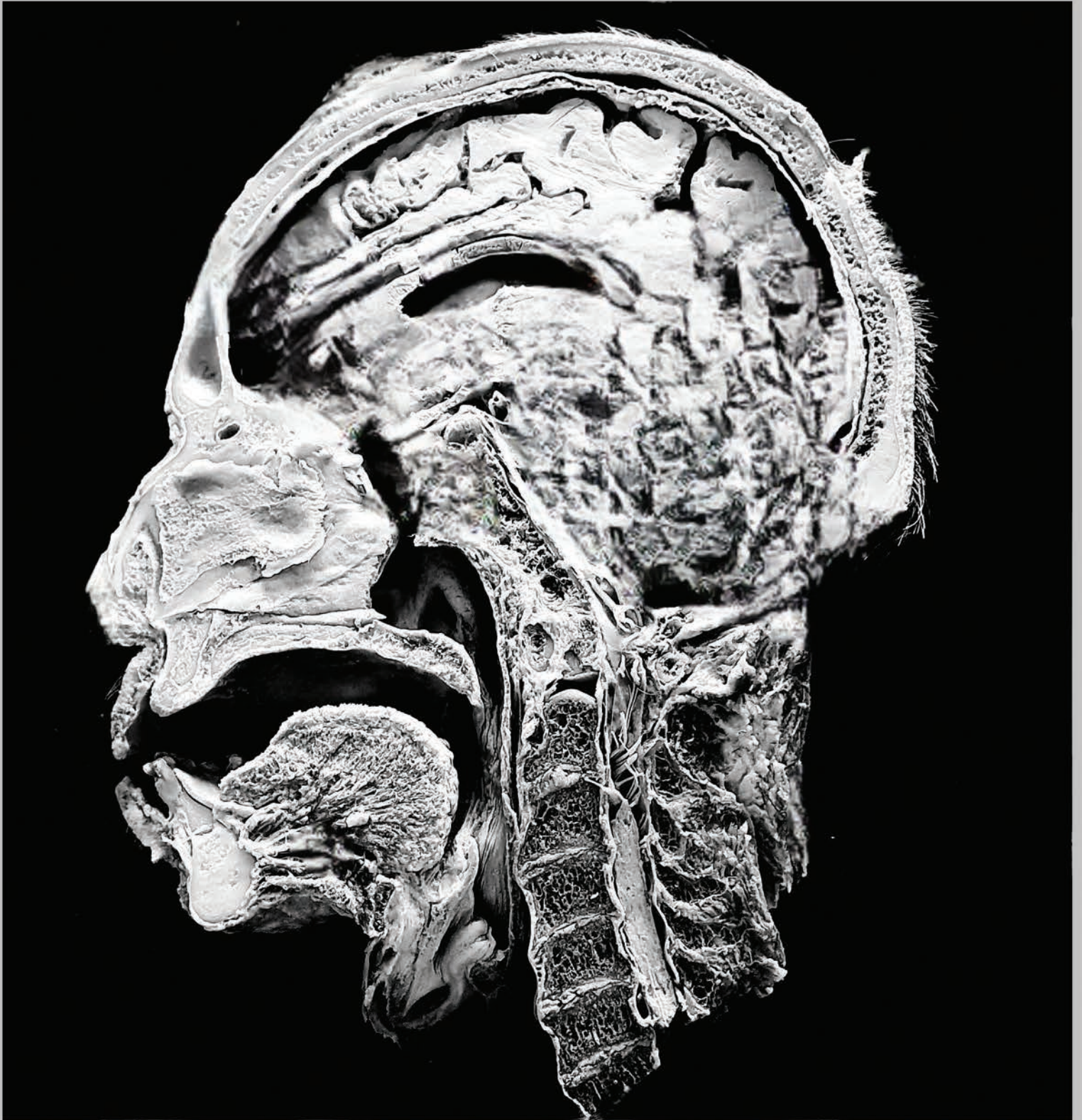




Incisions

The Newsletter of the Philippine College of Surgeons

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Life's Surges

Rey-An Niño L. Garcia, MD



ON THE COVER



INSIDE THE MIND OF A TEACHER
By DR. LEONARDO ONA II

Dr. Leonardo Ona II is a PCS fellow practicing in Metro Manila. He served as president of the Philippine Society of General Surgeons in 2022-2023. Presently, he is the training officer of the general surgery residency program in St. Luke's Medical Center Global City and is an active faculty at the St. Lukes Medical Center College of Medicine.

Dr. Ona prefers to "capture the serendipity of the moment" using both film and digital photography. He takes pride in practicing discipline and restraint while doing his art.

The cover photo for this issue was taken during an anatomy class. Its title is: *Inside the Mind of the Teacher*.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Marcus Jose B. Brillantes, MD, FPCS



PCS FOUNDATION: Beginning Recollection & Accounts

The Philippine College of Surgeons traces its beginnings to modest gatherings in Ermita, Manila during the Commonwealth period. In a 1967 account, then-PCS President Dr. Clemente R. Calma recalled how a group of pioneering Filipino surgeons first met at the Paris Restaurant (later known as the Swiss Inn) to lay the foundation for what would eventually become the PCS.

Their early exploratory discussions culminated in the official inauguration of the College on September 12, 1936, although its by-laws would not be approved until October 16 of that same year. At the helm was the renowned Dr. Gregorio T. Singian, famously known as El Mago del Bisturí (“The Magician of the Scalpel”), who was unanimously elected as the organization’s first president.

The founding of the College marked a milestone in Philippine medical history as the first national surgical organization. Its primary mission was to raise the standards of surgical training and practice nationwide - a vision shared by its founders and early members.

However, accounts of the College’s founding vary. In a 1977 interview, Dr. Domingo Antonio, Jr., PCS President in 1964, offered a different version. According to him, the historic meeting occurred at the old San Juan de Dios Hospital in Intramuros, Manila. Six of the original 35 charter members were still living at the time of his recollection: Drs. Miguel Cañizares, Aurelio Dayrit, Rodolfo Gonzalez, Fortunato Guerrero, Ricardo Jara, and Luis Santos.

“The date was September 12, 1936,” Dr. Antonio recalled. “At the head of the long table sat the venerable and ailing Dr. Gregorio Singian - the father of Philippine Surgery, Director of San Juan de Dios Hospital, and former Chair of the Department of Surgery at the University of Santo Tomas.”

Another recollection came in 1986 from Dr. Luis F. Torres, who delivered the annual G.T. Singian Lecture.

Dr. Torres, who was a young resident at San Juan de Dios in 1936, recalled being invited with fellow residents to Dr. Singian’s home on 806 Dewey Boulevard (now Roxas Boulevard). There, they witnessed a small circle of Filipino surgeons gathered for the election of officers and formal inauguration of the PCS. Dr. Singian was named President, Dr. Baldomero Roxas was elected Vice President, and Dr. Carmelo R.M. Reyes was appointed Secretary-Treasurer.

By the time of the inauguration, Dr. Singian was at the twilight of his career and was partially impaired, suffering from right-sided hemiparesis and hearing loss. Despite his condition, his colleagues elected him out of respect for his leadership and legacy. He passed away in Hong Kong on January 29, 1936, just five months after his election.

Dr. Calma noted that early PCS gatherings went beyond professional networking. “They not only exchanged knowledge and compared skills,” he said, “they also tackled pressing issues - setting minimum standards for surgical hospitals, addressing cancer care, curbing unethical practices like fee-splitting, and defining the ethical relationship between surgeons and family physicians.”

As for the number of founding members, sources differ. Dr. Calma recalled 34; Dr. Antonio said there was 35. Exact records were lost during the vast destruction of Manila in World War II. What remains clear is that those present elected respected Filipino surgeons to lead the organization. Alongside Dr. Singian and Dr. Roxas, the by-laws committee was formed by Dr. Carmelo Reyes (also a lawyer), Dr. Antonio Villarama, and Dr. Herminio Velarde, Sr.

From the bold vision of a small band of pioneering surgeons, the Philippine College of Surgeons rose to become the guardian of surgical excellence in the nation - defining the standards, upholding the ethics, and shaping the very future of surgical education in our country.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

JOSE RHOEL C. DE LEON, MD, FPCS



We are almost 3/4 done with our term - together with my hardworking and dedicated Board of Regents - and we have made major breakthroughs towards achieving the goals we have set upon ourselves at the beginning of our term. The dream and the plans actually started way before my presidency. Being part of the executive committee of previous Board of Regents particularly 2023 and 2024 under presidents Concepcion C. Vesagas and Vivencio Jose P. Villaflor III - we have been discussing many of the things we set this year and hopefully will be pursued further in the years to come. There is only one objective - to achieve the mission and vision we set based on providing quality surgery for all (the objective set by our very founders themselves in 1936) under one umbrella of all cutting subspecialties, that is the Philippine College of Surgeons. Further, we cannot achieve all this by limiting ourselves to surgery alone. The practice of surgery have evolved with the times requiring us to go beyond surgery to assure that we become relevant to the community beyond doing surgery and that we become part of nation building while we protect ourselves from the threat of legislations, regulations, managed care, health economics etc.

As a guide, we created three #hashtags to remind us and keep us aligned with our objectives and imperatives for the year and beyond. Let me use the three #hashtags to report to my fellow surgeons what we have done in the middle six months of our term.

#qualitysurgeryforall

We had our 4th BOR meeting April 12, 2025 and one of the main focus of our discussion is the upcoming Midyear Convention from April 30- May 2, 2025 in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan hosted by the Metro Manila Chapter and co-hosted by the Philippine Surgical Infection Society. The MYC was a big success and kudos goes to the organizing committee led by Vice President Joselito Mendoza and the MYC Chair RJ Manzo. The Metro Manila Chapter under the leadership of Dr. Oey Pena made sure we all had a great time in Puerto Princesa. The MYC coincided as well with the Surgical Infection Society-Asia Pacific Conference coordinated by the PSIS under President Dr. Miguel Gary D. Galvez. The scientific sessions as well as the fellowship night were a huge success both in terms of attendance and impact in learning and camaraderie as well.

We started our Clinical Quality Programs (PCS-NSQIP) with the collaborative effort on Standards for SLNB led by our Cancer Committee, Quality assurance, PSGS, the SOSP and PSBS. We hope to come up with more PCS-NSQIP all across the different subspecialties.

We continue to strengthen all the committees of the college - focusing on continuing activities that will help us better improve our practice as well as be more responsive to the needs of our fellows and members.

It has long been our desire to fill up the position of Executive Secretary who will act as our Chief Operating Officer who will assure that programs of the college will be continuing since the president of the college only have a one year term. The Executive Director (ED) will be our stabilizer and will also assure the efficiency of our corporate operation. The first ED is very crucial since it will be a new position and the transition is very important. We prefer someone who understand the culture of the organization and familiar with our operation. We are very thankful to our Past president - Dra. Concepcion C. Vesagas for accepting our offer to be the first and interim Executive Director of our beloved college.

#pcsbeyondsurgery

One strength that the college can truly harness is to be the key opinion leader for health in the country. We already have the legacy, the capability, the reputation and the technical knowledge to be one but we need to be proactive in "offering ourselves" to the government and to the community. With the creation of our three (3) commissions - we have slowly thrown ourselves in the forefront of cancer care not just in the clinical aspect but in every facet of the disease. Interestingly, as I was reading the history of the college - the challenges of cancer was

a key issue even among our founders. The PCS-Cancer Commission continue to bring together all stakeholders on the table culminating in the annual National Cancer Summit. We also have the TIBCC (Trauma, Injury and Burn Care Commission doing its part in improving trauma care and policies in the country. The SURE have evolved from occasional surgical missions by the college into a collaborative surgical services across the country delivering surgical care as well as surgical education.

Internationally, we have strengthened our partnership with our neighbors and beyond. The ASEAN Federation of Surgical Colleges is at its most active time. We have spearheaded together with our Malaysian colleagues a joint declaration in decreasing the surgical footprint across the region with the Sarawak Declaration on Sustainable Surgery. On our end we will soon launch our Vision 2036: Zero Net Surgical Footprint, details of which will be presented once finalized. Together, the presidents of the ASEAN Colleges have also agreed to pursue common programs on equitable access to surgery and quality in surgery. During the Royal College of Surgeons Annual Congress in Pattaya last July - we brought two young fellows with us to be part of the first ASEAN Young Fellows Forum. Dr. JB Baltazar, a young colorectal surgeon presented for the Philippines on her young journey together with other presenters from the ASEAN countries as well as Taiwan - with Taiwan Surgical Association and RACS being “adopted” colleges of the ASEAN Federation. Our partnership and collaboration with the Royal College of Surgeons - Edinburgh, the oldest college in the world and the American College of Surgeons have been renewed and strengthened. We have made initial contacts as well with Japan, India, and other world colleges to further expand our network for future partnerships.

Dr. JB Baltazar and Dr. Arch Thor Ponce also stayed for further exposure in Thailand under the auspices of Prof. Suthep Udomsawaengsup as our second batch of the revived International Scholarship Program led by Chairman Dr. Ike Mendoza - who formulated the current mechanics for our program. Our International Relations Committee Chair, Dr. Maximo Simbulan have always been on hand to guide us with our international connections. We have opened up our International Scholarship Program to “named scholarship program” for any fellow or individual who may want to give back or sponsor some of our deserving scholars.

We also faced challenges from the government professional regulations that we are trying to work on being the umbrella organization of cutting subspecialties and one of the 8 recognized specialty division of the Philippine Medical Association. We also met with many government agencies including the two houses of congress, PHIC, DENR, PAGCOR among others. We continue to work with the HMOs and PHIC to assure that

the rights of our fellows are protected. We will be working closely with the new PHIC leadership led by one of our own - Dr. Edwin Mercado.

#onepcs

Arguably, the most challenging among all our hashtags - bringing all the subspecialties and affiliate societies as well as our chapters under one house, one umbrella - the Philippine College of Surgeons. To understand our current situation - we need to look back into our history. We were created in 1936 by a very diverse group of surgeons even when specialization is not yet fully developed. We have general surgeons, ophthalmologists, ob-gyn, urologist, orthopedic and trauma surgeons, EENT among our 34 charter fellows. However, in the 60s until the creation of the PSGS in 1999, admittedly we have become a GS centric college. It was envisioned that the creation of the PSGS would show the other subspecialties that the PCS is for every surgeon regardless of specialization. However, through the years we have failed to fully address the lingering issue of representation and mutual benefits leading to some subspecialties desiring to separate from the mother organization. We are now addressing this head on and in a transparent way. We are proposing amendments to our constitution part of which is to increase the number of seats in the Board of Regents that will assure equal representation of the different subspecialties. But that is just one issue.

So, we conducted the historic first Philippine Surgical Summit last August 23, 2025. We brought in all stakeholders of the college, the subspecialties and affiliates, past presidents, surgeons in the academe and government, young and old ones and chapter representatives. I would like to give credit to the Committee on Surgical Training (CST) led by Dr. Deogracias Reyes and Regent-in-Charge Dr. JJ Cruz for painstakingly preparing for the summit. It was a successful and historic one with everyone in attendance agreeing to a common roadmap to pursue in the coming years. Its not the solution for all that we are facing but we have already put the college on track too achieving its goal of being a true umbrella organization - the home of every Filipino Surgeon.

Here's a complete list of all the meetings and activities participated by your president:

- The 4th BOR Regular Meeting was held at the PCS GT Singian Room last April 12, 2025 presided by the president
- April 15, 2025 - Exhibitors Meeting for the 51st MYC in PPS
- April 22, 2025 - PCS Officers, with PMA President Dr. Sonny Santos, Past Presidents - Vesagas, Villaflores, Simbulan on PRC Concerns

- April 22, 2025 - Meeting with the Committee on By-Laws and Amendments and Committee on Conventions
- April 28, 2025 - Dialogue with the PRC BOM, PCS Exec Com, Past presidents and PMA held at the PMA Board Room
- The President delivered a special message during the pre convention activity of the PATOS held last April 30, 2025 at Puerto Princesa City, Palawan
- The President together with other officers and members of the BOR went around all the pre convention sports activities of the 51st MYC in Puerto Princesa City, as well as a courtesy call to the office of the Mayor of PP.
- Attended the welcome dinner for the MYC hosted by the Metro Manila Chapter - April 30, 2025 at Badjao Seafront Restaurant
- Delivered the Presidential Message and formally opened the MYC - during the opening ceremonies of the 51st MYC in Asturias Plaza Hotel Puerto Princesa City
- Presided over the Business meeting of the PCS/PCSF during the MYC
- Attended the fellowship night of the 51st MYC and delivered a short message as well as presided over the turnover of the MYC banner from MMC to the Bicol Chapter - May 1, 2025
- Held a special BOR meeting on May 2, 2025 to discuss pressing matters pertaining to the proposed memorandum circular from the PRC BOM on the recognition and classification of specialty societies as well as fellows and diplomates
- Represented the PCS during the Opening of the PMA Annual Convention and attended the PMA General Assembly at the EDSA Shangri-la Hotel last May 14-16, 2025
- UHC Update meeting with Dr. Enrique Ona and PP Juvie Villaflor at the EDSA Shangri-la Hotel as a pocket meeting during the PMA convention
- A report from PP Juvie Villaflor was given who represented the President during the RACS Convention which coincided with our MYC (see attached)
- A meeting with the EDSA Shangri-la officers was held together with the ES, VP, Secretary and Dra. Tagayuna to thresh out issues during our ACC and the possibility of renegotiating our locked in contract with them for the next 3 years last May 16, 2025
- 6th Board of Regents Meeting was held at the GT Singian Board room last June 21, 2025. Reported and updated the BOR on the activities attended by the president as well as the status of ongoing programs and future plans.
- June 30, 2025 Met with the Executive Committee of the Philippine Orthopedic Association (POA) to openly discuss their concerns and their letter together with the PSO-HNS and PAO, joined by our VP, former regent and POA PP Julyn Aguilar and ES. Based on an informal survey conducted by Pres. Jac Pimentel have no desire to separate from the PCS -if - relevant changes particularly on representation and on membership dues will be addressed. Fellows also feel that there's no benefit for them as a fellow with the current set up.
- July 1, 2025 - Alignment meeting with Unilab officers led by Mr. Bob Barrera GM of Westmont on behalf of Mr. John Dumpit to review our current partnerships as well as align other programs coming up - particularly the ACC
- Discussed also the possibility of having a top officer/ executive - to represent the company in the PCSF.
- July 1, 2025 EDSA Shangri-la Hotel - As authorized by the BOR - the officers met with PP Concepcion C. Vesagas, MD to formally offer the position of Executive Director -COO on an interim basis. She will be formally introduced during the PP Dinner on July 18, 2025.
- Delivered a video message to the 9th Annual Convention of the Surgical Oncology of the Philippines. Emphasized on the importance of collaboration our Cancer Initiatives led by our Cancer Committee, PCSCanCom, and all the subspecialties and affiliate of the college. Emphasized as well the history of the SOSB being borne out of the PCS Cancer Committee.
- Invited to deliver a message to the National Physiatrist day by Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine...Emphasized that we are looking forward to collaborating with their organization on our common agenda and initiative towards better and quality patient care - specially on the need for rehabilitation of surgical patients.
- July 10-12 Pattaya, Thailand - Invited to represent the PCS to the 50th Annual Congress of the Royal College of Surgeons Thailand as a stage party together with other international colleges
- We were joined in the RCST convention by our two young fellow scholars - Dr. JB Baltazar and Dr. Arch

Ponce who joined the ASEAN Young Fellows Forum. Dra. Baltazar delivered a lecture as well.

- July 18, 2025 - met with the Comelec to discuss the final form of the proposed amendments. The comelec made some minor comments and also noted on the comments of our legal consultants. The comments and revisions were forwarded to the Committee on By-laws for approval.
- July 18, 2025 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel - PCS Presidents Night - Our annual tribute to our past presidents. Joined also by Subspecialty Presidents, Affiliates and Chapter Presidents
- Formally signed the Contract of Engagement with our First Executive Director - COO Dr. Concepcion C. Vesagas.
- July 8, 2025 – Execom with Com. on Surgical Training– Re: Surgical Summit
- July 11, 2025 – Asean Federation of Surgery Younger Fellows Forum 2025; Theme: Reflections on the 10 years of a Surgeons (Participated as Co-Chair of the Session)
- July 11, 2025 – Surgical Oncology Society of the Philippines Annual Convention; Edsa Shangri-La Hotel
- July 12, 2025 – PSIS-SIPA Annual Conference; V. Luna Memorial Auditorium (represented by Dr. Orlando O. Ocampo)
- July 15, 2025 – Officers Meeting with Dean Malaya Santos, Mapua University
 - Committee on Conventions
- July 17, 2025 – Committee on Surgical Training and Officers with Dean Malaya Santos
- July 20, 2025 - Invited to speak at the 17th post graduate course of the PAFP Northern Mindanao Chapter in Butuan City and joined by the PCS NM

Chapter officers who held a dialogue with the local fellows from the CARAGA area

- July 22, 2025 Edsa Shangrila Hotel - Delivered a message during the Presidents Night of the 4th Annual Meeting of the International Society of Fluorescence Guided Surgery - Asia Pacific led by Pres. Catherine SC Teh and Invited as well as a faculty - reactor during the scientific sessions
- July 23, 2025 - PSGS -PALES joint convention Opening Ceremonies at EDSA Shangrila Hotel. Delivered a highly charged- passionate message emphasizing on the desire of the college for unity, oneness, collaboration - and reminding everyone of the past and our current challenges
- July 23, 2025 -Inaugural Meeting and Induction ceremonies of the newest affiliate society of the PCS. Delivered a cordial message welcoming the PAMOS to the fold of the PCS
- July 26, 2025 at Unilab - 2nd half of the year meeting with the Subspecialty and Affiliate Society Leaders
- Open discussion on issues particularly the upcoming summit and referendum
- PSPS raised issue on MIS
- August 2, 2025 - PCSF Regular Meeting. Special Meeting of the BOR
- August 8, 2025 - Hilton Newport -Attended and delivered a message during the opening ceremonies of the PAC 2025 of PAPRAS, joined by ED Connie Vesagas
- August 11, 2025 - Meeting with ORNAP at Valle Verde Country Club
- August 11, 2025 - Meeting with the Nominations Committee
- August 23, 2025 - The First Philippine Surgical Summit held at Bayanihan Center



ACROSS THE BOARD

Orlando O. Ocampo, MD, FPCS



5th BOARD OF REGENTS MEETING

Date: May 17, 2025

Venue: GT Singian Board Room, PCS Building

1. Agenda
 - a. Part I – Renewal of Memorandum of Agreement between Nephila and Philippine College of Surgeons Foundation (PCSF).
 - b. Part II - Presentation by Dr. Maria Rica M. Lumague of Association of Women Surgeons of the Philippines (AWSP) Book entitled: *Breaking Barriers: Stories of Filipino Women Pioneers in Surgery* to PCS President, Dr. Jose Rhoel De Leon.
 - c. Part III – Meeting Proper
2. Minutes of the Meeting
3. The meeting was called to order at 8:22 AM by Dr. Jose Rhoel C. De Leon.
4. The agenda was unanimously approved .
5. The minutes (April 12, 2025) were approved without amendments.
6. Matters Arising from the Minutes:
 - The International Scholarship Program with be retained with the Ad-hoc Committee on Asean Summit & International Relations; collaboration will instead be with the Committee on Surgical Training.
 - The Board approved the title of the 90th Foundation coffee table book as 'KALAYAG'.
 - Executive Director
 - o BOR Resolution 2025-01: Implementation of the hiring an Executive Director, as outlined in the PCS By-laws.
 - o Key Agreements and Actions:
 - The need to hire an Interim Executive Director.
 - The ideal candidate should possess corporate or business acumen
 - A Job Description for the Executive Director will be prepared
 - The position is full-time with renewable term of 2 to 3 years
 - Benchmarking will be based on Dr. Patricia Turner, ACS Executive Director
 - Remuneration details will be studied and recommended by Committee on Finance
7. Highlights of the President's report for May 2025
 - April 22, 2025 - Meeting with the Committee on By-Laws and Amendments and Committee on Conventions
 - April 28, 2025 - Dialogue with the PRC Board of Medicine, PMA, PCS ExeCom, and Past Presidents held at the PMA Board Room
 - Delivered the Presidential Message and formally opened the Mid-Year Convention (MYC) - during the opening ceremonies of the 51st MYC in Asturias Plaza Hotel Puerto Princesa City
 - Presided over the Business meeting of the PCS/PCSF during the MYC
 - Attended the fellowship night of the 51st MYC and delivered a short message as well as presided over the turnover of the MYC banner from MMC to the Bicol Chapter - May 1, 2025
 - Represented the PCS during the Opening of the PMA Annual Convention and attended the PMA General Assembly at the EDSA Shangri-La Hotel last May 14-16, 2025
8. New Matters:
 - 8.1. Committee Reports
 - 8.1.1. Cluster A – National Programs
 - 8.1.1.1.1 HMO/RVS
 1. Creation of a Google Form for Complaints related to HMO Concerns
 2. Additional Initiatives:
 - a. Institutionalize an adjudication process in coordination with the Membership, Ethics & Judicial Matters, and HMO Committees.
 - b. Send a clarificatory letter to the BIR Legal Division requesting an update on the exemption under the Ease of Paying Taxes (EOPT) law related to HMO billings.
 - c. Advocate for self-ledgering of income earned from HMOs.
 - d. Review and sanitize the 2024 list to ensure inclusion of procedures from 2009.
 - e. Establish an HMO Office (not a Committee) to ensure continuous monitoring and provide a “hotline” for addressing concerns/issues.
 - 8.1.1.2.1. Trauma
 1. Participation:
 - a. Meeting for the development of the National Emergency Medical Service (NEMS) Protocol, April 29, 2025, 2-5pm at Sampaguita Hall C, The Manila Hotel, Rizal Park, Ermita Manila, attended by: Joel U. Macalino, MD
 - b. Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) Guidelines for the Appointment of the Third Doctor under the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers, April 29, 2025, 1:30-3:30pm via Webex, attended by: Joseph T. Juico, MD
 2. ATLS Updated Schedules 2025
 - a. May 30-June 1, 2025 (PCS Office)

