insurance fund utilization and improve access to treatment for Filipino patients with musculoskeletal disease or disorders.

Moving forward, the marching orders have been given to all subspecialty societies and local chapter organizations, to direct their activities and outreach programs to the “unserved and underserved communities” of the country. Fellows were encouraged to present themselves to the leaders of the local government units (LGUs) where they practice, and work with them in the planning and implementation of effective programs related to orthopedic issues and concerns in their locality. Education of local health workers will be given more focus, especially on the prevention and early diagnosis, including treatment of mild and minor cases, as well as catching late-stage conditions that need referral to specialists for more aggressive and complex management.

The Association will continue to collaborate with government and non-government agencies in the promotion and implementation of programs related to the universal and primary health care in the country.

The POA being more involved in national health issues, and community service, will be in a better position to help more patients, in more remote locations. This will allow us to participate in the decision making of health policies and programs in our locality, and in the national stage as well. This is truly a testament to what the Philippine Orthopedic Association stands for!



# A Solid Start of an Amazing Year

• Aileen Delos Santos-Garcia, MD, FPSO-HNS, FPCS •

The Philippine Society of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery (PSO-HNS), offers unique opportunities to its partners and stakeholders, backed by the strength and commitment of its 993 fellows. With 67 years of operating experience, the PSO-HNS is embarking on a period of exceptional growth, grounded in its commitment to operating integrity, financial discipline, and fiscal accountability guided by its core values.

There are 993 ORL-HNS fellows serving 113 million or about 1 ENT doctor to about 113 thousand Filipinos.

The Philippines has a lower physician to population ratio compared to the world average, highlighting the high inequality in the number and distribution of ENTs. The PSOHNS aims to inform policies that improve access to ENT services nationwide, such as scale-up of training of ENTs and incentives to distribute specialists. At present, the PSO-HNS is composed of 10 Subspecialty Academies and 8 Component Chapters. This assures the presence of an ENT doctor in all parts of the country.



## PSO-HNS Leadership Summit 2023



Led by the society's incumbent president, Dr. Ricardo Ramirez, Jr., the present PSO-HNS Officers and Board of Trustees facilitated the recent leadership summit held last February 24 - 25, 2023 at the Hilton Hotel, Newport Pasay City, attended by all chapter presidents and academy chairpersons. The activity was a resounding success, positioning the society off to a great start for the year ahead.

The summit was marked by productive discussions and a shared sense of purpose, as leaders from different chapters and academies came together to brainstorm ideas, share best practices, and establish common goals. Through lively debates and brainstorming sessions, the attendees were able to identify key challenges facing the society, as well as opportunities for growth and development. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of all involved, the summit succeeded in laying a solid foundation for the year ahead, positioning the society to achieve great things in the months to come.



# Hectic sked for PSPS

## First PSPS Council Meeting | January 14, 2023

The newly elected council members of the PSPS held its strategic planning meeting last January 14, 2023 at Jaeu Bistro Ramen Bar in Filinvest, Alabang. The meeting commenced with a short invocation and blessing for the guidance and success of the Society's projects. This was followed by the meeting proper, where the members of the council mapped out and planned for the activities for the year. They were joined by the PSPS technical support team who will assist in the preparation and implementation of each activity. The meeting will truly help the council in the accomplishment of the planned projects and achieve its goals of maintaining the quality of its training programs and of sustaining the active participation and professional development of pediatric surgeons of the country.

## Pediatric Surgical Mission with the World Surgical Foundation Philippines | February 9-12, 2023

On February 9-12, 2023, the World Surgical Foundation Philippines partnered with PSPS along with the Philippine Pediatric Society (PPS), Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists (PSA) and other government and non-government collaborators for its first surgical mission in Iloilo City. It was held in Western Visayas Medical Center, where the mission team successfully performed a total of 26 anorectal surgeries for indigent patients in the region. Through this activity, children born with anorectal malformation and Hirschsprung disease who are living with colostomies were given hope towards a better, brighter, colostomy-free future.

## Pediatric Colorectal Workshop Preparations | February 21, 2023

A meeting with Dr. Marc Levitt kicked off the preparations for the PSPS Pediatric Colorectal Workshop that will be held in 2025. Dr. Levitt is the director of the Center for Colorectal and Pelvic Reconstruction at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Ohio. He is a leading expert in the treatment of colorectal and pelvic conditions in children, and is recognized internationally for his expertise. In partnership with Dr. Levitt, this workshop aims to enhance and elevate the skills of our pediatric surgeons, as well as ensure the safe and efficient management of pediatric colorectal conditions in the country.

## Philippine Cancer Commission Convention | February 24, 2023

The PSPS, together with the Philippine College of Surgeons Cancer Commission (PCS Can Com), participated in this year's Philippine National Cancer Summit held last February 24, 2023 at the Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila. The session entitled Brain Tumor Service Delivery In Children: Addressing the Barriers and Challenges Through Collaboration, aimed to address the different issues in the screening, diagnosis, and treatment of brain tumors in children. The discussion was moderated by Dr. Esther Saguil, and one of the reactors is Dr. Russel Alegarbes, both of whom are fellows of the PSPS. The session enabled the communication of expertise, research, good practice models, and social innovations geared towards a patient-centered quality management to the different stakeholders of cancer care.