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- b. July 4-6, 2025 (PCS Office)
 - c. August 8-10, 2025 (PCS Office)
 - d. September 5-7, 2025 (PCS Office)
 - e. October 3-5, 2025 (PCS Office)
3. Stop The Bleed - quotation from Teleflex re tourniquet
 4. Basic Emergency Skills in Trauma (BEST) Skills Stations open for levels 2 and 3 surgery residents scheduled for May 16-17, 2025
 5. Upcoming Conferences:
 - a. World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WADEM) 2025 - May 2-6, 2025 at Keio Plaza Hotel Tokyo, Shinjuku, Tokyo, Japan
 - b. European EMS Congress Stockholm Waterfront Congress Center - June 2-4, 2025
 - c. Singapore Trauma and Acute Care Conference (STACC) - Navigating Uncertainties, Inspiring Solutions, Building Resilience on July 17-18, 2025 Suntec, Singapore
 - d. Topics in Emergency Medicine: Trauma Budapest, Hungary on September 8-12, 2025
 - e. International Surgical Week ISW 2026, Mexico City on April 19-23, 2026
 6. Sub -Com Critical Care and Nutrition
 - a. Creating Facebook reels (minimum 3 minutes)
Topic: Introduction/Teaser of SICU Rotation
 - b. Collaboration with Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine, Inc. (PARM) meeting held last April 23, 2025, at 8pm
 - c. Collaboration with Philippine College of Medical Nutrition Physician (PCMNP)

8.1.1.3. Trauma, Injury and Burn Care Commission (TIBCC)

1. Updates By Cluster
 - a. Hospital Care Cluster:
 - PMA Annual Convention, May 15, 2025, at 12:00nn to 1pm.
Topics: Trauma System in the Philippines: Developing a Trauma System by Dr. Benedict Edward P. Valdez
 - The National Trauma Registry Project by Dr. Aireen Patricia M. Madrid
 - Trauma Network: Capacity Building for Trauma Centers by Atty. Joel U. Macalino
 - b. Rehabilitation Cluster:
Balikatan Exercise: Request to conduct training across Northern Luzon Command areas
 - c. Disaster Risk Reduction Cluster:
Disaster Preparedness Tabletop Exercise conducted by Drs. Andrew Jay Pusung and Jorge Concepcion during the 4th BOR Meeting (April 12, 2025).
 - d. Trauma Education;
DSTC Course on June 13-15, 2025
Structure: 2-day didactics, 1-day animal lab
Foreign Instructors:
Dr. Tarek Razek (Quebec, Canada),
Dr. Teo Li Tserng (Singapore).
 - e. Neuro Trauma Society of the Philippines, Inc. (NTSP)
Organizing the 18th Asian Australasian Congress of Neurological Surgeons (AACNS 2026), June 15-18, 2026; SMX Convention Center.
2. Updates from Atty. Joel U. Macalino
Attended PCEM Convention; The Manila Hotel; April 29, 2025

Panel Discussion: "Trauma Across the Acute Care Continuum"

8.1.1.4. Cancer

1. Participation in PCS 81st Annual Clinical Congress:
Format: Lecture and Panel Discussion
Interesting Case Presentation: by Dr. Jan Andrew Bueno
 - Tumoral thrombosis
 - Upper Gastrointestinal Cancer
 Possible Speakers/panelists:
 - Young and Senior consultants for the panel discussion/reactors
 - Plan to invite a foreign Upper G. I Oncologist
2. Cancer Bulletin - Vol. 10 no. 2 June-Dec 2025 issue
Target release date: 1st week of June

8.1.1.5. SURE & Community Services

1. SPSA – WSF & Locale Government Unit of Sorsogon Deployment Program
 - Deployment of volunteer surgeon (Dr. Dave Narciso Cortes) and Anesthesiologist (Dr. Alfredo Patriarca) concluded on April 15, 2025.
2. Scheduled Missions:
Iloilo City – June 24-27, 2025
General Santos City – July 15-18, 2025
Bacolod City – August 12-15, 2025

8.1.1.6. Surgical Infections

1. Participation on PCS 51st Midyear Convention in collaboration with the Philippine Surgical Infection Society
 - a. Research Paper Contest Winners:
 - 1st Prize: Daniel Ernest Florendo, MD, UP-PGH
Title: Comparative Outcomes of Laparoscopic versus Open Appendectomy at a Pediatric Surgery Referral Center in the Philippines
 - 2nd Prize: Charmaine Ray R. Caisido, MD, UP-PGH
Title: Surgical Site Infection (SSI) Rates Following Appendectomy at the UP-PGH from January to November 2023
 - 3rd Prize: Katherine Marie B. Montejo, MD, V. Luna Medial Center
Title: Prevalence and Risk Factors of Surgical Site Infection in Military General Surgery Ward: An Observational Study Panel of Judges (SIS-AP)
 - o Prof. Yuichi Yoshida, MD
 - o Prof. Suk-Hwan Lee, MD
 - o Prof. Toar JM Lalising, MD
2. 5th PSIS Surgical Infections Prevention Awareness Day (SIPA) in collaboration with PCS and ORNAP.
July 12, 2025 (Saturday) 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Venue: Victoriano Luna Medical Center Auditorium, Quezon City
3. 81st Annual Clinical Congress on December 6-10, 2025
Topic: Duration for Antibiotic regimens for Surgical Infections...The Shorter...The Better
4. Project with Pfizer: Com. On Surgical Infection on LMS
 - Thoracic infection (empyema thoracis)
 - Urologic infection - CAUTI and upper tract UTIs
 - Surgical Site Infections or Complicated intra-abdominal Infections

8.1.2. Cluster B – Surgical Education

8.1.2.1. Conventions

1. Post-evaluation
51st Midyear Convention – April 30-May 2, 2025 Palawan
Hosts: Metro Manila Chapter in collaboration with Surgical Infection Society-Asia Pacific and Philippine Surgical Infection Society
Theme: “Twists and Turns in Surgery: Managing Surgical Challenges”
Pre-convention Events/Activities – April 30, 2025
Shuttle Service - Provided for delegates travelling to their hotel, some hotels arranged their own shuttles.
 - a. Convention Proper
Opening Ceremony - Session coordinators deserve commendation
Fellowship Night (May 1) - The party atmosphere was lively from the start, with music and drinks. The PCSMMC will share the Fellowship Night preparations and pointers with the Bicol chapters.
Remarks: “It was arguably the best Fellowship Night so far”
 - b. Scientific Sessions
April 30, 2025
 - PATOS Workshop - 85 attendees (including 22 new members)
 - SOSP Workshop and Live Surgery held at Ospital ng Palawan
May 1-2, 2025 - Extended session time on the second day
 - c. Business Meeting – Attended by 77 Fellows
2. Upcoming Events:
 1. 81st Annual Clinical Congress - Dec 6-10, 2025, EDSA Shangri-La Manila, Mandaluyong City; Theme: “Surgical Synergy: The Fusion of Classic Mastery and Modern Technology”
 2. 52nd Midyear Convention – May 6-8, 2026 (Wednesday-Friday)
Theme: Building Integrity, Competence and Outstanding Leadership (BICOL)
Venue: Villa Caceres, Naga City
Chapter Host: PCS Bicol Chapter
Proposed Date Change: Move dates to April 30-May 2, 2026 (Thursday-Saturday)
The Philippine Association of Plastic Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons (PAPRAS) will be the collaborating society. PAPRAS will be invited to send a representative to the Subcommittee for MYC 2026.
 3. 82nd Annual Clinical Congress – Dec 6 – 10, 2026
Theme: Universal Access to Quality Surgery: Integrating Expertise, Innovation and Compassion
 4. 53rd Midyear Convention – May 2027
Chapter and Society bids
The PCS Northern Luzon Chapter has submitted an intent to bid for the 53rd Midyear Convention in 2027.
Deadline for bids: June 30, 2025

8.1.2.2. CSE

81st Annual Clinical Congress (ACC) on Dec 6-10, 2025.
Additional Foreign Speaker: Dr. Matthew Kroh (USA) Upper GI/Bariatric

8.1.2.3. LMS

The revised quotation from IT Programmer (Quatro Cantos) has been adjusted from PHP 58,240.00 to PHP 47,040.00, reflecting the payment scheme for Dragon Pay directly to the PCSF bank account.

8.1.2.4. Surgical Research

1. Participation:
 - a. PSIS Research last May 2, 2025 at Palawan
 - b. PCS 81st Annual Clinical Congress
 - i. Champion of Champions (COC) - December 7, 2025 (Sunday) @ 1:30-5pm
 - ii. Free Paper Presentation - December 7, 2025 (Sunday); 1:30-3pm and 3:30-5pm;
 - iii. Free Paper Presentation - December 10, 2025 (Wednesday); 8-10am, 10:30am-12nn, 1:30-3:30pm and 3:30-5pm;
 - iv. Champion of Champions Interesting Case Category - December 9, 2025 (Tuesday); 1:30-5pm.
2. Endorsed Studies
To support dissemination of the information and survey to the affiliates, sub-specialty societies and chapters.
 - a. Surgical Systems in Climate Vulnerable Countries “Assessment of Surgical Systems in Climate Vulnerable Countries” - How can the Philippines Adopt Sustainable and Climate Resilient Surgical Care - Giovanni Gamalong UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine and MAPUA.
 - b. Received email last April 14, 2025 from the University of Santo Tomas-Graduate “The Development and Validation of the Filipino Resident Physician Well-being Scale.

8.1.2.5. Surgical Training

1. Key Legislation Impacting Surgical Training and Medical Practice
 - a. Legislative and Healthcare Developments Affecting Surgical Training and Medical Practice in the Philippines (Presented By: Dr. Cueto
 - b. Organizational Issues:
 - PCS aims to be the umbrella organization for all surgical specialties in the country advocating for unified policies, standards, and representation.
 - PCS recommends Subspecialty Societies through their boards, administer certifying exams align with national standardsThe meeting highlighted key legislative and structural changes affecting medical practice. Participants emphasized the importance of institutional readiness and PCS's leadership role in standardizing certification and training across all surgical disciplines.
2. Educational Summit of the Philippine College of Surgeons (PCS)
Topic: Redefining the Role of PCS Toward Subspecialty and Affiliate Societies
The PCS Educational Summit aimed to clarify and strengthen PCS's role as the central umbrella organization for all surgical societies in the Philippines.

8.1.3 Cluster C – Membership Development

8.1.3.1. Membership

1. Honorary Fellowship Endorsement Process: Instead of a formal invitation, the Committee will issue a formal letter with guided questions to gather information for the Board of Regents to base its decision.
2. Membership Dues Collection: Sub-Specialty Societies may collect dues and remit to PCS to streamline payments. Feasibility and financial impact are under review; the Committee on Finance is studying the processes.

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3. PCS Mobile App and Payment Convenience: The app will enable annual dues payments, member updates, engagements, and overall member experience enhancements.
4. Data Integration on the Mobile App: The app will incorporate key data fields for HMOs, PhilHealth, Security Bank, and other institutions.

8.1.3.2 Awards

PCS Committee on Awards held its first meeting to review senior Fellows for Legends of the Knife, Community Service, and Lifetime Achievement awards. Nominees will be forwarded to Chapters/Societies for verification and endorsement; submissions are due by May 31, 2025.

8.1.4. Cluster D – External Affairs

8.1.4.1. External Affairs

1. PCS Foundation Week Activities:
 - September 6, 2025 (Saturday) Day 1 - National Surgical Outreach Program
 - September 7, 2025 (Sunday) Day 2 - Holy Mass (am) / Sports (pm)
 - September 8, 2025 (Monday) Day 3 - PCS 2025 Fun shoot
 - September 9, 2025 (Tuesday) Day 4 - Camaraderie Golf
 - September 10, 2025 (Wednesday) Day 5 - Mangrove tree planting/Releasing of sea turtle hatchlings/ Feeding Program
 - September 11, 2025 (Thursday) Day 6 - National Stop the Bleed and Bloodletting Activity per Chapter/ Surgical Residents Got Talent
 - September 12, 2025 (Friday) Day 7 - PCS Foundation Gala Dinne

8.1.4.2. Patient Safety & Quality Assurance

The Handbook on Developing the PCS Surgical Quality Improvement Program (SQIP) was approved. The Board recommends distributing the handbook to all institutions with training programs to promote awareness and implementation of quality improvement initiatives.

8.1.5. Cluster E – Socio-economic Matters

8.1.5.1 Finance

Opening a savings account with Security Bank for the payment of annual dues (via SBC credit card).

8.1.5.2. PCS Building

1. Museum Lobby Artwork
Proposal to commission a mural depicting PCS history by Master Pancho Piano of Pinto Museum
2. Corridor Improvements
Wood plastic composite accent wall and hallway lighting upgrade on ground and second floors.

8.1.5.3. Hospital Standardization & Accreditation

National Health Data Repository (NHDR):
A communication will be forwarded to PhilHealth President, Dr. Edwin Mercado expressing PCS's willingness to assist in the development of NHDR.
BOR proposal includes the standardization and leveling of the quality of operating rooms across institutions.

9. Other Matters.
ExeCom met with PALES officers last May 31, 2025.

10. Next Meeting
June 21, 2025 (Saturday); 8am; GT Singian Board Room

11. There being no matters to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 4:42 pm.

6th BOARD OF REGENTS MEETING

Date: June 21, 2025
Venue: GT Singian Board Room, PCS Building

1. Minutes of the Meeting
2. The meeting was called to order at 8:22 AM by Dr. Jose Rhoel C. De Leon.
3. The agenda was unanimously approved.
4. The minutes (May 17, 2025) were approved without amendments.
5. Matters Arising from the Minutes:
 - The re-appointment of Dr. Edwin Mercado as President and CEO of PhilHealth.
 - Scheduling another meeting with the DOH, PhilHealth, and other relevant agencies to present the College's programs in the second half of the year.
6. President's Reports and Events Attended
 - a. Mid-year review: Reassessing progress and setting priorities for the second half of the term.
 - b. Theme and governance: Guided by #qualitysurgeryforall; ongoing committee implementation with emphasis on continuity and sustainability.
 - c. Standards and programs: Expanding PCS-NSQIP standards; advancing CSE activities; 51st MYC completed; ACC 2025 prep; LMS modules growing; ASEAN scholarship for two fellows.
 - d. Rural and planning: Encourage continuous programs, early budgeting, and operating-room standards with DOH/PhilHealth.
 - e. Sustainability and advocacy: Strengthened international collaboration; Sarawak Declaration on Sustainable Surgery; active health-governance lobbying; engagement with key agencies.
 - f. Organizational development: Plans to hire an Executive Director, corporatize operations, establish Leadership Academy and PCS Museum; Vision 2036: Zero Net Carbon; PCS Young Surgeons Group.
 - g. Umbrella role and engagement: Deepen ties with subspecialties and affiliates; prepare for Surgical Summit, and leadership training; ratify constitutional amendments.
 - h. Communications: Issued statements, including calls for peaceful elections and opposition to tobacco tax rollback.

Summary: PCS is consolidating its umbrella role while expanding standards, quality programs, and governance for sustainability.

Next steps: finalize constitutional amendments, conduct the Surgical Summit, and actively engage remaining subspecialties and affiliates in inclusive planning.

- May 22, 2025 - Closing program of the PSGS 25th Anniversary - represented by VP Joselito Mendoza, MD
- May 28, 2025 - Exec Com with Finance, External Affairs and Membership Re: Security Bank Membership Card
- May 30, 2025 - Executive Committee with the CST

- June 4-6 Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh Triennial and International Conference On Surgical Education and Training (ICOSSET) 2025
 - June 10, PSST Convention at Conrad Manila
 - June 12-15 - 51st Annual Congress of the College of Surgeons Academy of Medicine of Malaysia (CSAMM) in Sarawak where we signed the Sarawak Declaration
 - June 16, 2025 Committee on CSE and Conventions Meeting
 - June 17, 2025 Ad Hoc Committee on ASEAN Summit and International relations
7. Update from the Board of Governors
- A meeting of the Search Sub-committee on Awards has been scheduled.
 - Although a contract has been signed with AHMOPI, some Fellows have reported that their names are not listed among the AHMOPI accredited surgeons on the PCS website
 - The Central Luzon Chapter has expressed interest in bidding for the 2028 Midyear Convention.
 - The International College of Surgeons, through Dr. Joson, has expressed interest in a face-to-face meeting with PCS officers. ICS members may qualify for recognition as Associate Members.
8. Committee Reports
- 8.1 Cluster A – National Programs
- 8.1.1 HMO/RVS
1. AHMOPI – PAHMOC Memorandum of Agreement:
Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to partnership, professionalism, and efficient support for healthcare providers and HMO members.
- a. Concerns were raised regarding the repetitive and burdensome contract renewal process, especially for long standing Fellows.
 - b. A proposal was made to streamline documentation requirements, limiting credentials to those needing renewal (PRC, PhilHealth) or with contact details changes.
2. HMO Complaints
A google form is available for Fellows to report complaints:
<http://bit.ly/4k2QgkH>.
- 8.1.2. ASEAN Summit & International Relations
1. Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand – July 10-12, 2025;
Venue: Royal Cliff Hotels Group, Pattaya, Thailand
- a. Asean Federation of Surgery Young Fellow Forum; July 11, 2025
 - b. The Committee has selected Dr. Joanne A. Baltazar as the College's Younger Fellow.
 - c. International Scholar: Dr. Arch Thor Ponce, a General Surgeon practicing at CUMC, Cagayan De Oro City.
2. Post-congress Activity
Observership at King Chulalongkorn Memorial Hospital through Prof. Suthep Udomsawaengsup, Director, Minimally Invasive Surgery Center.
Participants: Dr. Joanne A. Baltazar & Dr. Arch Thor Ponce
Coverage dates – July 13-July 18, 2025 (5 days)
- Exposure to the Thai healthcare system
 - Networking with the other ASEAN Young Fellows
3. Program Evaluation – Scholarship Program
The Committee will develop a program evaluation framework to measure the impact, focusing on:
- Benefit to PCS and the surgical profession
 - Advantages for the scholars' institution patients
 - Positions held by scholars in their respective institution
4. 81st Annual Clinical Congress Participation
Chair: Maximo H. Simbulan Jr., MD, FPCS
Co-Chair: Miguel C. Mendoza, MD, FPCS
- a. Crossing Borders, Shaping Futures: International Scholarship Program
Speaker: Matthew D. Kroh, MD, FACS, FASMB, FASGE
 - b. Reflections on Surgical Training and Practice: The US Experience Through the Eyes of a Young Filipino Surgeon
Speaker: Ma. Elkie M. Jualayba, MD
 - c. Rethinking the Incision, Embracing a Paradigm Shift: My PCS International Scholarship Experience
Speaker: Edrik Luke T. Pialago, MD, FPCS
 - d. Lecture (TBA)
Speaker: Joanna Pauline A. Baltazar, MD, FPCS
- Panelists
- Prof. Chien-sung Tsai
 - Prof. Thanya Nimmanwudipong
 - Prof. Rowan Parks
 - Asean Surgical College Presidents
5. International Scholar 2026
- Specialty – Robotics and Cardiac Surgery
 - Rotation Arrangement: Coordinated through the surgical college with which PCS has a Memorandum of Understanding, particularly the Taiwan Surgical Association.
 - Number of Scholars: Two (2)
 - Next Step: Discuss guidelines, criteria and budget in the upcoming meeting
6. 2026 Young Fellow – will be sent to Malaysia
- 8.1.3. Trauma
- 1. Increase in honoraria of the ATLS faculty to 40%
 - 2. Establishment of an official ATLS email address (atlsph@pcs.org.ph) using Google workspace, at an annual cost of Php8,840.
 - 3. Participation in the PCS 81st Annual Clinical Congress (December 6 – 10, 2025; EDSA Shangri-La Manila, Mandaluyong City).
Key Event: Trauma Sessions on December 10, 2025 from 1:30-5pm at Isla Ballroom.
 - 4. Sub - Com Critical Care and Nutrition
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the collaborative activities with the Philippine Board of Medical Nutrition Physician (PBMNP). This is in preparation for the workshop during the 81st Annual Clinical Congress.
- 8.1.4. Cancer
1. Participation on PCS 81st Annual Clinical Congress: December 6-10, 2025,
Topic: Case Presentation by Dr. Jan Andrew Bueno on Peritoneal Carcinomatosis
- Multi-disciplinary discussion
 - Data on surgical vs palliative cases
 - Epidemiologic data on upper G.I cancers via google form
 - Collaboration with key institutions and Specialty societies (SOSP, PSGS)

2. Advocacy videos

8.1.5. SURE & Community Services

1. Proposal for PCS SURE to oversee all surgical missions in the Philippines
Two options for legislation of the Surgical missions
2. The Commission will set up a meeting with Congress and the Senate after the SONA on July 28, 2025 SONA
3. Revival of the Adopt-a-Hospital Program
4. Rural Surgery Program
The Society of Philippine Surgeons in America (SPSA) is committed to supporting this initiative, especially in the underserved areas.
5. National Surgical Outreach
Program on National Surgical Outreach Day
Date: September 6, 2025 (Saturday)
Time: 7:30 AM (9AM Simultaneous Cutting Time)
Venue: PCS Information and Coordination Office (PICO)
Invitees include: DOH Secretary Ted Herbosa, PhilHealth President Dr. Edwin Mercado, PMA President Dr. Hector M. Santos Jr., PSA President Dr. Francis B. Mayuga and ORNAP President, Ms. Sheree S. Velasco, RN
The simultaneous surgeries will be broadcast via Zoom and Facebook Live.
Each institution is encouraged to have one (1) or two (2) patients.
All institutions will provide their own tarpaulin background and will be reimbursed upon submission of proof of payment.
Satellite Hosts
 - Metro Manila (Main Host) – Dr. Rhoderick C. De Leon
 - Central Luzon – Dr. Benedicto S. Joson Jr.
 - Visayas – Dr. Ron R. Del Mar
 - Mindanao – Dr. Dures Fe E. Tagayuna

8.1.6. Surgical Infections

1. 81st Annual Clinical Congress on December 6-10, 2025
Proposed topics:
 - Duration for Antibiotic regimens for Surgical Infections... The Shorter...The Better
 - Rising cases of HIV in the Philippines, What the Surgeons should know
2. Skin Preparation Video
 - A Project under PCS in collaboration with PSIS and ORNAP
 - Contract with BBraun expected to be finalized by the end of June 2025
 - Content will cover skin preparation techniques of thorax, neck, abdomen, and perineal areas
3. Project with Pfizer:
Activities: 1 webinar and 3 LMS lectures
1st Webinar: Rapid Diagnostic Tests as an Innovation Towards Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS)
LMS modules (3)
 - Thoracic infection (empyema thoracis)
 - Urologic infection – (Catheter Associated UTI (CAUTI) and upper tract UTIs)
 - Surgical site infectionsAlternative Topic: Complicated intra-abdominal Infections

8.2. Cluster B – Surgical Education

8.2.1. Conventions

1. 81st Annual Clinical Congress - Dec 6-10, 2025
 - a. Pre-congress Activities
Swing-Fore-A-Cause IV – December 4, 2025 (Friday); Summit Point Lipa
 - b. Convocation – December 6, 2025 (Saturday); 2pm; Red Carpet Cinemas, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
An ocular inspection of the cinemas was conducted on June 20, 2025 at Red Carpet Cinema. The Committee on Membership will meet to discuss details about for the Orientation and Convocation
 - c. Scientific Program
 - Additional sessions:
2nd PCS-TSA Session in partnership with PATACSI & PAPRAS
Topics : Heart Transplant
Hand & Upper Arm Transplant
Reactors from PATACSI & PAPRAS
 - Panel Discussion: ASEAN and International Leaders Forum
 - d. To institutionalize the session with recipients of the Legends of the Knife.
 - e. Recording of sessions:
 - a. Faculty consent will be obtained beforehand
 - b. Recordings will be shared but not CME accredited
 - c. The Com. on SICT will provide guidelines for online access via a code for registered participants
2. 52nd Midyear Convention – April 30-May 2, 2026 (Thursday-Saturday)
Theme: Building Integrity, Competence and Outstanding Leadership (BICOL)
Proposed Venue: Villa Caceres, Naga City
Host Chapter: Bicol Chapter
Society Co-Host: PAPRAS
 1. Pre-convention Activities
 - Dates: April 28-29, 2026
 - SURE mission in cooperation with Gov. Jose Edwin Hamor
 - Multi-specialty surgical mission focusing on cleft lip & palate procedures
 - Tree-planting and bonsai exhibit
 - Sports activities: basketball, Amazing Race, golf (organized by PCS Golf Club)
 2. Update from Bicol Chapter
 - Courtesy call to former Mayor Leni Robredo – July 2025
 - Welcome Dinner – April 30, 2026, at Villa Del Rey
 - Lunch symposium on Robotics
3. 82nd Annual Clinical Congress – Dec 5 – 10, 2026
 - Theme: Universal Access to Quality Surgery: Integrating Expertise, Innovation and Compassion;
 - Venue: Edsa Shangri-La Hotel
 - Prioritize international faculty from surgical Colleges with which PCS has MOAs such as Asean Federation of Surgical Colleges, Taiwan Surgical Association, and RACS
4. Proposed 3-year contract with Edsa Shangri-La Hotel (2026-2028)
The proposed 3-year contract from Ms. Lorie Gamalinda, Director of Edsa Shangri-La was approved.

8.2.2. CSE

1. 81st Annual Clinical Congress (ACC) on Dec 6-10, 2025
Panel Discussion or Session on PCS LEGENDS OF THE KNIFE: The Masters who shaped Philippine Surgery
Proposed Faculty: Surgeons expert in Hospital Management/Surgical Training/Leadership.
Include this as a dedicated session on PCS Legends, similar to the sessions on Surgical History and PCS Guidelines.
2. 82nd Annual Clinical Congress (ACC) on Dec 5-9, 2026, at the EDSA Shangri-La Manila, Mandaluyong City/Theme: Universal Access to Quality Surgery: Integrating Expertise, Innovation and Compassion
Request for Additional Foreign Speaker:
Dorothea Koh (Singapore) - Founder & CEO, Bot MD; (AI-Powered Patient Engagement Platform)
Sa-Hong Min (Korea) – Gastric / Upper GI Surgery Specialist
3. Re-alignment of Primary Care Surgery Thrust
In light of upcoming program on cancer screening benefits by PhilHealth and existing Outpatient Emergency Care Benefit (OECB), the Committee recommends re-aligning the mandates of the Subcommittee on Primary Care Surgery to support these initiatives:
Proposed programs:
 - Courses for the primary care physicians on identifying high risk individuals for cancer screening, interpreting tests and referral protocols.
 - Evaluation and management of minor trauma and outpatient conditions, including simple lacerations, musculoskeletal injuries, and appropriate referrals for complex cases.This Sub-committee will also publish a new Primary Care Surgery Manual.

8.2.3. LMS

1. The Board of Regents approved the proposal submitted by Dragon Pay for the annual LMS registration website subscription.
2. Module rollout according to the scheduled calendar
 - June 1, 2025
 - o POINTS : Re run (June 22-27, 2025)
 - o BEST: Re run as review for JULY 2025 skills workshop participants
 - o PATOS Module 103
 - July 2025
 - o Basic Ultrasound (PSUS) online exam
 - o SLNB (PSBS) Year Levels 3-5 didactic
 - Additional topics – Surgical Infection
 - o Thoracic Infection (Empyema Thoracic)
 - o Urologic Infection (CAUTI and Upper Tract UTIs)
 - o Surgical Site Infection
 - o Complicated Intra-Abdominal Infections
3. Participation - MoodleMoot Philippines 2025 theme: “Smart Learning, Secure Teaching: AI & Cybersecurity in Education” on July 2- 4, 2025, at the Luxent Hotel, 51 Timog Ave., South Triangle, Quezon City
Speaker: Dr. Warren M. Roraldo – PCS-LMS Experience
4. Participation - PCS 81st Annual Clinical Congress Title: History of LMS and Values
Speaker: Warren M. Roraldo, MD
Moderator: Orlando O. Ocampo, MD

8.2.4. Joint Accreditation Council

1. Review of Past Activities:
 - From 2011 to 2017, extensive discussions and workshops addressed accreditation and certification, including data gathering on surgical training features in other ASEAN countries
 - Chairs of the specialty boards and accrediting bodies of surgical specialty societies actively participated in these activities
 - During 2014-2015, workshops focused on accreditation and curricula across various surgical subspecialties.
 - Policies and guidelines on accreditation were developed and agreed upon.
 - A report on accreditation, including survey and recommended policies, has been produced
2. Role, Tasks and Responsibilities of the JAC
 - a. Legal Basis
The Foundation for the JAC is outlined in the Administrative Manual (p 447 of the Administrative Manual, 2001 PCS Directory, No. 8, Chapter III – Committees) which states that “The Committee on Accreditation shall establish a Joint Accreditation Council to coordinate the respective accreditation committees of the different surgical specialties.”
 - b. Tasks
 - i. Provide the PCS Board of Regents with information to assist the DOH, PRC, and PMA in implementing the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Medical Practitioners
 - ii. Ensure high standards of surgical practice in the Philippines by recommending:
 1. Accreditation standards for residency training programs across all surgical specialties
 2. Certification process for all surgical specialties
 3. Standardized curriculum formats, including core outcomes / and competencies
 4. Leave details of curriculum, accreditation requirements, certification and implementation to individual specialty societies
 - iii. Surgical Research
1. 81st Annual Clinical Congress Entries:
To display research entries via looping television screens instead of panel boards.
2. Participation:
 - a. Evidence Generation and Technical Support Division attended a Zoom meeting on June 11, 2025 from 11am to 12nn.
Attendee: Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, MD
 - b. PCS 81st Annual Clinical Congress
Champion of Champions (COC)
Free Paper Presentation
Champion of Champions Interesting Case Category
 - c. Sub-Committee on Surgical Innovation and Technology (including Robotics)

8.2.5. Surgical Training

1. PCS Role Clarification
PCS remains the only lead specialty society that does not directly administer a residency training program. Reversing this setup is no longer feasible. It is crucial to clearly define PCS's role as a coordinator and overseer among surgical societies.

2. Multidisciplinary Organizations
There is an increasing presence of multiprofessional and multidisciplinary groups (e.g., minimally invasive surgery, ultrasound societies, surgical infection). Their roles and integration within the PCS structure must be clarified, including necessary amendments to the PCS Administrative Code to reflect these developments.
3. Legislation on Postgraduate Medical Education Council (PGMEC)
A proposed bill aims to establish a Postgraduate Medical Education Council (PGMEC) under the BOM, which may assume functions of accreditation and certification currently performed by PCS and specialty boards. PCS must prepare to respond to or engage with this legislative initiative to safeguard its mandate.
4. Middle-Tier Practitioner Role
There is growing discussion focus on creating a middle tier for General Practitioners with training but without certification, allowing them to perform certain specialty procedures. This aligns with PhilHealth's "GP with Training" classification and poses regulatory, quality, and ethical implications for the surgical profession.

Upcoming Summit:

The planned Summit will serve as a crucial platform to clarify PCS's role, address fragmentation in surgical training and credentialing, and promote a unified policy for surgical education in the Philippines.

It is essential that all cutting specialties to formally acknowledge PCS's oversight role in training and curriculum development to ensure cohesion, maintain quality standards, and provide unified representation.

Establishing a structured framework will help harmonize roles, prevent duplication, and enable effective oversight of all surgical training programs.

8.3. Cluster C – Membership Development

8.3.1. CSSBP

1. Session during the PCS 81st Annual Clinical Congress
Proposed Faculty: Julie-Lyn Noel, MD, MBA
Proposed Topic: Re-certification/Maintenance of Certification (European perspective)
Proposed Reactors: Representative from the Philippine Board of Anesthesiology and Philippine Board of Pediatric Surgery to share experience on Re-certification

8.3.2. Membership

1. PCS App Promotion and Data Updating
 - Set-up stations with tablets or computers at conventions to assist Fellows in updating their profiles.
 - Integrate a QR code system into the PCS mobile app for easier access and sharing.
2. Communication and Outreach
 - Develop and widely distribute infographics highlighting fellowship benefits to raise awareness.
 - Incorporate application process details and benefits into informational materials shared with society representatives.
 - Encourage Society Membership Committees to circulate these materials among their members to maximize outreach.

8.4. Cluster D – External Affairs

8.4.1. External Affairs& P.R.

Payment Request for Creative Files - 89th Foundation Day Celebration:

Total requirements include a series of activities such as:

- Surgical outreach, Holy Mass, sports events
- Bike ride, fun shoot, camaraderie golf,
- Environmental awareness, nutritional awareness
- Surgical residents got talent, Residents' Night
- Stop the Bleed & Blood-letting, and Gala Dinner:

Total Amount: Php900,000.00

8.4.2. Publications

1. Participation in the 81st Annual Clinical Congress
Session Title: Pen vs. Algorithm: Is AI a Writer's Friend or Foe?
Panelists:
 - a. Prof. Louie Giray
 - b. Joey Lapena, MD (Fellow)
2. 90th Foundation Coffee table book:
To feature all subspecialties and Affiliate Societies, highlighting PCS
3. Centennial Coffee Table Book:
Focus on history, milestones and legacy projects
APPROVED Theme: ISANGDAAN. ISANG DAAN.

8.4.3. PJSS

1. Participation on PCS 81st Annual Clinical Congress: December 6-10, 2025,
Proposed Topic/Title: Guidelines for Reporting and Publishing Scientific Articles
Possible Speakers: To be assigned from the Editorial Board.
2. PJSS volume 80 number 1 was published last May 2025
 - a. Metastatic Axillary Lymphadenopathy from a Triple-Negative Occult Breast Carcinoma in a Male Patient: A Case Report – article published to PJSS vol 80
 - b. One author was omitted in the print version due to manuscript revision issues. An erratum will be published in the upcoming print, and the online version has been corrected to include Dr. Francisco Y. Arcellana Jr.

8.4.4. SICT

1. Recording Lectures for ACC in the Mobile App
 - a. Add a dedicated, clickable tab for lecture videos.
 - b. Curate and upload selected session videos under the Scientific Program section of the app.
2. PCS Fellows Geographical Mapping
 - a. Develop an interactive map displaying fellows' distribution by location.
 - b. Include a search bar for filtering by hospital or fellow's name
 - c. Enable clickable pins to view detailed information of fellows in specific areas.

8.4.5. Patient Safety & Quality Assurance

1. How to Start a Quality Surgical Improvement Program?
The committee has decided to coordinate with a publisher and printer for formatting and proofreading, prior to final approval

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by the committee members and the Board of Regents. Timeline of this project is during our 81th ACC.

2. Participation - PCS 81st Annual Clinical Congress
Title: Quality in Surgery: A co-relational analysis of pre-operative surgical risk assessment in predicting surgical outcomes

8.5. Cluster E – Socio-economic Matters

8.5.1. Finance

1. Approved to hire an Interim Executive Director for two years, who will also serve as the Chief Operating Officer.
2. Real Estate Investment
Request the Committee to formulate guidelines for purchasing real estate, whether for investment or flipping.

8.5.2. PCS Building

1. Re-painting project: Color Version of Proposed Design
The Committee will also ask to recommend enhancements to the building's front gates.
2. 3rd Floor Meeting Rooms
Upgrading outdated lights and diffusers, rehabilitation of accordion dividers (free of charge).
3. 10% increase for RMG8 Security Agency Corp
4. Renewal of PSGS Contract (October 1, 2025-September 30, 2030)
Proposed Escalation Schedule: 5-5-5-10-10
5. Mural Depicting PCS History at the Lobby
Consider converting the mural into a framed painting.

8.5.3. Socials & Sports

1. Pre-convention Activity
Swing-Fore-A-Cause IV – December 5, 2025 (Friday)
Venue: Summit Point, Lipa
2. Fellowship Night – December 7 (Sunday)
Emcee: Dr. Monette Casupang and Ms. Czarina Cerbito

8.5.4. Fellows Assistance Plan

1. For Review – Benefits/Coverage
BOR Resolution 2025-02: Recipients of the Lifetime Achievement Award, Legends of the Knife and Community Service Award are exempted from paying their FAP premiums
Exempting Past Presidents, Fellows aged 90 and above from FAP payments
2. Senior Citizen Benefits
20% discount on Annual Dues for Senior citizens.
3. Requirements to avail of the full FAP Benefits
 - Must be in good standing.
 - Must have updated Annual Dues (less 20% for seniors, if applicable).
4. Limited Awareness and the Need for Wider Dissemination of the FAP Program
 - Create a QR code linked to the application form and the FAP Manual/Brochure

- Prominently post the QR code on the College's social media platforms
- Onsite Promotion
- Set up a dedicated FAP Information Booth during major PCS conventions and general assemblies for direct assistance
- Distribute flyers and brochures to promote awareness, understanding, and encourage application.

5. Invitation to HMOs/Insurance Providers
Explore partnerships with HMO or insurance companies to enhance the Fellows' benefits.
Coverage and Benefits tailored for PCS Fellows

9. Other Matters

9.1 Ad-hoc Committee on the PCS 90th Anniversary

Update from Working Committees

1. Merchandises: Jackets, ball caps & t-shirts
PCS Lifestyle merchandise will include special edition not necessarily limited to the 90th anniversary
2. Centennial logo contest
3. Coffee table book
4. Awards
Fellows aged 90 and above
To be awarded during the Gala Dinner
5. Art Raffle
OperaArt combined with art raffle in cooperation with Pinto Art
6. PCS Hymn
7. PCS Museum
8. Surgical Procedures – Plan to perform 90 cataract cases and other surgical procedures

9.2 Application of Philippine Association of Metabolic & Obesity Surgery (PAMOS)

Upon review by the Board Secretary, PAMOS has completed all requirements for application as an Affiliate Society of PCS.

9.3. ExeCom Dialogue with PALES Officers – May 31, 2025

10. Letters Received

10.1. Letter from Philippine Society of Pediatric Surgeons Concern regarding PALES fellowship requirements for MIS procedures.

10.2. Invitation from the DOH Philippine Cancer Center

Workshop on “Policy Development on the Interim Guidelines on Hospital-based Cancer Registration (HBCR)” on July 15-18, 2025; Hotel Seoul, Pampanga.

10.3. A request to the Committee on Awards to re-consider the policy of requesting a confidential copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae, as nominees may have an updated CV on hand.

11. Next Meeting • July 19, 2025 (Saturday); 9am; GT Singian Board Room

12. Adjournment There are no matters to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:18 pm

7th BOARD OF REGENTS MEETING

Date: July 21, 2025

Venue: GT Singian Board Room, PCS Building

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING

2. The meeting was called to order at 9:03 AM by Dr. Jose Rhoel C. De Leon.
3. The agenda was unanimously approved.
4. The minutes (June 21, 2025) were approved with the following corrections.
5. Matters Arising from the Minutes:
 - 5.1. Dr Jose Rhoel C. De Leon was represented by the Board Secretary, Dr. Orlando O. Ocampo, who delivered the message on his behalf during the Surgical Infection Prevention Awareness (SIPA) Convention – held July 12, 2025 at V. Luna Auditorium
 - 5.2. The Board approved the inclusion of the Executive Director's report. Dr. Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas, who was recently appointed as the interim Executive Director, attended the meeting.
 - 5.3. Guidelines in Giving Honoraria – Administrative Manual, (Appendix I, Item 2).Tokens
 - Fellows: Additional 20% discount on registration fee (on top of the 30% discount for the Committee Chairs and Members)
 - Fellows volunteering during SURE missions: 10% discount per mission with a validity of one (1) year, applicable during the Midyear Convention or the Annual Clinical Congress.
 - Specialists/Lay Persons – Gift Certificates worth Php4K (SM Gift Cards)
 - 5.4. International Scholars
For 2026, the international scholar will undergo observership in MIS/Robotic Surgery. The Regents emphasized that scholar should have a demonstrated interest in Robotic Surgery and possess the necessary equipment in their hospital.
6. President's Update
 - July 1, 2025 - Alignment meeting with UNILAB (Bob Barrera, Westmont) to review partnerships and plan programs (notably ACS-ACC).
Discussed appointing a top officer/executive to represent the company in the PCS.
 - July 1, 2025 - Edsa Shang Hotel: BOR authorized offering the position of Executive Director/COO to Dr. Concepcion C. Vesagas on an interim basis. Formal introduction planned for July 18 Past President's Dinner.
 - July 11, 2025 - Delivered a video message to the 9th Annual Convention of the Surgical Oncology of the Philippines, emphasizing collaboration among Cancer Initiatives, PCS CanCom, subspecialties, and affiliates.
 - July 10–12, 2025 - Pattaya, Thailand: PCS representation at the 50th Annual Congress of the Royal College of Surgeons Thailand as a stage party with other international colleges.
Included two PCS fellow scholars, Dr. JB Baltazar and Dr. Arch Ponce (ASEAN Young Fellows Forum); Dr. Baltazar delivered a lecture.
 - July 18, 2025 - Met with COMELEC to discuss final amendments; minor comments received from COMELEC and legal consultants; revisions forwarded to By-laws Committee for approval.

- July 18, 2025 - Grand Hyatt Hotel – PCS Presidents Night: annual tribute to past presidents; attended by Subspecialty Presidents, Affiliates, and Chapter Presidents.
- Other Meetings attended:
 - July 8, 2025 – ExeCom with Committee on Surgical Training – Re: Surgical Summit.
 - July 15, 2025 – Officers Meeting with Dean Malaya Santos, Mapua University.

7. New Matters

7.1 Treasurer's Report

- a) Support the PCS museum as an educational project, to be named PCS Educational Center and Museum, with PCSF providing support.
- b) Noted heavy investment in the international scholarship program; explore options for PCSF support.
- c) Committee Chairs should conduct budget hearings through the Committee on Finance
- d) Acknowledgment of early-year comprehensive report.
- e) Recommendation to amend provisions in the PCS Foundation, specifically:
 - Reconsider the composition of the Board of Trustees to include fewer Regents and more benefactors and past PCS Presidents
 - Consider removing the executive function from the BOT, focusing more on resource generation

7.2 COMELEC

The following BOR comments regarding the proposed By-laws were expressed:

Article II – Management; Section 1 – Board of Regents

- Approved the proposed amendments increasing the number of Regents to 21 members

Article II – Management; Section 4 – Advisory Council

- Retain the current provision.

Article II – Management; Section 5 – Executive Staff

- Change to lowercase: chief operating officer

Article V – Commissions; Section 2 – Other Commissions

- Approve the current provision, deleting the word “other” for clarity

Article VI – Committees; Section 1 – Standing Committees

- Adopt the COMELEC revision.

Article VI – Committees; r – Committee on Fellow Assistance Plan (FAP)

- Adopt the COMELEC revision.

Article VI – Committees

- Adopt the COMELEC revision for the new provision: Committee on International Relations.

7.3 Committee Reports

7.3.1 Cluster A – National Programs

7.3.1.1. HMO/RVS

Meeting with PMA regarding the standardization of professional fees for physicians, considering disparities between rates offered by Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) and PhilHealth (PHIC). This aligns with the national goal of implementing a No Balance Billing (NBB) policy.

Next Steps

- o PMA will continue gathering and consolidating data from various societies.
- o Follow-up meetings will be scheduled to finalize a standardized professional fee structure.
- o A formal presentation will be prepared for discussions with HMOs and PhilHealth.

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7.3.1.2. Asean Summit & International Relations

1. Sarawak Declaration on Sustainable Surgery – Signed during the Annual Convention in Kuching, Malaysia by PCS, RCST and TSA
2. Declaration on Quality Surgery – To be jointly pursued regionally.
3. Manila Declaration on Equitable Access to Surgery – To be signed during the PCS ACC
4. Formal exchange of Fellows Program for 2026: – Participants from Thailand, Singapore and Philippines will attend the Younger Fellows Forum.
5. The 2nd Younger Fellows Forum: Scheduled during the PCS ACC
6. International scholarship
 - Allocate a percentage of the MYC & ACC net income
 - Offer a named scholarship grant
 - Request the Ad-hoc Committee to draft the guidelines on Named Scholars and Return Service Agreement
7. Partner with the RACS Rural Surgery
 - Suggest mapping hospitals' surgical needs and strengths – to be examined by Com. on Surgical Training and Com. on Surgical Research.
 - International Colleges: Some have expressed informal interest in collaborating with PCS regarding surgical needs and capabilities in the region.

7.3.1.3. Trauma

1. Invitation: The Lifestage Technical Working Group (TWG) members of PCS are invited to attend the NPGP Evidence Summit on October 20-21, 2025 in Iloilo City.
 - Attendees:
 1. Jorge M. Concepcion, MD - Com on Trauma
 2. Rex A. Madrigal, MD - Com on PSQA / Com on HSA
 3. Domingo S. Bongala, MD - Com on Surgical Infections
2. ATLS
 - a. Conduct a 3-day Workshop for surgeons from the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP)
Limit: 24 Participants
Advocacy course to be held annually
 - b. Purchase a handheld ultrasound machine
 - c. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)
MOU renewal and mannequin donation
3. STOP THE BLEED (STB)
 - a. To collaborate with AFP via SG Gen. Fatima Claire Navarro – for Participation in the 3rd National Stop the Bleed on September 11, 2025 through TIBCC
Plan to hold a “Training the Trainers” workshop for AFP
 - b. Develop a new poster layout for the Stop the Bleed and Blood Letting Program.
4. Invitations
ATLS Region XVI: National Trauma Conference; October 17-18, 2025; Sri Lanka
Attendees: Dr. Andrew Jay G. Pusung, Dr. Rannie Baquiran and Mr. Severo Ruiz, RN
5. BEST Workshop
Purchase two (2) sets of Bladder Kits for Laerdal Pneumothorax Trainer (Cat. No. 200-00150) (Php24K from Tower Medical)
6. Sub - Com Critical Care and Nutrition
Draft MOU with the Philippine College of Medical Nutrition Physicians (PCMNP).
Conduct a pocket workshop on December 8, 2025 (Monday) targeting 40 attendees with a 50/50 share in registration fees.

7. Sub-Com on BURNS

- c.5.1 Scald Burns Poster - On-going development of burn posters in Visayan and Hiligaynon dialect
- c.5.2 Flame Burns Poster by Dra. Verceles
- c.5.3 LMS Lecture to be uploaded by end of July
- c.5.4 Plan to create an E-Book for the Handbook for the Acute Management of Burn Injuries (work on licensing)

7.3.1.4. Cancer

The Cancer Bulletin will be distributed in time for the ACC. The Committee has yet to meet regarding the update on Sentinel Lymph Node Biopsy.