## We have a Hymn!

The official hymn of the Philippine Society of Pediatric Surgeons was launched last December 2022. This hymn expresses how our surgeons serve our country as they continuously heed the call to be the champion the Filipino children. With lyrics and arrangement from Raymond Leslie I. Diaz, MD, the song beautifully expresses the mission and vision of pediatric surgeons all around the country.

*We heed a call to champion our children  
Their dire pain and  
suffering our aim to cure and ease*

*We heed a call to bear the light of knowledge  
To right the wrongs of nature  
and of fate and of disease*

*We heed a call to band as one great body  
And join our hands and hearts and minds  
to serve humanity*

*We pledge our best  
deserved by all God's children  
The Philippine Society of Pediatric Surgeons  
Leading with skill, care and compassion  
PSPS are we!*





## The Colostomy Freedom Project

intends to deliver free professional medical and surgical services to indigent pediatric patients suffering from anorectal malformations and Hirschsprung's disease, helping these children to grow without the social stigma brought about the need for colostomy.

## Inter-organizational Partnership | March 9, 2023

One of the priorities of the society is to reach areas of the country that have limited access to healthcare. The World Surgical Foundation Philippines, Philippine Society of Pediatric Surgeons, Philippine Pediatric Society, and Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists are collaborating to form a coalition for the purpose of holding pediatric surgical missions nationwide to deliver safe and quality surgery to patients in need. A meeting was held in Conrad's hotel last March 9, attended by Dr. Peñafrancia Cano (PSA President), Dr. Joy Luat-Inciong (PSPA President), Dr. Wilfredo Santos (PPS National Secretary), Dr. Rodolfo Tuazon, Jr. (PSPS President), Dr. Lester Suntay (WSFP President), Dr. Beda Espineda (PCS SURE Foundation Chair) and Dr. Edrick Lim (PSPS Vice President).

## First Interhospital Conference | March 23, 2023

Annually, the PSPS conducts Interhospital Conferences hosted by the different pediatric surgery training institutions in the country. These conferences serve as avenues for members of the PSPS to be updated on the catalogue of activities of and the index of surgical cases managed by each training program for the previous year.

The National Children's Hospital (NCH) Department of Surgery hosted this year's first PSPS Interhospital Conference last March 23, 2023. It was a hybrid conference with a physical venue at the NCH Multipurpose Hall and a simultaneous virtual airing via Zoom. The program was moderated by Dr. Christine Fausto, the Department's Training Officer. NCH's Chief of Medical Professional Staff (CMPS), Dr. Philip Morales, gave the Welcoming Remarks, and the Department's Chairman, Dr. Jose Modesto Abellera III, delivered the Opening Remarks. Dr. Franco Antonio Catangui presented the annual census for 2022, and Dr. Jeryl Jack Echaz presented an interesting case of Parasitic Twin managed in the institution. The President of the PSPS, Dr. Rodolfo Tuazon, Jr., delivered the Closing Remarks. The success of the interhospital conferences is proof of the dedication of the members of the PSPS to the formation of new pediatric surgeons to help achieve progressive and accessible quality pediatric surgical care in the country.

## Hypospadias Repair Workshop | March 27, 2023

The National Children's Hospital (NCH) Department of Surgery and Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center (JRRMMC) – Section of Pediatric Surgery, together with the Philippine Society of Pediatric Surgeons (PSPS) welcomed in the country Dr. Nyo Yoke Lin, a consultant of Pediatric Surgery and Urology from University Children's Medical Institute, Department of Pediatric Surgery in National University Hospital, Singapore, last March 27, 2023. He performed two hypospadias repair procedures in NCH, assisted and observed by consultants and fellows of pediatric surgery and pediatric urology. The surgeries were followed by his discussion of the surgical techniques performed and the latest innovations in the perioperative management of hypospadias. The discussion, which was held in the NCH Department of Surgery with online streaming via Zoom, was moderated by Dr. Russel Alegarbes.



## Philippines Set to Host the Biennial Convention of the GICS | March 29, 2023

The Global Initiative for Children's Surgery (GICS) is an initiative launched in 2014 with the aim of addressing the gap in pediatric surgical care in low- and middle-income countries. A meeting with the GICS officers has the Philippines set to host the biennial convention on February 22-25, 2024. This convention will tackle topics aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of surgical care for children in low-resource settings and to reduce the global burden of surgical disease among children.

# Three-day Surgical Outreach Activity in Apayao

• Jose P. Bulatao III, MD, FPCS •

Surgery is an essential part of all health systems. With one in four people undergoing an operation in their lifetime, it remains the mainstay of treatment for most diseases requiring non-medical intervention. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, it was estimated that around 5 billion people lacked access to surgical care and 143 million more operations per year were required globally to address the surgical backlog. The pandemic has acutely worsened the situation and placed a spotlight on the need for change in how surgery is delivered. During COVID-19 surges, at least 28 million elective operations were postponed around the world, with the backlog further increasing during recovery.

Focused surgery performed in geographically isolated and displaced areas where unmet needs are most palpable has been a crucial strategy utilized in addressing the pervasive problem of surgical backlog. Recognizing this urgent need and call for immediate action, the Philippine Association of Laparoscopic and Endoscopic Surgeons or P.A.L.E.S. North Luzon Chapter in cooperation with the Philippine College of Surgeons (PCS) North Luzon Chapter and the Philippine College of Surgeons (PCS) Surgery to Underserved Regions for Education (S.U.R.E.) Commission embarked on a 3-day surgical outreach activity to cater to the surgical needs of patients from Apayao, a landlocked province in the Cordillera Administrative Region in Luzon and is considered as one of the least densely-populated provinces in the Philippines.



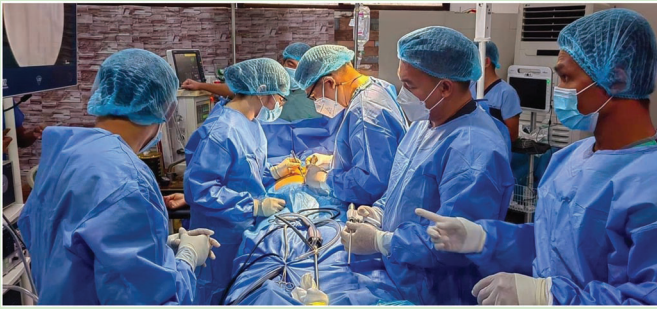
On a balmy evening of January, a team of physicians departed from Dagupan City and travelled by air to Tuguegarao City before journeying by land to the Municipality of Conner in Apayao. The team led by Dr. Vivencio Jose “Juvie” Villaflor III, General Surgeon with interest in Minimally-Invasive

Surgery and current Vice-President of the Philippine College of Surgeons, PCS Fellows Dr. Jose Bulatao III (PCS NLC Presindet), Dr. Jeffrey Cayabyab, Dr. Ralph Lazarus Rapacon and Dr. Karlo Marco “KMO” Orduña, anesthesiologist from Dagupan Doctors Villaflor Hospital rendezvoused with a team of surgeon volunteers and healthcare workers from Conner District Hospital (CDH), a Level 1 50-bed capacity DOH-retained hospital which was created by virtue of Republic Act 7850 in 1994 during the administration of former President Fidel V. Ramos.

The CDH contingent led by Dr. Nelson Rigor, Chief of Hospital II and Dr. Michael Mercado, Medical Specialist III and Head of the OR Department, and Dr. Gilsah Fortuno hosted the 3-day outreach activity which provided free surgical services to 20 indigent patients with various conditions ranging from gallbladder stones, hernias, and common bile duct stones. Surgical procedures were conducted employing advanced techniques through Minimally Invasive Surgery (MIS) using state-of-the-art equipment which were provided for by Karl Storz Endoscopy. The highlight of the activity was the conduct of simultaneous live surgery involving complicated cases in 2 separate venues - Conner District Hospital in Apayao and Villaflor Hospital in Dagupan City. The operations were viewed in real time by consultants, residents and fellows-in-training as part of the P.A.L.E.S. Pre-Mid Year Convention activities through the auspices of the Endoscopic Laparoscopic Institute and participating health care institutions. Proponents of MIS were on hand to perform the complex surgical procedures and share their expert knowledge and skills with other young and aspiring surgeons. The activity also provided an opportunity to make cutting-edge surgical technology performed by trained specialists available even to the marginalized segment of population residing in geographically isolated and displaced areas.







Evidence has shown that substandard care wastes significant resources and harms the health of populations, destroying human capital and reducing productivity. Quality of care, especially patient safety, is essential to creating trust in health services. It is also key to global health security, which starts with local health security, and in turn depends on high-quality frontline health services. Quality health services not only prevent human suffering and ensure healthier societies, they also ensure better human capital and healthier economies.

Too often, quality is perceived as a luxury that only rich countries can afford. Building quality health services requires a culture of transparency, engagement, and openness about results, which are possible in all societies – regardless of their income level. Around the world and in our local setting, lessons abound on what works and what does not, providing a rich foundation from which to

rapidly scale up a quality revolution. Technological innovation plays a key role in offering new ways to expand high-quality health care services more rapidly, and at an affordable cost.

A patient-centric approach has to be the core of quality. People and communities must be engaged in the design, delivery, and ongoing assessment of health services to ensure they are built to meet local health needs – rather than those of donors, commercial or political interests, or because “it’s always been done that way”. Focusing on quality is critical, but leadership must also focus on celebrating excellence; communicating transparently; and fostering collaboration across clinical teams, as well as with patients, and civil society – including patient groups, non-governmental organizations, and grassroots community groups.