7.3.1.5. SURE & Community Services

1. Theme for the National Surgical Outreach Day, September 6, 2025

Bridging Gaps, Transforming Lives with Quality Surgery
2. Additional Member

Mr. Greg Dixon - CEO of Calmoseptine
3. Authority to Sign MOA with the Department of Health on the Commitment to PCS Missions

Once the draft MOA from the DOH legal office is received, it will be forwarded to the PCS legal counsel for review.
4. Participation in 81st Annual Clinical Congress (December 6-10, 2025)

Topic: Summit of the Philippine Surgical Missioners with DOH: Alleviating the Surgical Burden in the GIDAs
5. Rural Surgery Program

Continuation of the SPSA -PCS SURE Rural Surgery Program.
6. Partnerships and Missions:
 - Maharlika Charity Foundation Inc. (Dr. Benedict Edward P. Valdez)
 - a) July 28-August 1, 2025; Holy Child Colleges of Butuan
 - b) August 9-15, 2025; Hermil Hospital in Polomolok, South Cotabato
 - c) August 24-29, 2025; Bukidnon Provincial Medical Center, Bukidnon (BPMC)
Dr. Valdez will initiate a partnership with the Philippine Band of Mercy regarding club foot cases, collaborating with Dr. Miguel Antonio C. Prantilla, Chief of Hospital, BPMC.
 - Sui Generis Mission (Dr. Henry C. Chua)
August 21-23, 2025; Northern Palawan Provincial Hospital, Taytay, Palawan.
 - Tentative venue of surgical missions for 2026
 - a) Camarines Sur
 - b) Romblon
 - c) Antique

7.3.1.6. Surgical Infections

1. PSIS project with ORNAP: Development of Instructional Skin Preparation Video, funded by B Braun, with contract finalization expected within the month
Timeline: complete by the 1st week of September
Venue: UP-PGH Operating room
Request: Approval to include the PCS logo and to utilize PCS social media platforms and LMS for dissemination
2. Project with Pfizer: One webinar and 3 LMS lectures for CSI
Approval sought for the following topics:
 1. 1st Webinar: Title: Management of Complicated Intra-abdominal Infections
Date/Time: September 20, 2025, Saturday 2:00-4:00 PM
Speaker: Hermogenes J. Monroy III, MD
Moderator: Katrina Victoria B. Angeles, MD
 2. LMS modules
Complete 3 LMS lectures by August 30, 2025, in coordination with the LMS committee
 - Thoracic infection (empyema thoracis)
- Invite Mariam Grace A. Delima, MD
 - Urologic Infection
- Invite Rufino T. Agudera, MD, FPUA (requesting a PCS Fellow to lecture)
 - Updates in the management of Hepatic Abscess
- Nino P. Isabedra, MD
 3. Participation: 81st Annual Clinical Congress:
Topic: Rising cases of HIV in the Philippines, What every Surgeon should know
Proposed speaker: Errol Roy L. Arellano, MD (IDS from V. Luna Hospital, recommended by Dr. Ampuan)

The Board suggests including a surgeon as one of the panelist.

7.3.2. Cluster B – Surgical Education

7.3.2.1. Conventions

1. 81st Annual Clinical Congress
 - Pre-congress Activities
Swing-Fore-A-Cause IV – December 4, 2025 (Friday); Summit Point Lipa; Tournament Director: Dr. Ronald Yutangco
 - Convocation – December 6, 2025 (Saturday); 2pm
Venue: The Marquee Tent, Edsa Shangri-La Hotel
 - Opening Ceremony – December 7, 2025 (Sunday); 9am; Isla Ballroom
An audio-visual presentation featuring PCS Founder Dr. Gregorio T. Singian will be shown prior to the memorial oration.
The Committee on Publication will prepare a 3-minute AVP.
 - Physical Arrangements
Lounge sofa will be placed on stage in the Isla Ballroom and function rooms for the scientific sessions.
2. 52nd Midyear Convention – April 30-May 2, 2026 (Thursday-Saturday)
Theme: Building Integrity, Competence and Outstanding Leadership (BICOL); Venue: Villa Caceres, Naga City; Host: Bicol Chapter
Society Co-Host: PAPRAS

- a. Courtesy Call to Mayor Leni Robredo
Guest Speaker during the Opening Ceremonies
Presentation of the Key to the City
- b. Surgical Mission
Venue: Sorsogon
The Chapter has sent a formal letter to Gov. Edwin “Boboy” Hamor regarding the surgical mission.
3. 82nd Annual Clinical Congress – Dec 5 – 10, 2026
Theme: Universal Access to Quality Surgery: Integrating Expertise Innovation and Compassion
Venue: Edsa Shangri-La Hotel

Consider including clinical advocacies for sub-specialty topics.
4. 53rd Midyear Convention – May 2027
The following Chapters have submitted their letters of intent to bid for the 2027 Midyear Convention:
 - Northern Luzon Chapter
 - Negros Island Chapter
An AVP featuring the proposed venue, hotels, and tourist destinations will be presented at the next BOR meeting.

The Philippine Urological Association (PUA) has verbally expressed interest in co-hosting.
5. 83rd Annual Clinical Congress – December 4-9, 2027; Edsa Shangri-La Hotel- No updates as of now.

7.3.2.2. CSE

1. 81st Annual Clinical Congress (ACC) on Dec 6-10, 2025

Request for Video Recording from Dec. 7 – 10, 2025
2. 52ND Midyear Convention-April 30-May 2, 2026; Villa Caceres Hotel, Naga City; Theme: Building Integrity, Competence, and Outstanding Leadership in Surgery (B.I.C.O.L.)
Host: Bicol Chapter; Co-host Society: PAPRAS

General Objective
To foster the development of integrity, competence, and leadership skills in general surgeons, promoting ethical practice, enhanced surgical proficiency, and effective leadership within surgical teams and healthcare settings.
3. 82nd Annual Clinical Congress (ACC); December 5-9, 2026; Theme: “Surgical Synergy: The Fusion of Classic Mastery and Modern Technology”
Proposed Foreign Speakers:
 - Roberto Riviello, MD- Trauma, Burn & Surgical Critical Care-USA
 - William Ryan, MD- Head & Neck Surgery - USA
 - Jed Calata, MD- Surgical Training-USA
 - Carlo Ratta, MD-Surgical Training-Europe
 - Abraham Jaccob- Advanced MIS-Australia
 - Hisamitsu Zaha, MD- Breast Surgery-Japan
 - Kwang-Woong Lee, MD - Hepatic & Transplant Surgery-Korea
 - Adam L. Kushner, MD- Trauma & Surgical Critical Care & Global Surgery-Columbia (South America)
 - Han-Byoel Lee, MD- Surgical Oncology Breast and Endocrine Surgery-Korea

7.3.2.3. LMS

1. Module Rollout According to the Scheduled Calendar (July 2025)
 - Basic Ultrasound (PSUS) online exam (rescheduled to August)
 - Initial module to utilize the LMS for examination
 - SLNB (PSBS), N=242 (Year 4-5 residents) - Request to extend rollout to fellows
 - PATOS, 130 participants
 - BEST Skill Station (July 26-27, 2025, at PCS Office), 120 participants
2. Creation of Modules
 - Additional Topics – Surgical Infection (Target: LMS implementation by September)
Thoracic Infection (Empyema Thoracis)
Urologic Infection (CAUTI and Upper Tract UTIs)
Surgical Site Infection or Complication, Intra-Abdominal Infections
Recorded webinar lecture by Dr. Monroy: “Complicated Intrabdominal Infection”
3. Plans for 2026
 - a. Establish a fixed schedule and duration for module rollout
 - b. Implement promotional activities:
 - c. Posters on the landing page
 - d. LMS link on the PCS website
 - e. Other marketing strategies
4. Participation - PCS 81st Annual Clinical Congress Theme: “Surgical Synergy: The Fusion of Classic Mastery and Modern Technology”; December 6–10, 2025 at Edsa Shangri-La Manila, Mandaluyong City
December 10, 2025 (Wednesday), 3:30–5:00pm at Kamia
Title: History of LMS and Values: Future Plans
Speaker: Warren M. Roraldo, MD
Moderator: Orlando O. Ocampo, MD

7.3.2.4. Surgical Research

1. Research Agenda
Title: Research Agenda Setting for Surgical Societies: A Prelude to Multispecialty Collaborative Studies

A collaborative workshop with the PCS Committee on Surgical Research aimed at capacitating Surgical Specialty organizations and Training programs in setting research agenda which is along the major focus areas: Cancer, Trauma and Surgical Infection.

The workshop will be hybrid, with online activities via the RESEARCH MODULE and an onsite workshop during the PCS Annual Clinical Congress.

Intended Learners – subspecialty societies
Research Coordinators of the Training Programs
Part 1. ONLINE - RESEARCH LMS

Prerequisite videos: If the participants have not completed these yet in the previous year)
 1. Module 1 Topic 1: Introduction to Research - JOSE Modesto Abellera III, MD
 2. Module 3 Topic 3: Ethical principles in Research - Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, MD
 3. Module 3 Topic 6: Writing Grant Applications for Cancer Research - Carmela Caballero, MD

Part 2: For the Onsite Workshop

7.3.2.5. Surgical Training

- e.1. Philippine Surgical Summit
Disseminate the program/outline to all attendees for prior consultation with their respective societies
Schedule a meeting to identify members for each working group before the workshop
- e.2. Mapua University Program
Potential initiatives include:
Develop a short course, PCS-Mapua, on basic O.R. nursing (in collaboration with ORNAP).

Explore partnership opportunities with Mapua for an MBA in Surgical Leadership.

7.3.3. Cluster C – Membership Development

7.3.3.1. Membership

1. Proposed Inspirational Speaker (by order of priority) for the December 6, 2025 Convocation (2pm, The Marquee Tent, Edsa Shangri-La Hotel):
 - a) Roman L. Belmonte Jr., MD (PCS President, 1996)
 - b) Antonio B. Sison, MD (PCS President, 1998)
 - c) Ernesto C. Tan, MD (PCS President, 2002)
 - d) Eduardo R. Gatchalian, MD (PCS President, 2006)
2. Proposed Honorary Fellow, Prof. Ashok Shaha
Honorary Fellow Conferment: To submit a draft Checklist in time for the next BOR meeting.

7.3.3.2. Awards

The Search Sub-committee of the PCS Committee on Awards, Chaired by Dr. Benedicto S. Joson Jr. has evaluated and submitted nominations from various Fellows nominated by their Specialty Societies and/or Chapters.

The Committee on Awards will meet on July 22, 2025 Tuesday at 7PM via Zoom platform to review submitted nominees for various award categories.

7.3.4. Cluster D – External Affairs

7.3.4.1. External Affairs& P.R.

1. Blessing of PCS Educational Center & Museum during National Surgical Outreach Simultaneous Cutting on September 6, 2025 (Saturday).
2. September 11, 2025 - Surgical Residents Got Talent: Season 1 Residents Night at Makati Medical Center
 - Special number from the BOR to be confirmed
3. September 12, 2025 - PCS Foundation Gala Dinner at the Marquee Tent, Edsa Shangri-La Hotel

7.3.4.2. Publications

1. 81st Annual Clinical Congress participation in the scientific program of the 2025 ACC (1.5-hour Session)
Suggested session title:
 - “Pen vs. Algorithm: Is AI a Writer’s Friend or Foe?”
 - “When Pens Meet AI Processors: Who Owns the Narrative Now?”

2. 2nd issue of Incisions May–August 2025
Deadline of Submission: 2nd Week of August 9, 2025 (Saturday)
3. Activities for 2025
Writing workshop: August 30, 2025; 8am-12nn; Singian Board Room
4. Committee on Publication participation 2025 ACC (one hour & 15 minutes session)
5. 2025 Foundation AVP materials
Real-time collection from Central & all Chapters/Subspec & Affiliate societies
6. 90th Foundation and Centennial Preparation
 - a. Logo Design for 90th Foundation – handled by the Committee on External Affairs
 - b. Launch a Logo contest amongst PCS Fellows for the 100th Anniversary logo - mechanics developed by Dr. Rey-An Garcia to be shared with Dr. Rex Madrigal
 - c. 90th Foundation Coffee table book highlighting all subspecialty & affiliate societies and the One PCS concept
Approved Title: Kalayag
7. Centennial Coffee Table Book – focusing on history, milestones & legacy projects.
Theme: Sandaan. Isang Daan

7.3.4.3. Patient Safety & Quality Assurance

1. How to Start Quality Surgical Improvement Program

A copy of the handbook has been forwarded to Mr. Nelson Cayno for review, specifically regarding format.
2. Participation - PCS 81st Annual Clinical Congress

Title 1: Quality in Surgery: A Correlational Analysis of Perioperative Surgical Risk Assessment in Predicting Surgical Outcomes
Speaker: Xenia Caressa P. Sinon, MD
Title 2: Thyroidectomy Difficulty Scale
Speaker: Rainier Y. Lutanco, MD
Moderator: Roberto A. Sarmiento, MD

7.3.5. Cluster E – Socio-economic Matters

7.3.5.1. Finance

1. Acquisition of Real Property
 - Consider properties identified through BOG & Chapters in their areas.
The BOR shall not sign any contract or business transaction, which will encumber more than 30% of the current assets of the college, without prior authorization from the membership.
2. The Executive Director and the Committee to study options for building improvements or co-developments, including transfer sites.

7.3.5.2. PCS Building

Accomplishment Summary to date:

- b.1. Exterior Painting -67%
- b.2. Package Scope (museum. Hallways, 3rd floor meeting room) -48.25%
- b.3. Additional scope (2nd floor restroom) – 50%

7.3.5.3. Socials & Sports

1. Foundation Week Sports Events

September 7, 2025 (Sunday): Simultaneous Bike Ride

September 8, 2025 (Monday): Pickle Ball / Camaraderie Golf

2. 81st Annual Clinical Congress

- a. Pre-convention Activity
Swing-Fore-A-Cause IV

- b. Fellowship Night – December 7 (Sunday); Isla Ballroom

Approved Theme: Surgeons in Sync: Musical Synergy
Proposed Entertainment:

The Committee will evaluate performances from bands such as Mitoy & the Draybers, Arpee and the Multi-vitamins, among others.

Emcee: Dr. Monette Casupang (over-all emcee coordinator, to be called on-stage); Ms. Czarina Cerbito (from Westmont), Dr. Victor Delos Reyes

7.3.5.4. Fellows Assistance Plan

Dissemination of FAP Program

Strategies include:

- PCS Website and Social Media
- QR Code with the Application Form and FAP Manual

8. Other Matters

9. Letters Received

9.1 Letter received from PSGS – Re: PRC

Board Action: To schedule a dialogue/meeting with PSGS after their Surgical Forum or the August 23, 2025 Surgical Summit.

10. Schedule of Next BOR Meetings

- August 9, 2025 (Saturday); 8am; GT Singian Board Room
- September 13, 2025 (Saturday); 8am; Basilan Room, Edsa Shangri-la Hotel (ESH) – for confirmation???
- October 11, 2025 (Saturday); 8am; Basilan Room, ESH
- November 15, 2025; 8am; Basilan Room, ESH

11. There being no further matters, the meeting was adjourned at 4:52 pm.

PCS Midyear Convention 2025

• Raymond Joseph Manzo, MD, FPCS •

The Philippine College of Surgeons Metro Manila Chapter had hosted this year's Midyear Convention at Puerto Princesa, Palawan. This is the second time that the chapter hosted this event in this beautiful province, the last one held before the pandemic in 2019. The theme "*Twists and Turns in Surgery: Managing Surgical Challenges*" held at Citystate Asturias Hotel, Puerto Princesa, Palawan from April 30-May 2, 2025, foregrounded interesting sessions and discussions centered on surgical decision-making processes, innovative techniques and cutting edge technologies aimed at improving outcomes of patients in all surgical subspecialties. Co-hosting the event was the Philippine Society of Surgical Infections who simultaneously held their 7th Surgical Infection Society - Asia Pacific International Conference featuring foreign experts from Japan, South Korea and Indonesia.

Headed by our President, Dr Jose Rhoel De Leon, the organizing committee, namely: Vice president and Chair of the Conventions' Committee, Dr Joselito Mendoza, PCS - MMC president Dr Roel Pena, and Chair of the Subcommittee on Conventions for the MYC 2025 Dr Raymond Joseph Manzo, and the Philippine Surgical Infection Society President Dr Miguel Gary Galvez, had carefully structured the 2-day convention for the total of 952 fellows, residents and other guests in attendance.

Two workshops kickstarted the preconvention activities. One was presented by the Philippine Association for Training Officers in Surgery, entitled *Module 101B: the Training officer as a coach-mentor and Module 105: The training officer as a liaison officer*, and the other, given by the Surgical Oncology Society of the Philippines, which focused on *Treatment Options for Breast Cancer*.





Showing that indeed surgeons have skills beyond the operating room, a 3-on-3 Basketball Mini tournament was held at Palawan State University gymnasium where fellows and residents from four chapters competed for bragging rights as the Best

Team. The Metro Manila (UP-PGH), Central Luzon, Northern Mindanao and Southern Tagalog chapter showcased their athletic prowess, with the Metro Manila Chapter emerging as the victors.



Another highlight of the midyear convention was the Fellowship Night, celebrated this year with the theme “Surgical Time out”, held at the Princesa Garden Island Resort and Spa. The surgeons had indeed a night to remember, enjoying camaraderie and good food and music. The very talented fellows of the Metro Manila Chapter and PSIS regaled everyone with surprise numbers. The celebration was one for the books!



See related story on page 52

ATLS 11TH EDITION

X - MARKS THE START.

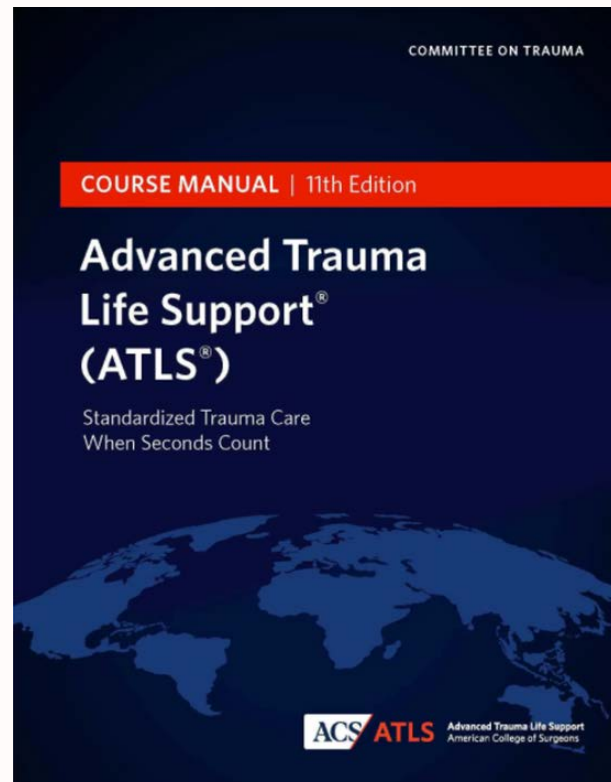


ATLS Region XVI: Australia, Bangladesh, China-Mainland, China-HKSAR, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, and Thailand

It has been more than a decade now when the Advance Trauma Life Support was promulgated in the Philippines in March 2013. We were introduced to the 9th edition which imprinted into us how to manage the trauma patient following the ABCDE approach – Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Disability and Exposure/Environmental control. To this day, there are already 93 student courses held in the country producing 1600 ATLS providers and 10 instructor courses with over 90 faculties spread all over the country.

Recently, there is a surge of foreign doctors applying to get their Provider Course in the country. Last March 2025, the Advance Trauma Life Support Global Symposium was held in Chicago, USA. Together with our educators, Dr. Warren Roraldo and Dr. Rannie Rabe-Baquiran and one of our faculty Dr. Pauline Convocor, we attended this milestone event. The symposium introduced a dramatic change in our priorities during the Primary Survey of trauma patients, from ABCDE to x-ABCDE

X stands for exsanguinating hemorrhage, giving priority to the control of life-threatening compressible bleeding which is the most common cause of preventable death after injury (Stop the Bleed). The new algorithm aligns now with Prehospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) and the Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) which for the longest time have prioritized bleeding over airway management. A few of the updates in the latest edition gives emphasis on balanced resuscitation and early use of blood products – use of whole blood while limiting crystalloids use.



There is a strong recommendation on the use of Tranexamic acid during the 1st three hours following an injury. It highlights pelvic hemorrhage control as a major cause of hemorrhagic shock in trauma. The content of this edition is available and applicable to varied setting whether you are in a major trauma center or in a resource limited environment.



Surgeon's Legacy Series Highlights the Role of General Surgeons in Deceased Organ Donation

Metro Manila, Philippines — May 10, 2025

The Philippine Society of General Surgeons - Metro Manila Chapter (PSGS-MMC), in collaboration with the Association of Women Surgeons of the Philippines (AWSP), hosted a meaningful installment of the Surgeon's Legacy Series titled "A General Surgeon's Role in Deceased Organ Donation." Timed fittingly with the celebration of Mother's Day, the event honored not just surgical excellence, but the enduring influence of women in surgery—mothers, mentors, and trailblazers—through a special mother-and-daughter feature.

The session featured Dr. Rose Marie O. Rosete-Liquete, Executive Director of the National Kidney and Transplant Institute (NKTi), as the reactor. A trailblazer in transplant surgery, Dr. Rosete-Liquete currently leads the Human Organ Preservation Effort and holds multiple national and international leadership roles in transplantation societies. Her insights offered valuable context to the evolution of transplant surgery and the crucial role of general surgeons in deceased organ donation.

Taking center stage as the speaker was her daughter, Dr. Ma. Michaela Rosette R. Liquete-Illescas, a fellowship-trained transplant and vascular surgeon at NKTi and Kyoto University Hospital in Japan. Dr. Liquete-Illescas delivered an engaging and informative lecture highlighting the surgical, ethical, and systemic aspects of organ retrieval from deceased donors, while also touching on the pressing need for surgeon-led advocacy in expanding donor pools and improving transplant outcomes.

The session was moderated by Dr. Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, Trustee of both the Association of Women Surgeons of the Philippines (AWSP) and the Philippine Society of General Surgeons - Metro Manila Chapter (PSGS-MMC). In her opening narrative, she emphasized that this event was more than just a discussion on organ donation—it served as a testament to the enduring impact of mentorship, national service, and legacy in surgery.

The program opened with an invocation and national hymns, followed by welcome remarks from Dr. Ferdinand Y. Syfu, President of PSGS-MMC, and a message from PSGS National President Dr. Raymund Andrew G. Ong. The main session included the keynote lecture and reactor's commentary, followed by an engaging open forum that allowed residents and consultants alike to reflect on the evolving roles of general surgeons in organ donation and transplant services.

The event concluded with the awarding of a certificate of appreciation and closing remarks delivered by Dr. Maria Rica M. Lumague, President of the Association of Women Surgeons of the Philippines, who highlighted the significance of collaborative education and cross-generational mentorship in shaping the future of surgical practice.

Co-sponsored by AWSP in recognition of the special occasion, this Surgeon's Legacy Series installment served as a heartfelt tribute to the strength, service, and legacy of women in surgery. The full video recording and official program flow are accessible through this link:

Watch the event on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/16PXmG1eJa/?mibextid=wwXIfr>

Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, MD, FPCS, FPSGS

AWSP Heeds the Call of the PCS CanCom: Localizing NICCA by Institutionalizing BHW Training for Breast Cancer Early Detection

• Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, MD, FPCS, FPSGS •

Cancer remains one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in the Philippines. Early detection, timely referrals, and proper community education are crucial in improving patient outcomes. According to the World Health Organization, breast cancer caused approximately 670,000 deaths globally in 2022. In the Philippines, breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer, comprising 17.5% of all newly diagnosed cases and standing as the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the country. Alarming, around 65% of breast cancer cases in the Philippines are diagnosed at an advanced stage, underscoring the critical need for early detection and effective screening programs.

Notably, the incidence of breast cancer among younger women (aged ≤ 40 years) in the Philippines is higher compared to other Asian countries. This demographic tends to present with more aggressive tumor characteristics and has poorer survival outcomes. While specific statistics for breast cancer incidence and mortality in the Philippines for 2025 are not yet available, current trends emphasize the pressing need for enhanced early detection, public awareness, and access to timely treatment to improve patient outcomes.