The surgical outreach activity in Apayao is proof of concept that quality and safe surgery for all IS possible. With the right mix of inter sectoral collaboration, professional competence and dedication to public service, the promise of better delivery of surgical care has become more doable and achievable, even to the most remote locations under the most unfavorable conditions. It is also a resounding reminder of the endless possibilities that can happen once the right elements are aligned to accomplish a common purpose. -





# The Gift of Giving

## *Quality and Safe Surgery for All Through Care, Cure, and Collaboration*

• Ralph Lazarus R. Rapacon, MD, FPCS •

A patient-centric approach to delivery of surgical services has to be the core of quality. People and communities must be engaged in the design, deliberation, and delivery of health services to guarantee they are built to meet local health needs – rather than those of donors, commercial or political interests, or because “it has always been done that way”.

Putting a premium on quality is important, but leadership must also focus on celebrating excellence; communicating transparently; and fostering collaboration across clinical teams, as well as with patients, and civil society – including patient groups, industry partners, nongovernmental organizations, and grassroots community groups.

In the advent of the implementation of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in key pilot areas which includes the Province of Pangasinan, and in light of the disruption in surgical care brought about by the pandemic, the matter of addressing unmet surgeries has never been more relevant. The barometer by which we measure progress in UHC is through effective coverage of essential health services and financial protection without the danger of financial bankruptcy. But even if our country achieved essential health coverage and financial protection, health outcomes would still be poor if services were low-quality and unsafe.

Evidence suggests that substandard care wastes significant resources and harms the health of populations, destroying human capital and reducing productivity. Quality of care, especially patient safety, is imperative if we are to re-establish trust in health services. It is also key to global health security, which starts with local health security, and in turn depends on high-quality frontline health services. Quality health services not only prevent human suffering and ensure healthier societies, they also allow for better human capital and healthier economies.

Cognizant of all these realities, the Philippine College of Surgeons (PCS), which has served as the umbrella organization for all surgical cutting specialty societies in the country since its inception in 1936, has incessantly endeavored to ensure that accessible, and equitable surgical services are made available in underserved areas through its humanitarian arm, the Committee on Surgery in the Underserved Regions and

for Education or S.U.R.E. Commission. Aligned with this overarching objective, the Commission organized a SURGICAL OUTREACH ACTIVITY in partnership with the World Surgical Foundation Philippines (WSFP) together with the Dagupan Doctors Villaflor Memorial Hospital (DDVMH) and the MBP - Blessed Trinity General Hospital (MBP-BTGH) to address the surgical backlog in selected areas in the Province of Pangasinan. The outreach activity was conducted from November 27-30, 2022 which ran concurrently in the City of Dagupan and the Municipality of Mangatarem. Major operations for a wide range of diseases were done by conventional open surgery and by endoscopic or laparoscopic approach. These complex procedures, including minor surgeries were performed by both local and international surgeons at no cost for the benefit of deserving indigent patients suffering from a various ailments.

The invited luminaries were led by Dr. Domingo Alvear, a pediatric surgeon residing in Harrisburg, Philadelphia and founder of the World Surgical Foundation; Dr. Gazi Zibari, native of Kurdistan and an acclaimed humanitarian and transplant surgeon who presently holds the position of Chief of the Division of Transplantation and Director of Wills-Knighton Regional Transplant Program in Louisiana; and Dr. Quyen Chu, Chief of Surgical Oncology and Director of the Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Service in the Louisiana State University who is also a world-renowned researcher and educator. The local counterparts were led by Dr. Catherine Teh, Chief of the Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Service at the Makati Medical Center and member of numerous local and international specialty societies; Dr. Ramon Inso, General Surgeon and incumbent PCS President; Dr. Vivencio Jose Villaflor III, a General Surgeon with interest in Minimally-Invasive Surgery, Hospital and Medical Director of the DDVMH and concurrently, Board of Regents of the PCS; Dr. Beda Espineda, Pediatric Surgeon from Philippine Children's Medical Center and Commission Director of PCS S.U.R.E.; Dr. Marcus Lester Suntay, Pediatric Surgeon and Head of the WSFP; Dr. Jaime Maron, General Surgeon and Medical Director of MBP-BTGH; Dr. Roderick De Leon, Vice-President for Internal Projects of WSFP and practicing General Surgeon from Our Lady of Peace Hospital; Dr. Ralph Rapacon, Surgical Oncologist and President of the PCS-North Luzon Chapter; Dr. Mayeen Fernandez, General Surgeon and

President of the Philippine Society of General Surgeons (PSGS) - North Luzon Chapter; Dr. Jeff Wong, Plastic Surgeon from DDVMH and Dr. Kyle Gervin Ong, General Surgeon specializing in hepato-pancreato-biliary diseases who holds practice in MMC.

They were joined by prominent surgical practitioners who represented their affiliated societies namely Dr. Miguel Mendoza (Asian Hospital and Medical Center / AHMC); Dr. Raymond Ong (Philippine Association of Endoscopic and Laparoscopic Surgeons / PALES and Fellowship Consortium on Advanced Laparoscopic Surgery/ FOCALS); and Dr. Banny Genuino (Endo-Laparoscopic Institute / ELI).

In the weeks leading to the commencement of the surgical outreach activity, a rigorous screening process was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Mona Palisoc, Head of the Urgent Care Unit of DDVMH and Marie Fe G. Dela Cruz, Chief Nurse of DDVMH in order to ensure proper patient selection and safety. Ample support was extended by Dr. Marissa Umali, Dr. Karlo Orduna, Dr. Delia Guibani, Dr. Magdalyn Quilaton, Dr. Luis Buencamino, Dr. Fred Enrile and Dr. Jeffrey Corpuz who provided pre and perioperative anesthesia services under the able leadership of Dr. Maribel Valenzuela, President of the Philippine Association of Anesthesiologists (PSA) - Northern Luzon Chapter. The surgical outreach would not have been possible without the untiring service extended by the nursing staff of both DDVMH and MBP-BTGH together with volunteers from the WSFP and the Operating Room Nurses Association of the Philippines (ORNAP).

The activity was also coordinated through the generous support of industry partners such as Karl Storz Endoscopy Philippines, Medtronic, Health Solutions, Biosite Medical Instruments, Elan Vita Diagnostic Solutions, SonoScape, Braun, Cathay Drug Company, Inc., and ClearVue Pharma. Other partner-shareholders who gave their invaluable support included Unilab Foundation, Inc., Philippine Red Cross Pangasinan Chapter, Inner Wheel Club of Uptown Dagupan, CSI Group of Companies, University of Life and Sun Life Foundation. Logistical support was provided by the Municipal Government of Mangatarem and the Provincial Government of Pangasinan.

Prior to admission, patients were screened individually and appropriate diagnostic examinations were performed free of charge. In addition, all participants including healthcare workers were subjected to testing for SARS-CoV-2 in compliance with prescribed health protocols. As part of pre-operative care and for academic purposes, a Pre-Operative

Conference was conducted on the initial day with the panel of reactors consisting of Drs. Alvear, Zibari, Chu, and Teh who carefully “dissected” cases scheduled for surgery while generously sharing their knowledge and expertise on how to better manage the patients. Participating training institutions included the Ilocos Training and Medical Center, Region I Medical Center, Ospital ng Muntinlupa, AHMC, ELI and FOCALS.

After the last operating room theater had been vacated, a total of 120 individuals were recipients of quality and safe surgery for their respective ailments - cases ranging from complex malignant liver tumors, complicated cases of hernias, thyroid and breast masses, cleft lip and palate and various bowel abnormalities which included mostly, gallbladder stones. Surgical procedures that would have otherwise been undoable or plainly inaccessible due to either absence of equipment and expertise or lack of finances were made available utilizing the the best equipment, the best surgeons, anesthesiologists, and nurses while providing the best care possible.

Surgery is an essential part of all health systems. But so is humanity. As Dr. Juvie Villaflor alluded to the words of Hippocrates, “Where the art of medicine is loved, there is also love for humanity.” The recently concluded surgical outreach activity is proof that the spirit of altruism and volunteerism is alive and that ordinary people with great talent can perform extraordinary deeds with great love. It also shows that intersectional collaboration is the catalyst which can make effort more efficient and more inclusive.

Too often, quality is perceived as a luxury that only rich countries can afford. We now know this to be untrue. Building quality health services requires a culture of transparency, engagement, and openness about results, which are possible in all societies – regardless of their income level. Around the world and only recently in the thriving City of Dagupan and the quaint Municipality of Mangatarem, lessons have been learned on what works and what does not, providing a rich foundation from which to rapidly scale up a quality revolution.

Fact is, it can be done. And it HAS been done. Because in a world of cynics and skeptics, there are still dreamers and visionaries who dare to care. Who labor hard and play hard, because it is only in mirth and glee that work can be made pleasing to them. Who quietly toil in obscurity to change the world one community at a time... one surgical procedure at a time... one patient at a time.

All because the gift of giving never stops.

# PCS-STC

## Posthumous Award for Dr. Hernan Ang

• Marcus Jose B. Brillantes, MD, FPCS •

**Editor's Note:** The following is the Speech given on the Master of the Knife 2023 awarding to Dr. Hernan Ang at the Chapter Ceremonies, January 29, 2023)

Dra. Connie Vesagas, President PCS, Dr. Juvie Villaflor, VP, Regents, Dr. Joey Mendoza, Dr. Esperanza Lahoz, Dr. J. Rhoel de Leon, Ma'am Annette Tolentino, Fellows of the PCS Southern Tagalog Chapter, guests, Good Morning.

It is but proper and wholly befitting that our great Chapter recognises and awards our late colleague and dear friend, Hernan as Master of the Knife this year.