Strengthening Cancer Care at the Community Level

With the increasing awareness and implementation of the National Integrated Cancer Control Act (NICCA) and its provisions for localizing cancer care within local government units (LGUs), the involvement of various sectors of society has become crucial. The PCS Cancer Commission (CanCom), through its Cancer Surgery Community Outreach and Support Program (CSCOSP) under the leadership of Dr. Jose Rhoel C. De Leon, laid the groundwork for community-based cancer care. The primary goal was to develop a companion manual for community health workers to help them:

- Comfortably discuss breast cancer with patients,
- Provide accurate information about breast cancer,
- Offer prevention strategies, and
- Explain current policies for breast cancer control.

This breast cancer manual project was developed in collaboration with Ms. Kara Magsanoc-Alikpala of the I Can Serve Foundation, Inc., and the PCS Cancer Committee, chaired by Dra. Ida Marie T. Lim. It was designed to train trainers and expand the program's reach through PCS Chapters across the country.

Recognizing the urgent need to empower BHWs in cancer prevention, screening, and early detection, the “Breast Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Workbook” was officially introduced during the PCS Cancer Commission Summit of 2023 under the presidency of Dr. Maria Concepcion C. Vesagas. This project provided structured training for community health workers, equipping them with the necessary tools and knowledge to serve as the first line of defense against breast cancer at the barangay level.

AWSP's Commitment to Expanding BHW Training

To reinforce this advocacy, the Association of Women Surgeons of the Philippines (AWSP), under the leadership of Dr. Maria Rica M. Lumague, joined the mission to support the training and capacity building of BHWs. Their involvement strengthened the program by leveraging their expertise in surgical oncology, patient care, and community education, further amplifying the impact of the Breast Manual project.

The key components of the training program include:

1. Early Detection and Awareness – BHWs are trained to identify early warning signs of common cancers, such as breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer.
2. Proper Referral Pathways – The program ensures that BHWs understand the healthcare system and can guide patients to appropriate medical facilities for timely intervention.

> 50

Philippine Urological Association Launches First International Urological Summit in Hong Kong

The Philippine Urological Association (PUA) proudly held its First International Urological Summit from May 29–31, 2025 in Hong Kong, marking a major milestone in the organization's global outreach. In collaboration with the Hong Kong Urological Association, the event brought together Filipino and international urologists for three days of scientific exchange, surgical innovation, and professional fellowship.

Held at the Nina Hotel in Tsuen Wan West, the summit featured a robust scientific program with plenary sessions, cutting-edge technology showcases, and hands-on workshops, including RIRS, PCNL, and ECIRS. Delegates also participated in abstract presentations, industry exhibits, and high-level discussions on the future of urologic practice. The summit was enriched by the participation of a distinguished faculty composed of renowned urologists from both Hong Kong and the Philippines. Representing Hong Kong were Dr. Peter Chiu, Dr. Ka Lun Lo, Dr. Jeremy Teoh, and Dr. Steve Chan. From the Philippines, the faculty included Dr. Jason Letran, Dr. Apolonio Q. Lasala Jr., Dr. Donnel T. Rubio, and Dr. Nyette Celle M. Mascariñas. Their lectures and

live demonstrations provided delegates with advanced perspectives on modern urologic care.

One of the highlights of the event was the PUA Business Meeting and the Fellowship Night held on May 30, where new associate members were formally inducted. Attendees came in Disney-themed attire, setting the tone for the next day's group activities in Hong Kong Disneyland, including the "PUA Amazing Race," a group photo in front of the Castle of Magical Dreams, and a themed dinner at the Explorer's Club Restaurant.

This landmark summit not only strengthened ties with international peers but also reinforced PUA's commitment to global standards, continuous learning, and member empowerment. As emphasized by PUA President Dr. Juvido P. Agatep Jr. and Convention Chairman Dr. Patrick H. Tuliao, the success of this event reflects the organization's readiness to take Philippine urology to the world stage.

PUA extends its deepest gratitude to all delegates, speakers, partners, and sponsors who made the summit possible. Truly, the PUA Empowers.



Head and Neck Surgery, Moving Forward Together: The 2025 Journey of PAHNSI

• Adrian F. Fernando, MD, FPSOHNS, FPCS, FPAHNSI •

The Philippine Academy for Head and Neck Surgery, Inc. (PAHNSI) was established in 1994 to unify specialists across General Surgery, Otorhinolaryngology, Plastic Surgery, and allied disciplines involved in the care of patients with head and neck tumors. It was founded on the belief that cooperation, not competition, would elevate the standard of care and training in this complex surgical field.

Recognizing the shifting tides in healthcare, a new set of PAHNSI officers took office in January 2025, led by Dr. Adrian F. Fernando as President, alongside Dr. Rainier Y. Lutanco (Vice President), Dr. Kirt Areis E. Delovino (Secretary), Dr. Michael Jeff B. Fontano (Treasurer), and Dr. Sherwin B. Biasura (Auditor). The first order of business was to reestablish the Academy's identity and direction by crafting a bold new vision and mission, grounded in unity and forward-thinking leadership.

Our Vision

"To be the foremost multidisciplinary organization for Head and Neck Surgery, uniting specialists across various fields in promoting collaboration, advancing research, and delivering comprehensive, patient-centered care in the Philippines by 2030."

Our Mission

"To establish pathways and policies that will transform the academy into a platform for research, education, socio-civic engagement, and cross-disciplinary collaboration in Head and Neck Surgery."

Our Goals

To uphold excellence through best-practice policies, foster innovation and research, enhance collaboration among specialties, promote public engagement, and ensure growth through credentialing and quality training.

Today, PAHNSI stands as one of only two organizations in the Philippines recognized by the International Federation of Head and Neck Oncologic Societies (IFHNOS), a federation established through the collaboration of national and regional societies, now representing over 70 countries. This membership reaffirms our role in representing the country in global discussions on head and neck surgery, and enhances opportunities for academic exchange, training, and advancement, both for the Academy and its individual members.

Throughout the first half of 2025, PAHNSI remained active in both advocacy and education. We joined

national campaigns during Goiter Awareness Week in January, contributed to World Cancer Day in February with awareness activities, and took part in Head and Neck Consciousness Week in April in partnership with government and allied societies. During the PCS Midyear Convention in Palawan, PAHNSI hosted focused scientific sessions on the "Difficult Thyroid" and "Recurrent Thyroid Cancer," drawing attention to the need for experience-driven, interdisciplinary solutions in surgical oncology. In May, the Academy led initiatives during International Thyroid Awareness Week and World Thyroid Day, highlighting thyroid disorders and early detection.

Simultaneously, PAHNSI laid the groundwork for deeper internal reform and stronger member engagement. A strategic planning survey was launched to identify the values and aspirations of our members, leading to efforts to revisit our by-laws, clarify credentialing standards, and broaden multidisciplinary inclusion. Initiatives such as regional head and neck grand rounds, POCUS workshops, international society partnerships, and preparations for our 2026 Biennial Convention are already underway. We have also reengaged with PCS through cancer commission discussions and strategic collaborations, while maintaining ongoing dialogue with the Asian Society of Head and Neck Oncology (ASHNO). This July, PAHNSI will host the Head and Neck Oncology Session at the 9th Annual Convention of the Surgical Oncology Society of the Philippines (SOSP), featuring Dr. William Lim as our speaker. He will present on "Robotic Surgery for Head and Neck Cancer: Local Experience, Applications, and Future Directions in the Philippine Setting."

In the numerous times that I have been called to lead, I have always been guided by the African proverb: "If you want to go fast, walk alone. If you want to go far, walk together."

This captures the very essence of our work and how I envision the succeeding leaders and members of PAHNSI to think. While moments may arise that require swift, individual decisions, true and lasting progress is achieved when we move forward together, drawing from the strength of diverse perspectives, talents, and shared commitment. In the field of head and neck surgery, where the boundaries between specialties often blur, such unity is not only strategic, it is essential.

Head and neck surgery in the Philippines can only progress if we move forward together with humility, shared vision, and purpose. As we continue our journey, PAHNSI stands ready to listen, to lead, and to build a future where every specialist, every patient, and every partner has a place in the story.

Empowering Wound Care Practice: Philippine Wound Care Society Leads Seminar at JKQ Medical & Wellness Center

Bayambang, Pangasinan — May 23, 2025 — In a meaningful effort to advance wound care education and clinical practice, the Julius K. Quiambao Medical & Wellness Center Inc. (JKQMWC), a hospital managed by The Medical City, successfully hosted a comprehensive Wound Care and Ostomy Seminar/Workshop. The event was made possible through the invaluable support and expertise of the Philippine Wound Care Society (PWCS), whose distinguished members served as the seminar's primary speakers and facilitators.

The program commenced with a warm welcome from Dr. Dave C. Gamboa, Medical Director of JKQMWC, followed by an inspirational message delivered by Dr. Estrella Q. Glorioso, President and CEO of JKQMWC. The morning sessions featured a stellar lineup of PWCS experts who shared in-depth knowledge with participants representing various healthcare disciplines.

The distinguished speakers from PWCS addressed vital topics in wound care, including:

- Dr. Enrico De Jesus – Basic Science of Wound Healing
- Dr. Martin Villa – Time Concept of Wound Healing
- RN Rhyen Hitalla – Importance of Wound Documentation
- Dr. Gerald Abesamis – Wound Assessment
- Dr. Luinio Tongson – Principles of Wound Debridement

- Dr. Rosella Arellano – Vascular Ulcers

Their expert presentations provided essential insights that can significantly enhance wound and ostomy care, especially in rural and underserved areas.

In the afternoon, a hands-on workshop was conducted by Dr. Daveric De Jesus and RN Peter Anthony Guño, both PWCS members, who demonstrated basic wound dressing techniques and emphasized the crucial role of nurses in wound care. This was followed by an Ostomy Workshop led by RN Rhyen Hitalla and RN Peter Guño, covering key topics such as stoma care, pouch changing techniques, and stoma marking and planning.

Participants actively engaged in an open forum, raising insightful questions that reflected the real-world challenges of wound management in clinical settings. The seminar concluded with the awarding of certificates to the esteemed speakers and closing remarks from Atty. Arnel C. Glorioso, Hospital Administrator.

This successful seminar highlighted the value of collaboration among healthcare institutions and professional societies like the PWCS. Through initiatives like this, the Philippine Wound Care Society continues to uphold its mission to elevate wound care standards across the country—empowering clinicians to provide compassionate, evidence-based care to every patient.



Innovating PATOS

• Raymond Joseph Manzo, MD, FPCS •

The Philippine Association of Training Officers in Surgery has been conducting preconvention workshops since its inception in 1994, to help training officers in surgery hone their soft skills and also to ensure alignment with the updated surgical curriculum, specifically that of the Philippine Society of General Surgery.

Since 2023, the PATOS had innovated its workshops by combining online learning thru the PCS Learning Management System via asynchronous sessions with the usual face-to-face sessions presented as preconvention activities prior to the PCS midyear and annual conventions as well as the PSGS surgical forum.

On May 1, 2024, during the PCS Midyear convention at Baguio, PATOS presented Module 101a: The training officer as teacher expert and Module 103: the training officer as an evaluator. The featured lecturers were: Dra Rannie Rabe Baquiran, Dr Marlene Ricci Castillo, Dr. Raymond Joseph Manzo, Dr Warren Roraldo, and Dr Andrea Joanne Torre.

On July 30, 2024, another series of lectures were given during the research workshop held at St. Lukes Medical Center BGC entitled Research Education

for Scientific Excellence, this was attended by the surgical trainees and the training officers of the various training institutions. The speakers were: Dr Warren Roraldo, Dra Joy Grace Jerusalem, Dr Raymond Joseph Manzo, Dr Ida Marie Tabangay-Lim, and Dr Jose Modesto Abellera.

On July 31, 2024, the PATOS presented Module 102: The training officer as leader -manager at the Joy Nostalg Hotel and suites with lecturers, Dr Joseph Melbert Gulfan, Dr Leonardo Ona III, and Dr Jorge Concepcion.

On November 30, 2024 the workshop on Research Education for Scientific Excellence, was given again at the Joy Nostalg Hotel and Suites. This repeat version intended only for the training officers. The lecturers were: Dr Ida Marie Tabangay-Lim, DrJoy Grace Jerusalem, Dr Catherine Co, Dr Joseph Quebral, Dr Beverly Veronica Mante, Dr Theodore Vesagas and Dr Raymond Joseph Manzo.

Last April 30, 2025, Dr Warren Roraldo and Dr Jorge Concepcion, gave the lectures on Module 101B: the training officer as a coach-mentor, and for Module 105: the training officer as a liaison, lectures were given by Dr Willie Lagdameo and Dr Macky Faylona.



During the 2024 Midyear and Annual Conventions, the PATOS held sessions on Legal and Ethical Issues in Surgical Training and has been a continuing series of discussions held during the major conventions. Dr Alfred Lasala II ably

moderated the session with experts from different areas of practice. Dr Maria Rica Lumague, Dr Anthony Perez, Dr Alfred Phillip De Dios and Atty Joel Macalino discussed different situations and issues which can happen during surgical training

**LEAP INTO THE FUTURE
AND THE GLOBAL FILIPINO SURGEON**

**Legal and Ethical Issues in
Surgical Training v2**

ALFRED PHILLIP O. DE DIOS, MD
Panelist

MARIA RICA M. LUMAGUE, MD
Panelist

ATTY. JOEL U. MACALINO, MD
Panelist

ANTHONY R. PEREZ, MD
Panelist

ALFRED Q. LASALA II, MD
Moderator

Session by the
**Philippine Association of
Training Officers in Surgery**

DEC 03 10:30 AM

**Santan Ballroom
Edsa Shangri-La Hotel**

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

51st PCS Midyear Convention

TWISTS and TURNS in SURGERY-MANAGING SURGICAL CHALLENGES

**Legal and Ethical Issues in
Surgical Training v3**

LEONARDO O. ONA III, MD, FPCS
Panelist

MARIA CHERYL L. CUCUECO, MD, FPCS
Panelist

JOSE RAVELO T. BARTOLOME, MD, FPCS
Panelist

ATTY. EMMANUEL D. LOYOLA, MD, FPCS
Panelist

ALFRED Q. LASALA II, MD, FPCS
Moderator

MAY 02 10 AM

**Ambassador Hall I
Citystate Asturias Hotel
Puerto Princesa, Palawan**

Session by the
**Philippine Association of
Training Officers in Surgery**

PATACSI Midway Through 2025: Strengthening Our Society, Advancing Our Profession, Serving Our Communities

• Fernando A. Melendres Jr., MD, FPATACSI, FPCS •

As the Philippine Association of Thoracic, Cardiac, and Vascular Surgeons, Inc. (PATACSI) reaches the midpoint of 2025, the Society continues to demonstrate its commitment to strengthening its foundations, advancing professional development, and extending its services to the community. The initiatives undertaken this year reflect PATACSI's vision of fostering excellence in surgical education, ensuring professional growth, and delivering compassionate care to those in need.

Strengthening the Society

PATACSI has placed emphasis on initiatives that fortify the organization and its training programs:

- **Midyear Curriculum Workshop** – This activity provided an opportunity for constructive dialogue on the surgical training curriculum, ensuring that it remains aligned with evolving clinical standards and the competencies expected of future specialists.
- **Coordination with PBTCVS** – Close collaboration with the Philippine Board of Thoracic, Cardiac, and Vascular Surgery (PBTCVS) has been maintained to guarantee alignment between training programs and board certification requirements. This synergy ensures that trainees are adequately prepared for the diplomate examinations and their eventual independent practice.

Continuing Professional Development

PATACSI continues to prioritize professional growth through a variety of academic activities:

- **Scientific Meetings** – These sessions, hosted by the accredited training programs, highlighted interesting topics in thoracic, cardiac, and vascular surgery. Among the subjects presented were procedures in the thoracic hybrid operating room, the management of aortic dissections using the Frozen Elephant Trunk technique,

and multidisciplinary approaches to wound care.

- **Participation in the PCS Mid-Year Convention** – PATACSI Fellows shared expertise in managing catheter-related bloodstream infections and pleural infections, thereby contributing to the continuing education of general surgeons.
- **ATCSA 2025 Congress** – Preparations are well underway for PATACSI's hosting of the Association of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons of Asia (ATCSA) Congress on November 19–23, 2025, at the Shangri-La Makati. The scientific program is designed to promote multidisciplinary collaboration, with both local and international experts participating.

Community Service

In line with its commitment to social responsibility, PATACSI has sustained its community outreach initiatives:

- **Surgical Missions** – Arteriovenous fistula (AVF) and vascular access missions were conducted in multiple sites, including Tala Hospital, OFW Hospital in Pampanga, Western Visayas Medical Center, and Ormoc District Hospital. Each mission benefitted close to 50 patients, addressing the urgent need for dialysis access in underserved communities.
- **Local Leadership** – A growing number of these missions are being organized and led by local PATACSI Fellows. This approach not only enhances sustainability but also allows the Society to conserve logistical resources while maximizing community impact.

The activities of 2025 affirm PATACSI's enduring mission: to strengthen the Society, advance the professional development of its members, and extend the benefits of thoracic, cardiac, and vascular surgery to the Filipino people.

Philippine Spine Society 2025: A Year of Learning, Legacy, and Leadership

Philippine Spine Society 2025: A Year of Learning, Legacy, and Leadership

The Philippine Spine Society (PSS) continues to make waves in spine care education, research, and international collaboration. With a strong commitment to hands-on learning, academic excellence, and global engagement, 2025 has been a landmark year for the society. From regional courses to cadaveric and live tissue workshops, to preparations for international congresses and a major milestone anniversary, PSS is shaping the future of spine care—one successful event at a time.

A Resounding Success: PSS–APSS Spine Basic Course in Davao City

April 4–5, 2025 | Park Inn by Radisson, Davao City
In partnership with the Asia Pacific Spine Society (APSS), the 2025 Spine Basic Operative Course was held in Davao City, drawing spine surgeons, neurosurgeons, and orthopedic residents from across the country. Course Chair Dr. Harjoland Obenieta and PSS President Dr. Ronald P. Tangente opened the event, which featured lectures by top national and international experts, including Dr. Ou Yang Youheng (Singapore), Dr. Binod Bijukkche (Nepal) and Dr. I Gusti Lanang Ngurah Agong Artha Wiguna (Indonesia).

Highlights included:

- Lectures on cervical and lumbar spine pathology and surgical techniques
- Engaging open forums after each session
- Small Group Discussions, praised by participants for their interactive and high-impact learning
- A festive Fellowship Night promoting camaraderie

Sawbone Workshops focusing on C1–C2, ACDF, lateral mass, thoracic/lumbar pedicle screws, and S2AI

With over 10 faculty and 100 attendees, this course set the tone for the society's commitment to meaningful, hands-on education.

Cadaveric Endoscopic Spine Course: Sharpening Skills in Manila

June 27–28, 2025 | UP College of Medicine, Manila

Organized by Dr. Anne Kathlene Ganai-Antonio and Dr. Rafael C. Bundoc, the PSS Cadaveric Endoscopic Spine Course offered 16 selected delegates a unique opportunity to practice endoscopic procedures using cadaveric specimens.

The course included:

- Needling, transforaminal, and interlaminar approaches
- A live cervical endoscopic demonstration
- A solemn tribute to the silent mentors, recognizing the donors who made this hands-on learning possible

The workshop emphasized anatomical precision, ethical practice, and surgical confidence, earning high praise from participants and setting a benchmark for future cadaveric courses.



PSS-UP-PGH Cadaveric Endoscopic Spine Course



Faculty and delegates in the APSS Spine Basic Course

Up Next: 9th PSS Live Tissue Swine Course August 9, 2025 | Valdez Hall, Veterans Memorial Medical Center

The upcoming 9th Live Tissue Swine Course will feature a blend of didactic sessions and live tissue surgical workshops, catering to both observing and hands-on participants.

Morning Didactics Will Cover:

- Cervical and thoracolumbar approaches (anterior/posterior)
- ENT, urologic, and neurosurgical complication management
- Dural tears and vessel injuries

Afternoon Workshop:

- Hands-on participants will be divided into 4 groups
- Observers will remain in the main hall for live-streamed surgeries with open forums
- Sponsored symposia and snacks will be provided

Led by Course Chair Dr. Kathryh Anne B. Jimenez and Dr. Gerardo Juan M. Sison, the course will reinforce surgical safety, skill development, and multidisciplinary integration.

From Research to Recognition: PSS at APSS Congress Malaysia

The PSS Research Committee, headed by Dr. Romel P. Estillo, has cultivated a strong culture of academic inquiry through its ongoing webinar series and active collaboration with the Malaysian Spine Society. These efforts have resulted in multiple research papers being accepted for presentation at the Asia Pacific Spine Society Congress held in Malaysia.

The Philippine delegation made a powerful showing at the congress, with spine and neurosurgery professionals attending in full force and proudly representing the country. These presentations underscore the society's commitment to advancing spine research and contributing meaningfully to the regional scientific community.

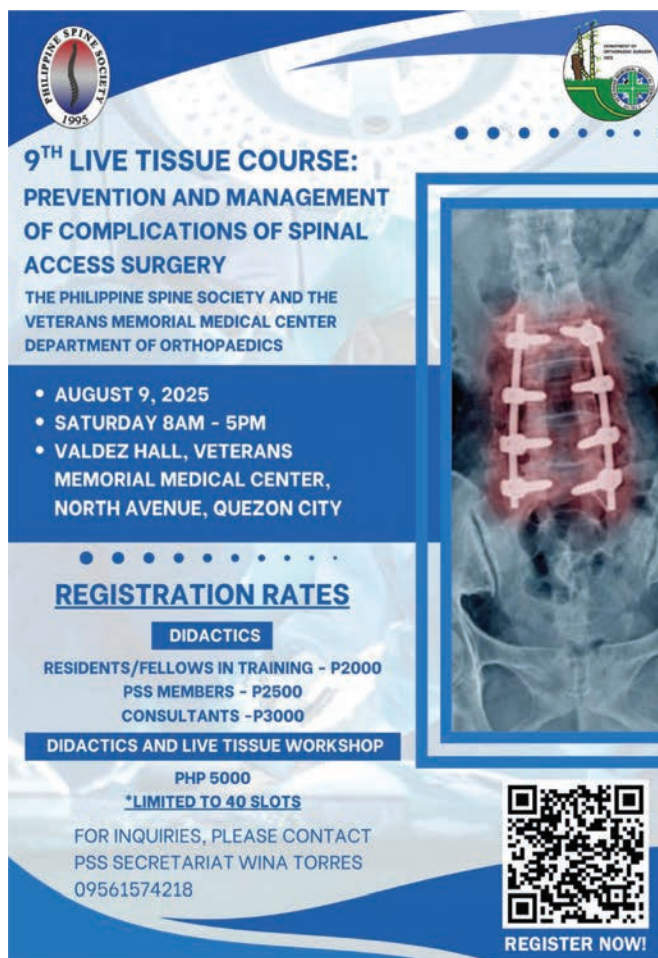
The Road Ahead: APSS Congress 2026 in Cebu, Philippines

June 3–6, 2026 | Shangri-La Mactan, Cebu

Following a successful bid in 2023, the Philippine Spine Society is proud to host the APSS 2026 Congress at Shangri-La Mactan Resort. This prestigious international event will bring together renowned faculty and delegates from across the Asia-Pacific region for:

- Scientific lectures
- Case discussions
- Surgical video sessions
- Collaborative research forums
- Hands-on Workshops
- Industry Sessions

With hundreds expected to attend, APSS 2026 promises to be a landmark moment in Philippine spine history. Stay updated at www.apss2026ph.org.



9TH LIVE TISSUE COURSE:
PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF COMPLICATIONS OF SPINAL ACCESS SURGERY

THE PHILIPPINE SPINE SOCIETY AND THE VETERANS MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER
DEPARTMENT OF ORTHOPAEDICS

- AUGUST 9, 2025
- SATURDAY 8AM - 5PM
- VALDEZ HALL, VETERANS MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER, NORTH AVENUE, QUEZON CITY

REGISTRATION RATES

DIDACTICS

RESIDENTS/FELLOWS IN TRAINING - P2000
PSS MEMBERS - P2500
CONSULTANTS - P3000

DIDACTICS AND LIVE TISSUE WORKSHOP

PHP 5000
***LIMITED TO 40 SLOTS**

FOR INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT
PSS SECRETARIAT WINA TORRES
09561574218

REGISTER NOW!