If Hernan were here today, present at this very moment, physically - he'd likely be immensely amused at all this fuss. Maybe - Hernan would probably quite characteristically break out into a hearty chuckle and in his usual jocular manner, rib each of us on bestowing him this prestigious award. I suspect he wouldn't take these accolades too seriously - just as most confident but modest men do not take unwanted attention - or themselves - seriously. I've known him to be a pretty unassuming fellow - simple, self-effacing, shy. But I feel he would nonetheless be grateful for the recognition.

Being a total outsider on my entrance to Perpetual Help Medical Center way back in 1997, Hernan was so very accommodating. It was like tentatively entering a room full of strangers. And then, there's one who smiles at you. That was Hernan. From then on, I saw him immediately as a "Kuya" and in time, started call him "Bossing". But, of course, he could hardly to be described as bossy.

He made himself available to many of us. I would chance to go to his clinic and discuss professional and personal matters and he readily dispensed invaluable advice.

I do remember the rare times I'd call on him during an intra-op procedure in order to get his immediate opinion.

We somehow quite naturally gravitated to each other. We were involved in a number of workings in the Surgery Department, discussing the residents or the medical students. He undertook his responsibilities as the Executive Training Officer seriously with due dedication and care.

During conventions and chapter activities, we invariably stayed side by side. (Dr. Inso was already "unreachable" and was moving in higher circles.) So Bossing and I kept each other company.

I can only recall the good side of Bossing Hernan. Not once did I ever witness a dark side. Never. Never did I see him lose his temper. Bossing was more known for his cheerful banter and the cracking of appropriate quips. Jeannie, his wife, told me the same thing: "napakabait" with a nary mean bone in his body.

The Bossing I knew was thoughtful and kind. One memorable incident readily comes to mind: Hernan went out of his way to do a timely call to me when I was on my way to the PCS for a Committee meeting, pre-Zoom period. Having heard of the latest traffic situation on the radio, he contacted me on-the-spot to warn and cautioned me to turn back immediately instead because of the nightmarish CARMageddon conditions at EDSA that evening. That was very much appreciated.

I did personally observe some slight trepidation and actual apprehension when he assumed the Chapter presidency back in 2008. To confide and admit such to me was indeed a testament of his humility.

During the severe lockdown period, we would continue to meet online periodically in our Resident's Training Committee. In one of those Zoom meetings, last December 2020, much to our startlement, it was noticed that he was now confined in the hospital. Bossing brushed this off as nothing of concern. That was his last meeting with us. 'Til the difficult end, Hernan responsibly carried out his duties.

I guess one vital lesson we can learn from Hernan's life is that it is how a person makes you feel - over that individual's accomplishments, achievements and successes - that truly matters.

As I have mentioned during Bossing's necrological services: Hernan was truly a decent individual and was the kindest there was. He was an extremely likeable human being. My only regret was I never told him that myself.

Our chapter surely misses him.

We all agree that our colleagues who sadly passed away in the line of service during the terrible period of the COVID pandemic are heroes. Hernan is our hero.

Hernan has been called by the Divine Healer for a higher service.

Congratulations Bossing Hernan!





## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas, MD, FPCS

## President, Philippine College of Surgeons 2023

• Marcus Jose B. Brillantes, MD, FPCS •

A future career in Biology - specifically in the dynamic field of Genetics - and a burning desire of being dedicated to the academe. That, would you believe, was the early career aspiration of our PCS President Dra. Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas.



Having finished her secondary schooling at the St. Theresa's College Manila with first honors, Dra. Vesagas pursued her Pre-Med studies in B. S. Biology in 1977 at the University of the Philippines. She graduated with distinction as cum laude in 1981. She was a member of the U.P. Pre-Medical Honors Society and the Phi Sigma Honor Society, Alpha Chi Chapter at the Diliman campus. But her father smartly intervened by suggesting to his daughter that she could still chase her dream of becoming a Biologist within the specialized branch of Genetics and accomplish this and more as a physician. Dra. Vesagas followed her father's advice.

She enrolled for medical studies at the University of the Philippines Manila in 1981 and graduated in 1985. Dra. Vesagas did her medical internship in the same institution from 1985-1986. After passing the medical boards, she decided to do residency at the Philippine General Hospital. During that period wherein her selected specialty was then a male-dominated field, Dra. Vesagas elected to go into General Surgery training undaunted.

When asked why she chose the field of Surgery, she replied, "It was a toss between Surgery and Obstetrics. During my rotation as a clinical clerk in Surgery, Dr. William Sy, the team captain then remarked that I should go into Surgery."

She finished her training in General Surgery in 1991 and shortly thereafter successfully hurdled the Diplomate Board examination.

Dra. Vesagas has held several positions in the PCS and in the various subspecialty societies.

Aside from currently being the President of the Philippine College of Surgeons, her current positions are as follows: Chairman of the Board, Philippine College of Surgeons Foundation, Inc; Trustee, Association of Women Surgeons of the Philippines; Officer-in-Charge, Ethics Review Board, 'Amang' Rodriguez Memorial Medical Center; Consultant, General Surgery, Department of Surgery, 'Amang' Rodriguez Memorial Medical Center; Visiting Consultant, Department of Surgery, Cardinal Santos Medical Center.