PSS delegation to APSS Annual Congress in Malaysia

Celebrating 30 Years: The 2025 PSS Annual Convention

This year marks the 30th Anniversary of the Philippine Spine Society, a momentous occasion that will be commemorated during the Annual Convention later in 2025. The event will celebrate:

- Three decades of advancing spine care and surgical education
- Pioneers who shaped the specialty in the Philippines
- Rising stars and future leaders in the field
- The convention will feature a robust scientific program, international keynote speakers, tribute ceremonies, and fellowship gatherings, uniting generations of spine surgeons in one grand celebration.

Philippine Wound Care Society Members Lead Speakers at Seminar-Workshop

Bayambang, Pangasinan — May 23, 2025 — In a meaningful effort to advance wound care education and clinical practice, the Julius K. Quiambao Medical & Wellness Center Inc. (JKQMWCC), a hospital managed by The Medical City, successfully hosted a comprehensive Wound Care and Ostomy Seminar/Workshop. The event was made possible through the invaluable support and expertise of the Philippine Wound Care Society (PWCS), whose distinguished members served as the seminar's primary speakers and facilitators.

The program commenced with a warm welcome from Dr. Dave C. Gamboa, Medical Director of JKQMWCC, followed by an inspirational message delivered by Dr. Estrella Q. Glorioso, President and CEO of JKQMWCC. The morning sessions featured a stellar lineup of PWCS experts who shared in-depth knowledge with participants representing various healthcare disciplines. The distinguished speakers from PWCS addressed vital topics in wound care, included:

- Dr. Enrico De Jesus – Basic Science of Wound Healing
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- Dr. Gerald Abesamis – Wound Assessment
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- Dr. Rosella Arellano – Vascular Ulcers

Their expert presentations provided essential insights that can significantly enhance wound and ostomy care, especially in rural and underserved areas.

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Participants actively engaged in an open forum, raising insightful questions that reflected the real-world challenges of wound management in clinical settings. The seminar concluded with the awarding of certificates to the esteemed speakers and closing remarks from Atty. Arnel C. Glorioso, Hospital Administrator.

This successful seminar highlighted the value of collaboration between healthcare institutions and professional societies like the PWCS. Through initiatives like this, the Philippine Wound Care Society continues to uphold its mission to elevate wound care standards across the country—empowering clinicians to provide compassionate, evidence-based care to every patient.



The 2nd Joint PSGS-PALES Annual Convention: A Comprehensive Chronicle

July 22-26, 2025 | EDSA Shangri-la Manila, Philippines

Introduction

The second joint conference of the Philippine Society of General Surgeons (PSGS) and the Philippine Association of Laparoscopic and Endoscopic Surgeons (PALES) brought together some of the brightest minds in the country in the vibrant city of Manila. Leading practitioners, educators, and trainees gathered at EDSA Shangri-La from July 22–26, 2025 for cutting-edge learning, professional camaraderie, and celebration. The five-day event, with the theme “Mastering Modern Surgery: Merging Approaches for Enhanced Care,” offered a dynamic program spanning workshops, plenary sessions, interactive panels, and festive social gatherings.

Day 0: July 21, 2025 — Pre-Convention Workshops and Opening

The convention kicked off with pre-convention workshops designed to provide hands-on experience and focused training on advanced surgical and endoscopic techniques.

SurgEndo 203

Surgical Endoscopy 203 was a hands-on workshop on advanced endoscopic techniques, focusing on Endoscopic Submucosal Dissection (ESD), held at Rizal Medical Center. Under the expert guidance of course director Dr. Arlyn R. Cañones, and moderated by Dr. Ray I. Sarmiento, the program featured an

insightful lecture on ESD principles by Dr. Lauren R. Rellora, followed by live case demonstrations performed by Dr. Rellora and Dr. Kohei Takizawa.

Advancements in Hernia Surgery & Liver Resection

Held at the FEU NRMF Medical Center, this special program showcased the latest advancements in hernia surgery using Histoacryl LapFix, as well as liver resection employing the SONOCA 300 HepaCCS. Under the leadership of course director Dr. Sarah Grace A. Ranay-Monsanto, the event was divided into two engaging parts. Part 1 featured didactic sessions on minimally invasive inguinal hernia repair by Dr. Margarette Ann Habawel-Rida, a comparison of TAPP versus TEP by Dr. Sarah Grace A. Ranay-Monsanto, and the innovative use of Histoacryl LapFix in hernia repair by Dr. Mary Grace Balunsat-Rojas. Part 2 included a skillfully executed live TAPP procedure by Dr. Raymund Andrew G. Ong and video demonstrations on open hernia mesh fixation by Dr. Jose Macario V. Faylona, as well as hepatic resection with the SONOCA system by Dr. Leandro V. Torre.

Day 1: July 22, 2025 — Conferences, Specialized Workshops, and Induction Ceremony

ISFGS-PALES International Conference

Day 1 officially commenced with the annual meeting of the International Society for Fluorescence-Guided Surgery (ISFGS), held at the Garden Ballroom



of EDSA Shangri-La Manila. Welcoming remarks were delivered by ISFGS-AP President and Congress Chair Dr. Catherine Teh, followed by a message from the esteemed PALES President Dr. Alex Palines. The sessions explored the foundations and applications of fluorescence-guided surgery, along with emerging practices, advancing techniques, and the latest innovations in the field.

Fundamentals Of Laparoscopic Sleeve Gastrectomy

The day also featured a focused session on the fundamentals of laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy, held at the Asian Hospital and Medical Center under the guidance of course directors Dr. Darwin S. Salonga and Dr. Jose Antonio M. Salud. The program explored updated IFSO/ASMBS guidelines for the Asian population, strategies for establishing a metabolic and bariatric center, the latest evidence and refined techniques in laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy, and approaches to preventing complications while maximizing results. Participants also witnessed a live laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy procedure. Hands-on stations for both nurses and surgeons were adeptly facilitated by Dr. Tyrone C. Lalas and Dr. Judy Carissa Atazan, ensuring a comprehensive and practical learning experience.

Choledochoscopy Workshop

The day's program continued with the Choledochoscopy Workshop, held at Karl Storz – BGC and led by course director Dr. Arvin Von G. Briones. The segment covered the essentials with Basics of Choledochoscopy presented by Dr. Deogracias Alberto G. Reyes; Complications in Choledochoscopy discussed by Dr. Raymond Joseph S. De Vera; and Tips and Tricks in Choledochoscopy shared by Dr. Raymond Joseph H. Romero. Attendees then rotated through hands-on stations featuring navigation, open CBDE, and laparoscopic CBDE with PIP, ensuring both theoretical and practical mastery of the procedure.

PSGS Inter-Chapter Research Contest

The trainees and other participants also got in on the action as they competed in the PSGS Inter-Chapter Research Contest, which featured papers from all over the country. The event was moderated by Dr. Jonathan Navarro. Hailing from the Central Luzon Chapter, Dr. Oliver Tagnanas from Cagayan Valley Medical Center grabbed top honors.

Induction of PSGS - PALES New Fellows and Associate Members, and PBAMIS Diplomates

The day concluded with the Induction of PSGS–PALES New Fellows and Associate Members, as well as PBAMIS Diplomates, held at the hotel's elegant Isla Grand Ballroom. The ceremony was graced by guest speaker Dr. Efren C. Laxamana, whose address offered inspiration and encouragement to the newly inducted members.

Day 2: July 23, 2025 — Lectures, Panel Discussions, and Symposia

Isla Ballroom Sessions

All held within the Isla Ballroom of EDSA Shangri-La Manila, the day commenced with an inspiring opening ceremony led by keynote speaker Dr. Alex A. Erasmo, followed by the Dr. Serafin Hilvano Memorial Lecture on “Endo-Laparoscopic Surgery in the Last Decade” by Dr. Michael K. W. Li. Insightful panel discussions explored the multidisciplinary approach in managing obstructive colorectal malignancies, moderated by Dr. Robert B. Bandolon, and the ethics of surgical innovation moderated by Dr. Cenon R. Alfonso. The Isla Ballroom sessions concluded with a compelling symposium on improving outcomes in complicated biliary conditions, chaired by Dr. A'Ericson N. Berberabe.

Fluorescence-Guided Surgery in the MIS Era

The session on Fluorescence-Guided Surgery in the MIS Era, chaired by Dr. Jose Vicente T. Prodigalidad, Dr. Renee Sicam, and Dr. Takeaki Ishizawa, tackled illuminated cutting-edge applications of indocyanine green (ICG) in minimally invasive surgery. Highlights included thought-provoking discussions on the roles and limitations of ICG-guided robotic liver resection by Dr. Andrew Chiow, robotic RAMPS with ICG by Dr. Kalayarasan Raja, and the practical integration of ICG in urologic procedures through Hong Kong's robotic-assisted partial nephrectomy, presented by Dr. Ka Wai Leung.

Fluorescence-Guided Surgery in the Philippines

The symposium on Fluorescence-Guided Surgery in the Philippines was started off by Jeffrey Dr. Jeronimo P. Domino, who discussed the origins of fluorescence-guided surgery in the country. The program continued with insights into the local experience in fluorescence-guided colorectal surgery by Dr. Michael Geoffrey L. Lim, fluorescence-guided lung nodule localization

in the hybrid operating room by Dr. Edmund E. Villaroman, and fluorescence-guided breast surgery by Dr. Felicidad Claudia R. Ordoñez.

PSGS Interesting Case Presentation

Not to be outdone by the previous day's Inter Chapter research contest, several trainees also put the most bizarre and rare cases on display. Moderated by Dr. Helen Amo, the event showcased numerous case reports from different chapters and training hospitals. Dr. Abe P. Ferrer from Dr. Paulino J. Garcia Memorial Hospital was awarded first place.

Day 3: July 24, 2025 — Symposia, Workshops, and Video Contest

Focused Lectures and Break-out Sessions

The 3rd day was filled with multiple sessions from different aspects of General Surgery. Each session highlighted critical aspects of surgical care. Notable sessions included the Standard of Practice in Acute Diverticulitis, Postinjury Multiple Organ Failure: How Does It Look Like in 2025?, Pelvic Exenteration Surgery, Improving Outcomes in Hernia Surgery, Defining Best Practices in the Philippines: Indications, Procedures & Facility Standards for Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery and Related Non-Surgical Procedures, Chest Wall Injury Surgical Stabilization: What is the Current Evidence and What is the Current Practice?, Advances in Oncoplastic Breast Surgery, Updates in Head and Neck Cancer, Management of Peritoneal Metastases in Gastric Cancer, Technical Tips of Lateral Pelvic Node Dissection, and GS-MIS Education.

Innovations in MIS in Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Surgery

Held at the Marquee Tent of EDSA Shangri-La, the third day featured a symposium on Improving Minimally Invasive Surgery in HPB Surgery, chaired by Dr. Anthony R. Perez. The session highlighted practical applications of indocyanine green (ICG) in liver resection presented by Dr. Takeshi Aoki, and detailed the steps involved in performing robotic-assisted pancreatic surgery, led by Dr. Kalayarsan Raja.

Advancing Skills in Minimally Invasive Surgery

Another symposium held at the Isla Ballroom on Day 3 focused on Advancing Skills in Minimally Invasive Surgery, chaired by Dr. Jeffrey Jeronimo

P. Domino. It featured insightful presentations on pathways to endoscopic breast surgery training by Dr. Hung-Wen Lai, and pathways to achieving robotics training by Dr. Charles Chung-Wei Lin.

The PALES Direct 2 OR

Held at the Garden Wing of Kamia, the day also featured a crash course in surgical video editing and presentation workshop, chaired by Dr. Camille D. Ingusan, and co-chaired by Dr. Carl Evans Y. De Castro. The session covered essential concepts such as video planning and offered practical tips and tricks for effective video editing. The workshop proper was facilitated by Dr. Jose Paolo C. Porciuncula, Dr. Rafael Alexis T. Resurrección, Dr. Jenine Joy C. Segismundo, and Dr. John Ray B. Yang. It concluded with the presentation of select edited videos created during the workshop, highlighting participants' progress and creativity.

PALES Video Contest

Related to surgical video editing, the PALES Video Contest showcased outstanding creativity and technical skill in surgical video production. Chaired by Dr. Banny Bay C. Genuino, and co-chaired by Dr. Rafael Alexis T. Resurrección, the contest was evaluated by a distinguished panel of judges including Dr. Alejandro M. Palines Jr, Dr. Jose Vicente T. Prodigalidad, and Dr. Jose Antonio M. Salud. This competition highlighted the innovative ways of capturing and presenting complex surgical procedures.

Day 4: July 25, 2025 — Research Highlights, Landmark Initiatives, and Car Raffle Extravaganza

Free Paper Sessions

The day's highlights included multiple Free Paper Sessions covering a wide range of topics. Among these were notable case reports such as the incidental discovery of splenic lymphangioma in an adult, presented by Dr. John Karl S. Uno under abdomen studies; intestinal T-cell lymphoma in a 47-year-old patient, by Dr. Abigail F. Rondina; perianal hidradenitis suppurativa mimicking complex fistula-in-ano, by Dr. Joyce K. Tan under bowel, appendix, and colorectal; pelvic metastatic squamous cell carcinoma of unknown primary site, by Dr. Marlon Dean B. Ebron II under pelvis; and a rare case of testicular germ cell tumor in one of five sisters with complete androgen insensitivity syndrome, by Dr. Mary Catherine S. Tiamson under urology. These

represent just a few of the diverse presentations that enriched the day's program.

Sessions of General Surgery Topics

Day 4 also had breakout rooms and specific lectures on different topics. This day focused not only on the clinical side of care for patients but also the professional and human side of being a surgeon. Notable lectures included Modified Chest Wall Lateral Intercostal Artery Perforator Flap (MCW LICAP), PSGS-MMC: Dissecting the Surgical Code of Conduct, Surgical Nutrition, Philippine Experience in Robotic Surgery, Session on Productivity Skills, Technology in Surgical Practice, Radiation and Chemotherapy Integration with Surgery for Sarcoma Management: Multidisciplinary Approaches to Optimize Outcomes, Surgeons Hobbies: Golf Aficionado, Technical Tips and Challenges in Upper Gi Surgery, Technology and Breast Cancer Management, Bariatric and Metabolic Surgeries: How I Do It, Constipation: More Than Just a Symptom, and Breast Tuberculosis.

PSGS Launching of Zero BDI 2025

The PSGS officially launched its Zero Bile Duct Injuries (BDI) 2025 campaign under the leadership of chair Dr. Arthur C. Sebastian. The program featured an informative presentation on the current status of BDI and the campaign's rationale by Dr. Raymond Andrew G. Ong, followed by a detailed discussion on landmarks for safe open cholecystectomy and the responsibilities of trainers and trainees by Dr. Jose Macario V. Faylona. The PSGS Zero BDI Timeout Checklist was introduced by Dr. Miguel C. Mendoza, while Dr. Roberto A. Chacon Jr. reported on recent BDI incidents. Campaign strategies were outlined by Dr. Alfred Q. Lasala II, and the session concluded with a summary and call to action by Dr. Robert B. Bandolon.

Car Raffle Event

A buzz of excitement swept through the convention hall as delegates assembled for the annual car raffle, a signature tradition of the PSGS-PALES convention. This year's grand prizes—two brand-new BYD Sealion 6 hybrid vehicles — were revealed amid cheers. The lucky winners, Dr. Leonard E. Cacawa, President of the PSGS-PALES Bicol Chapter, and Dr. Eunice F. Mercado-Cabebe, a newly inducted member from the Southern Tagalog Chapter, each took the stage to receive their keys and pose for photographs. Smaller prizes, including surgical instrument sets and travel vouchers, were also awarded to delighted participants.

Induction of 2025-2026 PSGS Board of Directors and Chapter Board of Trustees

President: Alfred Q. Lasala II, MD
Vice President: Miguel C. Mendoza, MD
Treasurer: Jose Macario V. Faylona, MD
Secretary: Jeffrey Jeronimo P. Domino, MD

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Natasha B. Emano-Elazegui, MD
Venerio G. Gasataya, Jr., MD
Froilan U. Dacumos, MD

Day 5: July 26, 2025 — Final Sessions and Closing Ceremonies

The final day, held entirely at the Isla Ballroom of EDSA Shangri-La Manila, began with an insightful lecture on the de-escalation of breast cancer surgery in low-risk patients by Dr. Felicidad Claudia R. Ordóñez, chaired by Dr. Hannah Angela DL. Acosta. This was followed by a symposium on contemporary surgical education, chaired by Dr. Joy Grace G. Jerusalem, featuring compelling talks from Dr. Catherine S. Co on the importance of collaborative surgical research, and Dr. Warren M. Roraldo on innovations in surgical training in the Philippines, focusing on the effectiveness of the learning management system across specialties. The day continued with a dynamic cine clinic session on diverse surgical procedures—including neck dissection, tissue repair hernia, endoscopic modified radical neck dissection, total mesorectal excision, fistula-in-ano surgery, parotidectomy, and endoscopic mastectomy—chaired by Dr. Arthur S. Sebastian. The event concluded with a memorable closing ceremony.

Reflections and Takeaways

The 2nd joint PSGS-PALES Annual Convention was an unqualified success, marked by robust scientific exchange, hands-on learning, and genuine camaraderie. The event's highlights, from the meticulously designed workshops to the joyous fellowship night and the electrifying car raffle, underscored the spirit of progress and collaboration. As the curtains closed on EDSA Shangri-la Manila, delegates departed with renewed knowledge, new friendships, and a shared commitment to advancing surgical care in the Philippines.

PSST Holds 20th Annual Convention: TRAUMA C.O.D.E. Collaborations to Optimize, Deliver & Empower the Philippine Trauma System

• Aireen Patricia M. Madrid, MD •

The Philippine Society for the Surgery of Trauma (PSST) marked its **20th Annual Convention held on 10-11 June 2025** at the Conrad Manila. The two-day event gathered national and international trauma experts, health leaders, and stakeholders to strengthen the country's trauma system through partnerships, innovation, and evidence-based practice.

Day 1 opened with welcome remarks from the PSST President Maria Lourdes C. Gutierrez, M.D., and the PCS President Jose Rhoel C. De Leon, M.D. This was followed by the **Dr. Alfredo T. Ramirez Memorial Lecture** delivered by Past PSST President Jorge M. Concepcion, M.D., with his topic entitled **"Through My Lens: Trauma Care in the Philippines."**

The morning sessions tackled **Enhancing Trauma Networks**, featuring **DOH Assistant Secretary Albert Francis E. Domingo, M.D., MSC**, on nationwide trauma care. Benedict Edward P. Valdez, M.D, who is the Director of the Institute of Emergency Trauma

and Critical Care of Southern Philippines Medical Center (SPMC), shared the Davao 911 lifeline for rapid emergency response and survival. The Chairman of the Department of Emergency Services of Manila Doctors Hospital, Pauline F. Convocar, M.D., discusses the topic of multi-specialty polytrauma management. AFP Surgeon Brigadier General Fatima Claire Navarro, MC, closed the segment with military-civilian collaboration insights.

Afternoon discussions covered **Optimizing Trauma Care** through training programs with the Director of Trauma and Head of Service of Trauma Surgery of Tan Tock Seng Hospital in Singapore, Prof. Teo Li Tserng, M.D., and the Program Director of CCATS-Quirino Memorial Medical Center, Raymundo F. Resurreccion, M.D. Neurosurgical trauma management was shared by the Executive Director of the University of the Philippines – Philippine General Hospital, Gerardo D. Legaspi, M.D., and PSST President, Maria Lourdes C.





Gutierrez, M.D. The FAST Break segment, where the next-generation trauma surgeons updated the audience on current guidelines and evidence-based practices in trauma resuscitation. This was followed by the introduction of the National Trauma Registry by the Asst. Prof. Val Randolph M. Madrid (UPLB) and the PEMAT and disaster response lecture by Alfonso C. M.D.

Day 2 was highlighted by the keynote address from DOH Secretary and Trauma Surgeon Teodoro J. Herbosa, M.D., who emphasized the government's commitment to elevating trauma care nationwide. This was followed by sessions on Delivering Quality Trauma Care with the Head of Trauma and Surgical Intensive care of Tondo Medical Center, Joel U. Macalino, M.D., the Chief of Section of Trauma and Critical care of Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center, Joseph T. Juico, M.D., and the Commanding Officer of Camp Siongco Station Hospital of the Philippine Army, LTC Jeremie C. Villamor, MC. The Empowering the Trauma System via the EMS Law was presented by Halima O. Mokamad-Romancap, M.D., the Chairman of the Department of Surgery of Cotabato Regional and Medical Center.

The **Asian Collaboration for Trauma (A.C.T.)** segment brought global perspectives, led by **A.C.T.**

President Adj. Asst. Prof. Raj Menon, M.D., of the Division of General Surgery – Trauma, National University Hospital, Singapore; **Prof. Koji Morishita, M.D.**, Chairman of the Department of Acute Critical Care and Disaster Medicine, Institute of Science, Tokyo, Japan; and **Prof. Tarek Razek, M.D.**, Definitive Surgery for Trauma Care Course (DSTC) Program Director, Trauma Program Director, and Chief of the Division of Trauma Surgery at the McGill University Health Center (MUHC), Montreal, Canada.

The **Military Trauma** session showcased collaborative research and field applications, with the Chief of Military Medicine Division of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Col. Emmanuel S. Degal, MC, and from a Navy Independent Duty Corpsman (IDC) from San Diego, California, USA, Ian Victor Bayne-Campbell, IDC shared an updates on military-civilian research and Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC).

The convention concluded with the induction of new PSST Fellows, the annual business meeting, and final remarks from the PSST leadership — reaffirming the society's commitment to ensuring that every trauma patient matters and that collaboration is the cornerstone of saving lives.



After years on pause, the **Definitive Surgery for Trauma and Intensive Care (DSTC)** course—flagship training of the **International Association for Trauma Surgery and Intensive Care (IATSIC)**—made its powerful return to the Philippines on 13–15 June 2025. This landmark event was made possible through the visionary leadership of Dr. Esther Saguil, Immediate Past President of the Philippine Society of Trauma Surgery (PSTS), whose dedication and determination were instrumental in bringing DSTC back to Philippine shores.

DSTC 2025 was led by world-renowned trauma surgeons **Prof. Tarek Razek (Canada)**, the incumbent DSTC Program Director, and **Prof. Li Tserng Teo (Singapore)**, who brought unmatched global experience, surgical mastery, and a passion for mentorship to a new generation of trauma leaders.

The course was held in partnership with B. Braun Aesculap Academy, led by the ever-supportive Ms. Sheila Curativo, where the immersive didactic sessions were hosted. The high-fidelity live tissue training was held at the Philippine Center for Advanced Surgery (PCAS) at Cardinal Santos Medical Center, providing participants with a unique opportunity to hone their real-world trauma skills in a state-of-the-art environment.

Trauma surgeons from across the Philippines joined the course, united by a common goal: to elevate trauma care and surgical readiness nationwide.

The exceptional local faculty was headed by none other than “Mother Dragon” herself—Dr. Maria Cheryl Cucueco, whose fierce commitment to trauma education inspired both faculty and participants alike. She was joined by an outstanding team: Dr. Alfonso Danac, Dr. Andrew Jay Pusung, Dr. Jorge Concepcion, Dr. Joseph Juico, Dr. Joel Macalino (Course Director), and Dr. Aireen Patricia Madrid (Course Coordinator), each bringing invaluable expertise and energy to the program.

And working tirelessly behind the scenes was the ever-efficient and endlessly gracious Ms. Anya Paceño, the DSTC Secretariat, whose coordination and heart ensured everything ran smoothly from start to finish.

The return of DSTC 2025 aligns with the mission of Department of Health Secretary Ted Herbosa, himself a trauma surgeon, who continues to champion the strengthening of trauma systems, emergency preparedness, and surgical capacity nationwide.

With its successful relaunch, DSTC reclaims its place as a cornerstone of trauma surgical education, equipping clinicians to lead with clarity, operate with confidence, and save lives when every second counts.

DSTC Philippines is back. Fierce, focused, and ready for the future of trauma care in the Philippines.



PCS – Northern Mindanao Chapter: Upholding PCS Standards for Excellence

• Bryan P. Bandolon, MD, FPCS •

The Philippine College of Surgeons – Northern Mindanao Chapter is the home of the current PCS President Dr. Jose Rhoel C. de Leon, and his initiative in bringing together all Surgeons of the Land under one umbrella of the PCS and to provide quality surgery for all, are deeply entrenched within the chapter standards. Therefore, we continue to cultivate a strong community of surgeons dedicated to excellence with a strong allegiance to the PCS marching orders. Emphatically initiated by the current PCS – NM Chapter President Dr. Rose Belle E. Rahon – Sugang and her team of equally passionate set of officers, who enthusiastically piled on surgically compelling activities in such a short period of the first quarter of the year.

With the chronic challenges that plague our vicinity, such as limited medical resources, disparities in access to healthcare, and the evolving demands of modern surgical practice, we have adapted to cultivate local resources to mitigate the hurdles. This includes tapping local community leaders as gates to access in healthcare and medical resources in the grass roots.

The groundbreaking of the Chapter's three priorities for 2025 were founded solid in the beginning of the year and perpetuated tirelessly as the months rolled on forward.

1. Strengthening Surgical Education and Training

Education being the bridge to excellence, it is has become vital as Surgeons of the Land to commit our lives to continuous learning. Thus PCS – NM Chapter organized numerous educational initiatives for Fellows and Surgical Residents of Northern Mindanao to perpetuate this ideal. Not as eventful as the first quarter of the year but still rather fruitful and steadfast:

- Standardization of Pediatric Care in Perioperative Setting, March 29, 2025, 1:00 pm, CUMC Conference Room, Cagayan de Oro City, Speaker: Dr. Erika Marie Gacus
- Wound Suturing and Stapling Workshop, April 12, 2025, 9:00am, VIP Hotel, Cagayan de Oro City, Lecturers: Dr. Joseph Ke-e, Dr. Rose Belle Rahon – Sugang and Dr. Bryan Bandolon
- Wound Suturing and Stapling Workshop, June 21, 2025, 9:00am, Amai Pak-pak Medical Center, Marawi City, Lecturer: Dr. Hassan Nor Mangorsi
- Annual Case Report Contest, April 28, 2025, 6:00pm, CUMC Conference Room, Cagayan de Oro City. Residents from all 3 training institutions of Northern Mindanao: MCOST, NMMC and APMC
- The series of educational sessions will elevate our expertise and supplement our commitment to mentoring the future Surgeons of the Land.

2. Advocacy to Equitable Healthcare

As guardians of health, it is our social responsibility to advocate for accessible and quality surgical care, especially in underserved areas. We have cultivated in the partnership with health institutions and the community to be beacons of relief for all patients, regardless of ethnicity or creed. We uphold the PCS banner for “quality surgery for all,” tapping into Fellows, Physicians from differing disciplines and Local Nursing and paramedical organizations to participate in various outreach programs whose groundwork has already been initiated from months prior.

- Breast Screening and Lay Forum, March 25, 2025, 8:00am, NMMC OPD, Cagayan de Oro City, Headed by: Dr. Rose Belle Rahon – Sugang
- Blood Letting, April 22, 2025, 8:00am, NMMC HLK Building Lobby, Cagayan de Oro City, Coordination with PCS – NM Resident's Organization
- Operation Tuli, May 7, 2025, 9:00am, CUBED Capistrano Complex, Cagayan de Oro City
- Boys 2 Men: Operation Tuli, May 17, 2025, 9:00am, San Isidro General Hospital, Gingoog City
- Alis Bukol, May 21, 2025, 9:00am, Bukidnon Provincial Medical Center, Malaybalay
- Operation Tuli and Blood Letting, May 31, 2025, 8:00am, ACE Medical Center, Cagayan de Oro City, RC CDO Health
- Operation Tuli and Blood Letting, June 7, 2025, 8:00am, St. Francis Doctor's Hospital and Medical Center, Cagayan de Oro City, RC CDO Health
- Medical Civic Action Program (Breast and Cervical Screening), June 14, 2025, 8:00am, BJMP Cagayan de Oro City Jail, Speaker: Dr. Rose Belle Rahon – Sugang in coordination with Philippine Air Force

The activities invigorated the leadership potential innate in the PCS bloodline and reinforced our unwavering commitment to serve our community with the God given graces of Surgery vested upon our Fellows.

3. Fostering Unity and Professional Growth

Although no activity has materialized in the quarter past, there are a variety of initiatives brewing for the near future. Activities that will assimilate multiple facets of Surgery, involving fellows in multidisciplinary events, to collaborate and cultivate professional growth for the common pursuit for excellence.

PCS-Cordillera Chapter Activities: Off to a Good Start

The Philippine College of Surgeons – Cordillera Chapter remains steadfast in its mission to provide quality surgery for all. It endeavors to promote surgical excellence and accessible healthcare within and beyond the region. With the spirit of service and collaboration, the chapter has conducted various programs directed not only to surgeons but as well as the community in its effort to provide better healthcare.

Colorectal Caravan

The Colorectal Caravan is a program initiated by the Philippine Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons and that is conducted in the different regions of the country. The program aims to collaborate and engage with local surgeons to address issues on colorectal diseases and bridge the gap in their management, especially in areas with limited colorectal surgeons.

Last May 24, 2025, together with the PCS Cordillera Chapter, the fourth leg of the Colorectal Caravan was held in Baguio City and was participated by both practicing surgeons and surgical residents alike. The event included lectures on chemotherapy for colon and rectal cancers, surgical techniques in TME and CME/CVL, as well as stoma care. Aside from these, a live demonstration of a laparoscopic low anterior resection was also held simultaneously with a forum with the participating surgical residents. The day concluded with a session called “Gut Talks: Unplugged” in which a couple of challenging colorectal cases were discussed with the experts in the field.



Tay, Tayo Na!

Together with the Philippine Urological Association and the Department of Health, as part of Fathers' Day Celebration, the PCS Cordillera Chapter held an event entitled “Tay, Tayo Na!” to raise awareness on men's health including diseases of the prostate. The one-day activity was held last June 14, 2025 with the local community members participating in the said event. Lectures covered topics such as men's health, reproductive system, and urologic conditions, with emphasis on the importance of prostate cancer screening. Afterwards, volunteer doctors and urologists held free consultations including digital rectal examinations with the participants.



Threads of Kindness: Surgeons Saving Lives

As a way to make healthcare more accessible, the Parkway Hospital and Residences, Inc. and Gonzalo and Charity Ong Foundation, in collaboration with the PCS Cordillera Chapter, held its third surgical outreach program to cater to the surgical needs of the members of the local community. The three-week event was held at the Parkway Medical Center in which volunteer surgeons operated on patients with various conditions including calculous cholecystitis, hernia, and breast masses.

Payong Mediko Mula sa Eksperto

Health education is an essential aspect in providing quality healthcare. In its commitment in providing such, the PCS Cordillera Chapter engages the community using various platforms. DZWT 540 Radyo Totoo regularly holds a segment called “Payong Mediko Mula sa Eksperto” hosted by Dr. Benito Sunga. In this program, various members of the chapter actively participate to help educate a wider audience and disseminate medical knowledge and advice even to far-flung communities.



Last May 2025, Dr. Roel Domingo was a guest of the radio show discussing brain cancer and shedding light on the importance of recognizing the signs and symptoms of brain tumor and seeking consultation for these conditions.

In June 2025, Dr. Percival Yang-ed also participated in the show, sharing his expertise and dispelling misconceptions on various urologic conditions. With the radio show, he was able to answer the questions of the audience and address their concerns all the while sharing his valuable knowledge in urology.

Through its initiatives in surgical education, community outreach, and health promotion, the Philippine College of Surgeons – Cordillera Chapter continues to be a vital force in shaping a healthier future for the region. By bringing surgical expertise closer to the people and empowering communities with knowledge, the PCS Cordillera Chapter remains unwavering in its commitment to provide quality surgery for all.

Reaching Communities, Sharpening Skills: The PCS Central Mindanao Chapter in Action

• Ishmael R. Dimaren, MD, FPCS; Sittie Aneza Camille A. Maglangit, MD, FPCS; Omira S. Abdulbasit, MD •

In less than a year since its founding, the Philippine College of Surgeons Central Mindanao Chapter, Inc. (PCS CMC) has made a meaningful difference in the communities it serves. Within just a few months, the chapter has gathered passionate and committed surgeons to engage in activities that reflect the core values of the profession—service, compassion, and unity.

Led by its chapter president Dr. Ishmael R. Dimaren, PCS CMC has quickly become a source of strength and connection among healthcare professionals, reaching patients from diverse backgrounds and showing that even a young organization can make a meaningful difference when driven by purpose and shared values.

Basic Suturing, Bowel Anastomosis and Stapling Workshop 2025

One of its major initiatives was the Basic Suturing, Bowel Anastomosis, and Stapling Workshop held on April 25, 2025, at the 6th Floor Function Hall of Cotabato Regional and Medical Center (CRMC). The intensive hands-on training gathered PCS Fellows, Surgery



residents, interns, and clerks for a full day of focused skill development in essential operative techniques for gastrointestinal and general surgery.

Organized in partnership with the CRMC Department of Surgery, the workshop featured live demonstrations and practical sessions led by experienced PCS CMC surgeons and faculty, ensuring participants not only observed but also practiced and refined their techniques. More than just a training activity, the workshop was an investment in the future—equipping young surgeons with skills that will one day help save lives.



Moving forward, PCS CMC remains committed to supporting surgical training institutions across the region, ensuring that programs like this become regular opportunities for growth, mentorship, and excellence in patient care.



Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month 2025



In a strong display of service and unity, the CRMC Department of Surgery, in partnership with the PCS CMC, organized a successful Community Surgical Outreach Program in Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat, on May 24, 2025. Although Colorectal Awareness Month is traditionally observed in March, the activity was intentionally scheduled for a later date to ensure broader community participation and operational readiness—while still supporting the advocacy for colorectal cancer awareness and prevention.

The initiative offered free services, including surgical consultations, pre-screening diagnostic ultrasounds, and minor surgical procedures, to residents in underserved communities. It also included a lay lecture on colorectal cancer and healthy dietary habits for the gut.



The outreach was led by Dr. Faisal K. Romancap, Chair of the CRMC Department of Surgery and an active member of PCS CMC, along with a dedicated team of surgeons, nurses, allied health professionals, and administrative staff. A total of 115 patients were served, including 35 surgical consultations, 40 ultrasound examinations (covering thyroid, breast, whole abdomen, and

masses), 19 circumcisions, and seven excisions of masses.



The people of Kalamansig warmly welcomed the program and expressed sincere appreciation for the care they received. The outreach was made possible through the ongoing support of CRMC Medical Center Chief and PCS CMC President, Dr. Ishmael R. Dimaren, whose leadership enables impactful health programs that reach remote communities and strengthen public surgical services.



Colonoscopy Mission 2025

As a meaningful continuation of the Colorectal Awareness Month celebration held last March, a Colonoscopy Screening Mission was successfully conducted at CRMC in July 2025 to promote early detection and prevention of colorectal cancer. The initiative was carried out in two phases: the initial screening and patient evaluation from July 2 to 4, 2025, followed by colonoscopy procedures performed on July 10 and 11, 2025, at the CRMC Operating Room Complex.

The mission was led by PCS CMC fellows, Dr. Amerah Oyod-Limjuco, Dr. Paul Michael Vincent Lugtu, and Dr. Louis Gerard Agustin, who directed a multidisciplinary medical team to ensure safe and efficient care. A total of 10 patients underwent screening and were subsequently scheduled for colonoscopy; all were safely discharged with no reported complications.



This ongoing effort underscores the commitment of PCS CMC and CRMC's healthcare professionals to expand access to cancer screening services,

highlighting the importance of early detection and preventive care in reducing the impact of colorectal cancer in the region.

These early accomplishments of the PCS Central Mindanao Chapter Inc. demonstrate what shared purpose and inspired leadership can achieve. Dr. Ishmael R. Dimaren, PCS CMC President and CRMC Medical Center Chief, has energized the chapter's mission with his vision rooted in service and collaboration. His guidance has empowered a new generation of surgeons to aim higher, care more deeply, and lead with compassion throughout Central Mindanao.

AWSP ... from page 28

3. Community Engagement and Patient Support – BHWs learn how to educate their communities about cancer prevention and provide emotional support to patients and their families.
4. Collaboration with Healthcare Providers – AWSP fosters partnerships between BHWs and medical professionals, enhancing coordination for improved patient care.

Sustaining the Advocacy Through Localized Training

AWSP is committed to sustaining and expanding this initiative by partnering with government agencies, local health offices, and non-government organizations. Through continuous education and hands-on training sessions, AWSP ensures that BHWs remain well-equipped to address the evolving challenges of cancer care in their communities.

Notably, BHW training sessions have been successfully conducted in multiple municipalities. In February 2024, in collaboration with the PSGS Metro Manila Chapter, training was held at Barangay 507, Zone 50, District IV of Manila, with three workbooks distributed. In August 2024, a session was conducted

in Parañaque City through its City Health Office, where workbooks were distributed to all 16 barangays.

Conclusion

By taking the lead in training Barangay Health Workers, the Association of Women Surgeons of the Philippines is making a significant impact in cancer care and prevention at the grassroots level. This advocacy aligns with the PCS Cancer Commission's goals and the provisions of the NICCA Law, fostering a more responsive and empowered healthcare system. Through collaborative efforts with organizations such as the I Can Serve Foundation and PCS, AWSP is strengthening the country's fight against cancer, ensuring that even the most underserved communities receive the care they deserve.

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- World Health Organization - Breast Cancer Fact Sheet
- ecancer.org - HER2 Receptor Negative and HER2 Receptor Low Breast Cancer Patients Study
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- ecancer.org - Young Filipino Breast Cancer Patients Survival Outcomes

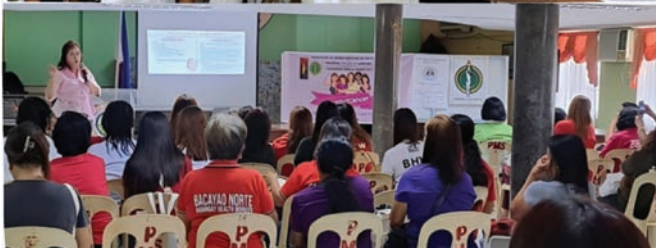
PCS Northern Luzon Chapter Strengthens Community Impact in Second Quarter of 2025

The Philippine College of Surgeons–Northern Luzon Chapter (PCS-NLC) marked a productive and purpose-driven second quarter in 2025 through a series of initiatives focused on community health, medical education, and outreach programs across Northern Luzon.

On March 16, the chapter led a medical mission at the Ilocos Norte Provincial Hospital, delivering free surgical consultations and medical services to underserved patients. This initiative reflects the chapter's ongoing efforts to bridge gaps in healthcare access.



In line with its advocacy on women's health, PCS-NLC, in partnership with the Association of Women Surgeons of the Philippines and the Pangasinan Medical Society, Inc., conducted a Breast Screening and Lay Forum on March 25. The event was attended by barangay health workers and focused on promoting early detection and awareness of breast cancer.



Moreover, a series of community empowerment and educational activities took place on April 5 in Ilocos Sur. Grade 5 and 6 students in Bantay, Ilocos Sur, participated in a road safety awareness seminar, which equipped young learners with knowledge on pedestrian safety and accident prevention. Meanwhile, in Fuerte, Caoayan, local officials, BHWs, and barangay tanods participated in a disaster preparedness forum to strengthen their readiness during times of emergency. On the same day,

PCS Beyond Surgery, one of the chapter's key missions, was introduced to third-year medical students at the University of Northern Philippines to inspire future physicians toward holistic, community-centered care.

On April 27, the chapter supported Operation Tuli, organized by the University of Northern Philippines–College of Medicine. The event successfully provided free circumcision services to over 150 children. This multi-sectoral activity was made possible through the collaboration of PCS-NLC, the Philippine Society of General Surgeons–Northern Luzon, Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital and Medical Center–Department of Surgery, Metro Vigan Hospital, Rotary Club of Vigan, and local government units and RHUs from Bantay, Caoayan, San Vicente, Sta. Catalina, and Vigan City.



On the other hand, the chapter conducted a Lay Fora Lecture on Erectile Dysfunction on May 23, attended by personnel from the Bureau of Fire Protection in Laoag City. This was followed by a simultaneous lay fora on men's health on June 13, across Batac and San Nicolas (Ilocos Norte), Vigan and Bantay (Ilocos Sur), and San Fernando City (La Union), promoting preventive care and health education for men.



The second quarter culminated with the launch of STAR 2 for Cancer on July 1. STAR, which stands for Screening, Treatment, Assistance, and Restoration, is a comprehensive cancer care initiative that aims to reduce cancer mortality through early detection and accessible treatment, while also offering holistic support to patients on their path to recovery.

With these impactful programs, the PCS Northern Luzon Chapter continues to live out its mission of going “beyond surgery,” extending care, compassion, and education to the communities it serves.

Navigating Surgical Challenges: Highlights from the PCS 51st Midyear Convention in Palawan

• Monette Jordan-Casupang, MD •

The Philippine College of Surgeons successfully held its 51st Midyear Convention last April 30 to May 2, 2025, hosted by the PCS Metro Manila Chapter in collaboration with the Philippine Surgical Infection Society (PSIS). Set against the stunning backdrop of Puerto Prinsesa, Palawan, the convention carried the theme “Twists and Turns in Surgery: Managing Surgical Challenges,” reflecting the complexity and evolving nature of modern surgical practice.

Following the well-attended opening ceremony, the congress featured a series of high-impact scientific sessions, with various subspecialty societies and PCS committees contributing a dynamic lineup of lectures and panel discussions. These sessions tackled critical and complex issues in surgical care, including the management of difficult thyroid and gallbladder cases. The exchange of expert insights and practical approaches proved invaluable in enhancing surgical judgement, refining techniques, and improving patient outcomes.

Simultaneously, the 7th Surgical Infection Society–Asia Pacific International Conference, led by PSIS, added further depth to the program by addressing intraabdominal infections, sepsis and septic shock, and surgical infection in the OR —underscoring the event’s commitment to advancing safe, evidence-based surgical practice.

The Palawan MYC gathered over 1000 registered delegates, who actively participated not only in the scientific sessions but also in a variety of engaging pre-congress activities—including the much-anticipated 2nd PCS MMC President’s Cup Basketball tournament at Palawan State University Gymnasium and the workshop of PATOS focusing on the Training Officer as Coach -Mentor and as Liaison Officer. To kick off the activities, the Welcome Dinner, hosted by the PCS Metro Manila Chapter, was a true culinary delight held at Badjao Seafront Restaurant, thoughtfully organized by our dedicated Palawan fellows.

The highlight of the non-scientific sessions was the fellowship night held at Princessa Garden Island with superb seafood and a wonderful line up of the grilling station which complemented the beach feel venue. With the theme “Surgical Time Out,” fellows, residents, and guests traded their scrubs for beachwear and let loose in an unforgettable night of dance, music, laughter, and camaraderie. The high-energy program reached a euphoric peak as the legendary foam party took over—transforming the dance floor into a sea of bubbles and beats. It was a perfect escape from the demands of the OR, reminding everyone that even surgeons need a joy-filled timeout. It was the kind of night that stories are made of. A night drenched in foam, friendship, and freedom—this will be remembered as the most epic fellowship night in PCS history.

A Female Surgeon's Double Duty

• Tamarah P. Cristobal, MD, FPCS, FPSGS •

Back when I was a fairly new consultant, I encountered a lot of patients who view me in either two ways:

1. “Wow bihira po ako makakita ng babaeng surgeon” or
2. “Bakit niyo po gusto maging surgeon hindi ba panglalake lang yon kasi mahirap pag may pamilya ka na?”

These perceptions were always understood and I never took offense to anyone who may view me as such. I always thought of how patients were used to the idea that only men can be surgeons and if you are a woman, their best guess would always be either OB Gyne or Pediatrics. Even when I was a kid, I never thought of women as surgeons because I also viewed the specialty as something a man would prefer and probably because there were also not a lot of women surgeons back then and with good reason. And so, I never find those statements off putting because those who are not privy to the medical world are not exposed to the recent changes and current shifting of the trends when it comes to choosing one's specialty. And during those days, it never crossed my mind that my priorities could shift along with the changing of the times and me growing up.

My experience wasn't without its hurdles. I had a senior resident early in my training who openly doubted women's roles in surgical training. He told me that he is personally not in favor of female surgery residents and he prefers male residents instead. He unwaveringly believed training was futile for women who, as he said, would become housewives in the end, dismissing female trainees as less committed or capable. He would very much reiterate the importance of spending time mentoring these young women, who, in the future could potentially not pass on the wisdom because their personal lives would get a hold of their hard earned careers. Back then, I found his personal beliefs outdated but nevertheless respected him for standing his ground. He would ask me how I feel about that and I would just shrug and nod, silently acknowledging his thoughts on the matter simply because I do not want to be punished as a junior for disagreeing with a senior. That attitude fueled my personal mission: to prove that women can

excel just as much as men in surgery. My goal was to finish my training regardless of whatever happens to my personal life and be inducted as a fellow of the Philippine College of Surgeons and the Philippine Society of General Surgeons.

Back then, we were 5 female residents and the male residents were 8 and I must say that the females held on to their positions with grit and spunk and we were able to be in the playing field with the same gusto and capacity as our male counterparts. His personal thoughts stuck with me all throughout my residency making it the vehement push that I need to prove my worth and that my training will not be in vain. Every day in the operating room, I worked harder to demonstrate my competence—resilient and determined to break that stereotype. My journey has become a testament to the fact that dedication, skill, and passion do not depend on gender, and that women are equally capable of leading in the surgical field. Eventually, I was able to fulfill my dreams of becoming a Diplomate and I was on my way to processing my application for Fellowship to the Southern Tagalog Chapter of the Philippine Society of General Surgeons and Philippine College of Surgeons. My senior resident's sentiments stuck with me all throughout my training thinking how outdated it was but I never realized how close to the truth it was and how it can actually affect me years later until I saw those two blue lines with my own eyes.

Imagine a surgeon whose career has been meticulously crafted over years—rigorous training, countless surgeries, exams, and a clear professional trajectory. Suddenly, pregnancy arrives unplanned or unexpectedly. The initial mix of excitement, disbelief, and anxiety often intertwines with concerns about health, career, and societal expectations. One may grapple with fears about how pregnancy will impact surgical duties, patient safety, and their position within the hospital hierarchy. That is exactly how I felt and at that moment, I heard my former senior resident's voice inside my head laughing, taunting, and mocking me. In my head I was thinking, “Oh my God, is he actually right about this all along? Is this the end of my career? Do I have to trade in my gloves for onesies and my scalpel for feeding bottles from now on?”

When I unexpectedly discovered I was pregnant, my world underwent a profound transformation. I was in the midst of processing my application for fellowship with the Southern Tagalog Chapter of the Philippine Society of General Surgeons, and I nearly faltered in my pursuit because I was overwhelmed with conflicting emotions. In the early stages of my first trimester, I felt physically exhausted and plagued by worry, and I contemplated postponing my fellowship application until after childbirth or whenever I felt capable. However, I recognized that if I chose to set it aside now, the stark reality was that I might never fulfill that aspiration. My mind raced with apprehensions: Would I be able to continue performing surgeries? How would my colleagues perceive my situation? Would my patients retain their trust in me? How would the Chapter respond to my candidacy as a new member, knowing I might not be able to contribute fully to their endeavors? I wrestled with overwhelming feelings of uncertainty and guilt as I sought to reconcile my professional identity with my emerging role as a mother.

As a woman surgeon, I felt the pressure to prove my competence daily. Pregnancy challenged this, forcing me to confront fears of vulnerability—worrying whether I could maintain my skills and reputation while nurturing a growing life inside me. With the societal and institutional pressures compelling women to achieve excellence, I found myself contemplating how pregnancy might impede my professional advancement—whether I would be perceived differently or forfeit opportunities that I had ardently strived to secure.

Concerns regarding the potential detriment to the fetus during surgical procedures, particularly those involving anesthesia or exposure to specific chemicals, can evoke considerable anxiety. Furthermore, feelings of guilt emerged—feelings of remorse for potentially needing to delegate responsibilities or for contemplating a hiatus from one's career. The unpredictability of my pregnancy and motherhood lead me to fears of career stagnation or missed opportunities—delaying promotions, surgical referrals or specialization—prompting further frustration and self-doubt on my end.

I found myself both physically and mentally drained, and although I was concerned for my well-being, I resolved to proceed with my fellowship application. This decision was not solely motivated by a desire to avoid letting my efforts go to waste; rather, it was driven by a lifelong aspiration that I have

rightfully earned. I felt compelled to seize what I have diligently labored for.