On a gladdening full circle note: In 2013, Dra. Vesagas was still able to pursue further studies on her leadoff passion: Introduction to Biology – The Secret of Life at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on a MOOC platform. The following year, she completed another online course on the Principles in Written English given by the University of California while simultaneously carrying out the duties as Editor-in-Chief of the PCS Newsletter. Despite her hectic schedule, she has also remarkably made time for competitive sports by trying out and becoming a member of the Manila Dragons Dragon Boat Rowing Team in 2006, of which she was even

awarded Most Improved Paddler on just her second year in the national team. The MDDBRT is one of the pioneer dragon boat teams in the Philippines and in a span of over 20 years has competed and won in a number of local and international boating races in different destinations including Melbourne, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Boracay.

Dra. Vesagas has numerous scientific & creative publications. Of the latter notably is the publication of the “Eight Decades of Philippine Surgery” by the Philippine College of Surgeons Board of Regents in 2016 of which she was editor.

The Newsletter was able to ask a few questions of our PCS President at the start of the year.

Were there any personal or family experiences that managed to shape your character and outlook today?

Having children and having a differently abled child has certainly shaped my outlook. Patience, looking for the good in people and having an optimistic outlook always helps.

What advice can you give our young surgeons?

Approach your profession with passion without forgetting that behind the patient is a person and a family who is concerned with outcomes. Continue to learn about the profession but be open to learning new things outside the confines of surgery. Make new friends and continue to have ties with your old friends. And always be humble and kind.

What are your aspirations for the College this year?

The aspirations are not for the year but for a long-term basis. I do not see myself pushing for

a “legacy project” but really making sure that the PCS will continue to grow in terms of membership, relevance to its members; that the College will continue to be significant in Philippine society, contributing to our health system and we be the go-to for surgical issues. It may not seem like it is a College aspiration but I would like that the Medical Act be passed by Congress this year in the form that the PCS helped formulate together with the other specialty divisions.

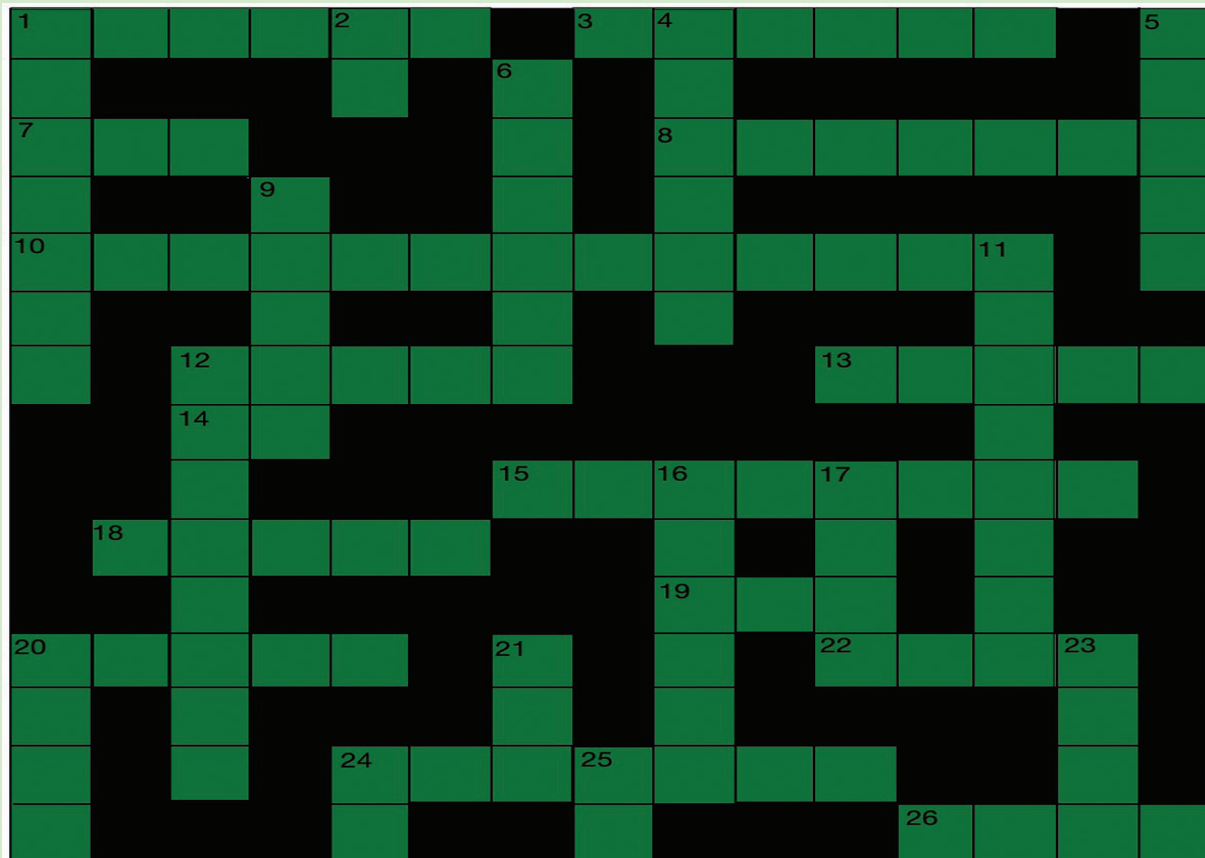


**The new PCS President with her husband, Dr. Theodor S. Vesagas and children.**

# Crossword Page

## Surgery History Trivia

• Domingo C. Sampang, MD, FPCS •



### ACROSS

1. FATHER OF EXPERIMENTAL SURGERY
3. NUN WHO BECAME A SURGICAL SAINT AFTER HER BREASTS WERE ORDERED TO BE REMOVED BY A ROMAN GOVERNOR
7. INITIAL OF THIS KNOWN ARTIST/PAINTER WHO MADE 779 DRAWINGS OF THE HUMAN BODY
8. HER MADE BASIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PATHOGENESIS OF SHOCK. PIONEER AND INNOVATOR IN THE FIELD OF CARDIAC SURGERY
10. PIONEER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THYROID SURGERY. RECIPIENT OF NOBEL PRIZE IN 1909
12. HE PERFORMED THE 1ST PORTACAVAL ANASTOMOSIS IN 1903
13. - - - - -NG SURGEON WHO DISCOVERED PENICILLIN IN 1928
14. IT MEANS AN EYE IN THE OLD ENGLISH (SCOTLAND, NORTHERN ENGLAND AND ARCHAIC)
15. HE PERFORMED THE 1ST SUCCESSFUL GASTRECTOMY. HE WAS THE ONE WHO STATED THAT "AN OPERATION ON THE HEART WOULD BE A PROSTITUTION OF SURGERY"
18. PERFORMED THE 1ST SUCCESSFUL HUMAN LUNG TRANSPLANTATION IN 1963
19. INITIAL OF THIS SPANISH NUEROSCIENTIST, PATHOLOGIST AND HISTOLOGIST SPECIALIZING IN NUEROANATOMY AND ACKNOWLEDGED AS THE PIONEER OF MODERN NUEROSCIENCE
20. HE PERFORMED THE FIRST HEART LUNG TRANSPORTATION IN 1982
22. THE FIRST HUMAN RADIOGRAPH PEFORMED BY ROENTGEN
24. PART OF WESTERN EUROPE WHERE THE 1ST LEGITIMATE DEGREE FOR PHYSICIAN WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1000AD
26. PART OF FRANCE WHERE THE 1ST LAPAROSCOPIC CHOLECYSTECTOMY WAS PERFORMED BY MOURET IN 1987

### DOWN

1. HE INTRODUCED THE GERMAN RESIDENCY TO U.S. AND INTRODUCED THE USE OF RUBBER GLOVES IN SURGERY. HE MADE FUNDAMENTAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SURGERY OF THYROID, BREAST AND HERNIA
2. A SPECIALTY WHERE ITS RESIDENCY PROGRAM IN THE WORLD BEGAN IN 1970 AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI
4. PIONEER CARDIOTHORACIC SURGEON WHO DEVELOPED EXTRACORPOREAL CIRCULATION (HEART LUNG MACHINE)
5. DE \_\_\_\_\_ HE PERFORMED THE 1ST CAROTID ENDARTERECTOMY IN 1953
6. HE DID THE 1ST END TO END VASCULAR ANASTOMOSIS. HIS TECHNIQUE MADE TRANSPLANTATION A TECHNICAL POSSIBILITY
9. A PhD IN PHYSICS WHO DEVELOPED ELECTROCAUTERY IN BOSTON IN 1920
11. DISCOVERED XRAYS IN 1895
12. FOUNDER OF MODERN HUMAN ANATOMY. HE MADE MAJOR ADVANCEMENT OVER THE LONG DOMINANT WORK OF GALEN
16. FATHER OF ASEPTIC SURGERY
17. AUGUST GOTTLIEB \_\_\_\_\_ TER A GERMAN SURGEON WHO DESCRIBED A DISORDER OF STRANGULATED HERNIA IN WHICH ONLY PART OF THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE BOWEL IS AFFECTED
20. \_\_\_\_\_ DES HE WAS THE FIRST TO ADMINISTER TOTAL PARENTERAL NUTRITION IN 1968
21. INITIAL OF HIS GERMAN SURGEON WHO WAS ACKNOWLEDGED AS THE FATHER OF MODERN RESIDENCY SYSTEM
23. \_\_\_\_\_ ST HE PERFORMED THE 1ST ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSMECTOMY IN 1951
24. THE MODERN FORM OF METRIC SYSTEM AND THE MOST WIDELY USED SYSTEM OF MEASUREMENT
25. ENGLISH PHYSICIAN WHO POPULARIZED VACCINATION (1749-1823)

*Editor's Note: You'll find the answers on page 31*