Eventually, I pursued my application and was graciously accepted as a member of the Southern Tagalog Chapter of the PSGS and PCS. To assert that I was profoundly grateful and fortunate would be an understatement. I could scarcely envision a more suitable environment for my personal growth, and amidst my circumstances, the chapter enveloped me in a welcoming embrace, free from any prejudices. My initial apprehensions were assuaged by the exceptionally warm-hearted colleagues who joyfully welcomed me and my unborn child as a treasured addition to their extended family. I was even invited to serve as the host of the turnover and induction ceremony of the chapter, a role I embraced wholeheartedly despite my prominent pregnancy.

A memorable milestone came when I was inducted as a fellow twice of the Philippine Society of General Surgeons and The Philippine College of Surgeons—during my pregnancy. To lighten the mood, I ever playfully joke that my unborn baby is an inducted fellow surgeon twice—a humorous nod to both my professional achievement and the unexpected, hilarious journey of pregnancy. This joke has become a symbol of pride and resilience, reflecting how I carried my career and personal life simultaneously with dedication and humor.

When I finally met my esteemed colleagues at the Southern Tagalog Chapter face to face, I was profoundly delighted to discover the significant presence of women within my newfound professional family, many of whom are also mothers. The fact that the outgoing chapter president is a woman with her own family filled me with exceptional joy, as she epitomizes the essence of what it means to be a female surgeon. A courageous leader endowed with a gentle demeanor, she adeptly navigates the complexities of both the operating room and domestic life with remarkable grace and resilience. Within the Southern Tagalog Chapter, composed of 57 women surgeons and 225 male surgeons, we witness a diverse tapestry of skills, ambitions, and camaraderie. Our environment is one of professionalism and mutual respect, where capability is measured by competence, not gender. Moreover, I take immense pleasure in the fact that the entire Society and College acknowledges the dual roles of being a woman and a mother not as impediments to a surgical career, but rather as distinguished honors that enrich the significance of the profession.

Our group of women surgeons exemplifies resilience and excellence, breaking barriers in a traditionally male-dominated field. Many of us have navigated rigorous training, demanding surgeries, and high-pressure environments, proving our capability time and again. The fact that my male colleagues in the Southern Tagalog Chapter—200 strong—are welcoming, supportive, and recognize our skills, is a cornerstone of our professional environment. This camaraderie and mutual respect create a foundation of safety and encouragement, making it possible for women like me to face personal hurdles with confidence. Their support alleviates some fears of isolation or marginalization, reinforcing that competency transcends gender.

My priorities changed. Each day, I grappled with holding onto my surgical proficiency while embracing my new identity as a mother. I appreciated my colleagues' understanding—an environment where I could share my experiences without fear of judgment. Our society's diverse makeup facilitated open conversations about the struggles of balancing work and family. The support from both female and male colleagues reinforced that capability is independent of gender, and that combining motherhood with a surgical career is possible with mutual understanding.

Having a professional environment in my chapter where 57 women surgeons excel and 225 men surgeons respect and support us makes a tangible difference. Their welcoming attitude and recognition of our capabilities foster a sense of safety and belonging, enabling us to navigate our personal and professional journeys more confidently. Our society demonstrates that competence and dedication shine regardless of gender, and true collegiality involves supporting each other through life's milestones—be it a challenging surgery or the miracle of new life. Our group's culture—welcoming and respectful—is a testament to the belief that capability knows no gender. The acknowledgment that women can excel in surgery, even amidst personal challenges, fuels my motivation and resilience. And I know that the same goes for all chapters as well, proving the point that times are fast changing and in the surgical world, gender is not a limiting factor to us women and we are treated as equals with the same competencies and capabilities -

-with just an extraordinary capability to carry a bun in our oven.

However, being a mother while pursuing a demanding surgical career is no easy feat. It's a constant balancing act—juggling hospital hours, surgeries, family needs, and self-care. The mental load is tremendous, with feelings of guilt for taking time away from the operating room or missing out on precious moments at home.

Every time I step into the OR, I carry more than just my surgical tools; I carry hope—a hope to inspire other women, young trainees, and my own child who I jokingly call the “future fellow” already inducted before birth.

Motherhood brought a whirlwind of emotions—joy, exhaustion, doubt, and unwavering determination. The mental strain of proving oneself—while managing pregnancy symptoms and postpartum challenges—is real. Yet, the support from my colleagues, especially within our society, makes this journey possible.

For women surgeons in our community, becoming a mother unexpectedly is both a personal challenge and an opportunity for growth. It demands resilience, support, and compassion—both self-directed and from our colleagues. Balancing our double duties both as a surgeon and a mother isn't easy, but with a society that values capability over convention, and colleagues who are genuinely welcoming, it's a journey that can lead to a more fulfilled, authentic life—both as healers and as mothers.

My story is a reflection of perseverance. It's about proving that women can be both exceptional surgeons and nurturing mothers. Balancing our lives both inside and outside the operating room is a daily challenge, but with humor, support, and determination, it becomes a testament to the strength and capability of women in our field.

In my heart and mind, the joke about my unborn “inducted fellow” isn't just humor—it's a symbol of hope and a reminder that the future of surgery is inclusive, empowered, and ready to break barriers.

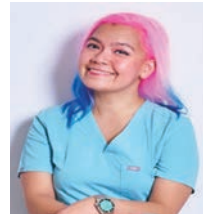
Beyond the Scalpel: The Surgeon Writes

This section highlights the creative spirit of surgeons who wield the pen as deftly as the scalpel. *Beyond the Scalpel: The Surgeon Writes* features original literary works—essays, poems, short stories, and reflections—authored by surgeons, offering a glimpse into the heart and humanity behind the surgical mask.

“Incompatible With Life,” “SVRGERY,” and “Three Movements on Anatomy” appear in her debut collection *Juggernaut* (UST Publishing House, 2024). “SVRGERY” was first published in Santelmo. “Anemia of Unknown Etiology,” “Atomoxetine,” and “Mental Health” are forthcoming in her second book, *Infinity and Ruin*.

About the Author

Alyza Taguilaso is a general surgeon and the author of *Juggernaut* (UST Publishing House, 2024). She is a graduate of the Ospital ng Muntinlupa General Surgery Residency Training Program. Her work has been shortlisted for the Rhysling Award and recognized in competitions such as the Manchester Poetry Prize and the Bridport Poetry Prize. Her poems have appeared in *Electric Literature*, *Crazyhorse*, *The Deadlands*, *Canthius*, *Fantasy Magazine*, *Nightmare Magazine*, *Strange Horizons*, *Orbis Journal*, *Voice & Verse*, and others.



Find her online at WordPress (@alyzataguilastorm), Instagram (@ventral and @doc.alyza), and Twitter/X (@lalalalalyza).

Incompatible With Life

1634 – Ambrose Paré first described an omphalocele

Omphalos (Latin), meaning “prominence” or “navel”

1733 – James Calder described a neonate with gastroschisis

Greek words *Gaster*, meaning “belly” and *Schisis*, meaning “to tear or split from”

The hours pass slowly as machine pumps breath into a tiny body – not more than a few days old. *One in four thousand*, the figures said. But this is the sixth child I’ve seen alive in two years with its organs eviscerated. A hole the size of my right hand gaping over her abdominal cavity. From it spills out liver, bowel, and heart – throbbing, pumping, pulse after stubborn pulse. Centuries apart they would find names for these conditions: a navel that swells, that great split from the belly all because one’s organs couldn’t find their proper place in time. Always, the parents are bewildered – *congenital* a word that rains down knives sharper than scalpels. Decide now, we are taught to say, despite the high likelihood of death. *Decide now*, or do nothing – options a weighed palm pressed over your chest. The hours pass slowly as blood soaks my socks, another day picking out portions of death from someone’s body. Another day of steel retracting skin and bone from point of injury. In another continent, she would have had better chances. They would’ve known even before she was born: An imbalance in her mother’s blood, an ultrasound that would have pointed out the defect, identified floating loops of bowel in a universe of amnion. There wouldn’t be a need to hop from hospital to hospital to hospital only to be met with the absence of vacancies. How your child was born too sick for us to treat, how you brought her to us far too late.

The pediatric cardiologist makes a joke, says the parents would’ve fared better if they got jobs abroad because in this dismembered archipelago not even God can book a heart transplant. A fellow surgeon makes another joke, about his own child, born with a single ventricle – how he would dissuade the boy from difficult future endeavors being as the life expectancy averaged at thirty years old. He chuckles with some difficulty as we clamp and ligate another tiny vessel.

How does it feel to know that your child was born only to die so soon? This is how much you are allowed to live.

She expired a day after the operation. Incompatible with life, another attending mutters, and I think of her cry – soft but shrill. Tiny body swathed in the light of a gooseneck lamp, a plastic bassinet the closest she'll know of home. I know people who've said that songs can save their lives. In another life, would she have known such beauty?

SVRGERY

1

My small hands have healed
many lives: mathematicians, artists,

murderers, rapists, mothers, daughters, farmers,
builders, bankers, thieves, crackheads, politicians,

addicts. Once upon a time,
a good friend's father was delivered dead

on arrival in our hospital. I only found out
a day later because his identification cards had been buried

in rubble and metal. A mentor tells me to call it crash,
because all *accidents* are preventable. I bite my tongue

as my friend cries in sounds barely human.
He asks me a favor I cannot speak of.

2

In 1543, Vesalius publishes *De Humanis
Corporis Fabrica*, regarded as a breakthrough
in human anatomy. Prior to this, no physician dared

dissect the human body for it was holy. To dip fingers
into gut and blood was only deserving of barbers. Surgeons.
Galen's teachings spoke the gospel truth of guidelines

based on dismembered bodies of animals. Slowly,
bone, sinew, and other organs let themselves be discovered –
philtrum, pelvis, medulla, spleen. In 1890,

Rene Le Fort becomes the youngest in France
to gain a medical degree. In 1901, after an experiment
involving thousands of cadaver heads

bashing them with rods or iron, or simply tossing
the heads against tables, he successfully describes
how the face is fractured. How the calvarium splits

predictably in three different ways. Sometimes I wonder
how much bone needed to be shattered into dust
so we would know another thing more

about our bodies. In the 21st century, everything is done
as per algorithm and protocol. Evidence classified
by degrees of reliability.

3

From the list of human wishes:
I would like to live
long enough.

4

In the year of the plague, my 90-year-old grandfather is spared the virus.
Instead, he suffers a heart attack from a bout of pneumonia. He lives through it,
bedridden. A tube permanently placed in his throat so he could breathe.

Once, I asked him if he wanted to live. He nodded,
in silence. The beeping of his ventilator punctuating the air
as his thin fingers weakly squeeze my hand.

5

Three years into training I hear news of another resident surgeon
whose heart collapsed after 72 hours of duty. There are studies

that show doctors 36% likelier to commit errors if they keep working
beyond 12-hour shifts. No one ever mentioned death

from exhaustion. The senior says the deceased never disclosed
his weak heart. Another senior simply calls him weak. Jump

a hundred years into the past and William Halsted, surgeon
extraordinaire, infuses his veins with cocaine. Continues

to function despite absence of sleep: an automaton saving lives
without fail. Setting a precedence high

as the heavens. *This is how you heal like a god –
human body without end.*

6

2021: Darwin's Arch in the Galapagos collapses; Gaza persists
despite being bombed into pulps by Israel; the world wobbles a little on its axis
as glaciers melt; another organ is discovered; a refined photograph
of a black hole is constructed; another moon bleeds
red; rockets from China crash
into the ocean; an English prince dies and is mourned
more than nameless children cast under rubble, drowned
at sea; another physician expires from the plague
still undoing developing nations; a distant aunt questions
the safety of vaccines over viber; a politician without any medical background
freely distributes anti-parasitics meant for horses, claiming it as panacea
for the plague in Manila; a quack doctor
prescribes cabbages to treat open wounds; a Japanese billionaire lines up
to be sent into space; another poet's organs are harvested in Myanmar
because his body wouldn't stop speaking; my nation shrinks its borders
and islands are bartered off beyond repair by a monster parading as president;
Antarctica births the largest iceberg; the Ganges swells
with ash; another gun blooms
in the bag of someone shot
without questions. Bodies pile up.
People lose count.

Shrine of faded photographs.
 Shrine of saints with calcified lungs.
 Shrine of upturned palms, smoothened from prayer.
 Shrine of discarded hospital sheets
 Shrine of expired prescriptions.
 Shrine of amputated limbs.
 Shrine of eulogies unsaid.
 Shrine bearing bodies of infants that never woke up.

The year the fascist was put in power, we noticed more bodies riddled by bullets arriving in the emergency room. Vital organs puckered and bloodless. Wailing relatives blaming everyone except the name they are disallowed to utter. Who were we but doctors to mete out judgement? Who is deserving of life? Bodies neatly line the sidewalks as I attend another lecture on acceptable terms to describe cause of death.

Answer these questions and you may proceed:

- A. How to operate?
- B. When to operate?
- C. When not to operate?

An acquaintance takes to tallying
 the sounds of ambulances he hears echoing
 in the evenings. I take to photographing
 hearses I drive by on the street.
 I keep a list of old friends
 whose names I can no longer speak.

Multiple friends have taken flights
 to other continents. No *future awaits you*

if you remain here. The cost would be three years
 of my measly income, just to take exams proving

my competence. How I can cut open bodies
 and sew them up as easily as I speak

a foreign tongue. Another two years waiting
 for the entire process, perhaps. Add another

year because I am Asian, female, and my family refuses
 to mingle with politicians. My grandfather is admitted in the hospital

again – what kind of granddaughter does that make me
 if I leave? They say the word *immigrant* so easily, rolling off

the grooves of their changed tongues. Accents lost at sea
 like baggage discarded so the ship remains afloat.

God of small injuries –
 God of transected arteries and unstable fractures –
 God of matted lymph nodes and metastatic disease –
 God of inverted organs and congenital anomalies –
 God of bile, pus, and ruptured bowels –
 God who demands blood –

What offerings do we lay before your many limbs?

A lesson on laterality: Legend speaks of a surgeon
 who mistakenly removed the functional kidney.

Anecdotes ascertain he was either drunk or
 tired. He was allowed to keep

his license but paid for the patient's dialysis
 his entire life. *Who are you*

to dare call yourself a god? In training we are questioned
 how complications are preventable.

The suture snaps; the wound unfurls, dehisces –
 a flood of pus weeps through the gauze bandage. There is no pain

but the stench fills the ward. Another consultant asks,
What would you have done differently to save this patient's life?

My grandfather wants to live but it pains me to see him. A body on a bed; multiple tubes attaching his cursed
 lungs to a machine.

Elsewhere, someone else's grandfather is laid to rest due to the absence of funds to call for an ambulance.

Teach me how to shape this deafening silence into your name.

First lesson on closure: the healed scar
 will never be as strong as the original tissue.

Before we are even allowed to resect
 and anastomose bowels, we memorize which parts

of our bodies are weakest – prone to ruptures
 and leaks. The presence of preexisting conditions that predispose to healing

poorly. We learn the Angle of Sorrow. How to prepare
 a patient for surgery. In med school they put you through hell

just so you could properly tell complete strangers
how the person they love is dying.

How you deal them the blow
of deciding whether to continue or stop.

17

My friend asks me a terrible favor:
to make sure the man who crashed
into his father stays

unwell. I shake my head. Squeeze
his trembling fingers. He breathes in
cigarette smoke. Inhales deep to poison

his lungs. Guilty to be the one left
living. I say nothing. What is choice
but a weight on your chest

heavier than someone else's life?

18

Laudanum is an elixir
whose name lauds from the words *To praise*,
meaning *This removes* all the pain – praise be the absence

of hurt, as the wound continues
to fester. A body alive
but in decay. Prior to the advent of anesthesia,

to undergo surgery meant to consent
to being a circus attraction
for your pain. *Let the injured endure.*

19

My grandfather's heart stops beating
a second time. He is revived but suffers

rib fractures from the fists pounding
on his chest. A red gash blooming

over his sternum. His eyes opened wide,
pupils dilated, unresponsive. I sign the papers

to cease resuscitation
should his heart fail once more.

How much pain can the body take
before it grows tired?

From the list of human wishes:
I would like to live
one day more.

Three Movements on Anatomy

I. Discipline

In order to grasp
the secrets of our bodies, we must strip
sinew from bone, slice off stray clumps

of fat, peeling the tiny folds of muscle: exposing
fossa, foramen, each precise incision following sulcus, showing
the skeleton glistening white as an old star amidst the remains

of blood: dried specks like rust. Inconsequential
as the ghost floating by the steel table, witnessing
its body unmoving, obliging to being opened,

his invisible eyes widening, perplexed
as the scalpel continues its scraping, unused
to the absence of pain.

II. Dissection

How little we know of these bodies: these people
with faces wrapped in gauze as we do our work – their skin

hard and crusted to the color of earth,
stiff and prone on steel beds, hands held in half-fists. Unyielding

as we slice out new wounds
with unpracticed knives, exposing

one muscle after another, feeling
through gloved hands the hardness

of bone, leaving the necessary markings as we make our way
through each appendage, turning the cut parts into routes

we would need to retrace, chart a map
in the roofs of our skulls, every dissected limb

floating as a loose specimen, a name:
without a face.

III. Lesson

He named my bones as I held out my hand –

Scaphoid, lunate, triquetrum, pointing
aloud, his fingers floating,

forming faces above mine, dancing –

as though it made things easier
to understand.

Anemia of Unknown Etiology

On the eleventh month of her 34th year, a couple of her red blood cells chose to have a vacation from her body. By that she means her hemoglobin levels dropped like a bomb, terribly low and massive to the point of almost deferring the shoulder surgery scheduled the next day. Thankfully, transfusion had already been invented and studied in this universe and the blood bank had sufficient bags of what she needed. Like any decent, anemic vampire, she consulted her friend the hematologist for insight and they immediately ordered a slew of tests which she begged off until after the operation, which is now, which is how she's writing this poem, meaning her other illness (ie. the disorder of moods, not this of the blood) renders her a liar and a cheat and prone to excuses for any behavior and really we're still not sure which part of her is bleeding, maybe you can tell her which one and why?

Atomoxetine

For Goose

Her youngest sister overdosed
two years ago. She already said this
in another poem. Let's pretend
they didn't gobble up all those pills –
designed to concentrate one's attention.
Let's pretend they didn't want to kill
themselves then. Let's pretend the medication
had no side effects. Definitely not along the lines
of making you think about killing yourself
more. Let's pretend it didn't feel
like a boulder weighing them down:
couldn't move, couldn't get out
of bed. Let's pretend there were no tremors,
no vomiting. Let's pretend their heart wasn't beating
like the chorus of a thousand drums.
A regular at rehab and emergency rooms,
let's pretend we don't have to deal with this.
It's not our problem, right?
Let's pretend this gives us
forgiveness and grace.

Mental Health

The voice in her head is telling her to write about something important.
War. Sickness. Some ruin. Wisdom written in a dusty scroll
somewhere, in a language she can't read. She believes her work is important:
This art of splitting
bodies open as the patient lies
asleep. But all she can think of is how she changed
from strong, independent woman to having to gulp all these pills daily
just to function. Insert screenshot of how she almost ruined her own life.
Seven rainbow-colored capsules
to steady the hurricane
in her bones. Insert impulse, insert indecision, insert sensory overload
of sadness. In sickness and in health. Her family would never approve
even if these very horrors came from them.
What is ruin, mom?
Tell her. Elsewhere
a nation wakes up to war drums and missiles. Children massacred
for months on end. Decimated daily like stone beating fruit
to a pulp. Yet here she is, trying to learn happiness
pill after
bitter pill.

Liver Transplantation in the Philippines: Standards, Scope, and the Imperative of Formal Training

• Siegfredo R. Paloyo, MD, MPH •

Introduction

Liver transplantation represents one of the most complex and demanding procedures in surgery, combining intricate technical skills with in-depth knowledge of immunology, infectious disease management, and systems-based care. In the Philippine setting, recent progress has been encouraging—with an increasing number of transplants performed and a growing interest from major institutions to establish their own liver transplant programs.

However, this progress brings with it a pressing need to address fundamental questions about training and credentialing. Who is truly qualified to perform liver transplants? Should technically skilled hepatobiliary (HPB) or pediatric surgeons be allowed to lead liver transplant operations independently? How should training and board certification be enforced? This article aims to explore these issues with clarity and candor.

On Hepatobiliary Surgeons Performing Liver Transplantation:

The idea of HPB surgeons independently performing liver transplants is a subject of ongoing debate. While technical overlap exists between complex liver resections and transplant hepatectomies or reconstructions, the notion that technical proficiency alone qualifies a surgeon to perform liver transplants is increasingly being challenged—particularly in high-standard, outcome-focused transplant systems.

Training Pathways: A Key Divergence

Hepatobiliary surgery and liver transplantation share anatomical and technical domains, especially in complex resections, vascular reconstructions, and biliary repairs. HPB surgeons often excel in managing hilar cholangiocarcinomas, hepatic metastasectomies, and pancreaticoduodenectomies—procedures requiring precision and experience in hepatobiliary anatomy.

In some European centers, the model of training allows for HPB surgeons to gain transplant exposure during their clinical rotations. Transplantation may be embedded within broader hepatobiliary training

programs, and in low- to medium-volume centers, HPB surgeons may assume the role of transplant surgeon out of necessity or tradition. However, this model is supported by well-established national transplant frameworks, centralized donor allocation systems, and rigid institutional oversight. In these settings, the boundaries between oncologic HPB surgery and transplant surgery can be more fluid.

However, in the United States, and much of the Western world, liver transplantation is regarded as a distinct and highly specialized field. Surgeons complete 2 years of transplant fellowship training with dedicated fellowship programs accredited by the American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS)[1]. These fellowships provide a comprehensive curriculum that extends beyond surgical technique to include, transplant immunology, pharmacologic immune osuppression, deceased and living donor management, organ allocation systems, post-transplant infectious disease management, and ethical, logistical, and psychosocial considerations in transplant candidacy.

This broader training paradigm acknowledges a simple truth: liver transplantation is not just a surgery, nor is it an advanced hepatectomy—it is a continuum of multidisciplinary care that begins with recipient and donor evaluation and extends throughout the patient's lifetime. It is a dynamic practice that encompasses donor evaluation and organ allocation, recipient selection based on MELD and comorbidities, and management of complications such as acute and chronic rejection, biliary strictures, and vascular thrombosis. Their system reflects the understanding that good technical surgery is not enough—long-term survival depends on holistic, protocol-driven care.

The Risk of Oversimplification

The argument that an HPB surgeon can “learn on the job” or that a few months of exposure is enough to qualify one for liver transplant practice risks oversimplifying a complex, high-risk endeavor. While many HPB surgeons possess superb technical skills, transplantation demands more than anatomic familiarity. It requires the judgment to manage immunologic complications, graft dysfunction, vascular thrombosis, infections, and critical post-

operative decision-making—often in real time and under great pressure.

More importantly, in outcomes-based health systems, particularly those using national registries and benchmarked metrics (e.g., UNOS in the U.S.), the quality and consistency of training directly influence patient survival, graft outcomes, and program reputation. For instance, studies from the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR) have shown that program outcomes are significantly influenced by surgeon and center experience, with early graft failure and re-transplantation rates correlating strongly with training and multidisciplinary support [2,3]. Having untrained or partially trained individuals lead liver transplants could have long-term consequences for program accreditation, team morale, and patient safety.

In low- to middle-income countries where transplant programs are emerging, there is temptation to “fill the gap” with technically capable HPB surgeons. While well-meaning, such efforts must be tempered by a commitment to patient safety and long-term outcomes. A temporary workaround should never evolve into a permanent standard.

The Philippine Setting: Gaps and Risks

In the Philippines, we face a different set of challenges: liver transplantation remains limited to a handful of centers, few cadaveric donors, and a shortage of specialized personnel. Some may argue that allowing HPB surgeons to take the lead in liver transplantation is a practical workaround. While understandable, this approach risks undermining patient safety and program credibility. To simply assign liver transplants to HPB surgeons who have observed or assisted in a handful of cases—even in a high-volume center—is to treat transplantation as a procedure, not a program. That view is shortsighted and potentially dangerous.

Many Filipino transplant surgeons trained abroad under rigorous transplant fellowships—bringing home not just surgical techniques, but a framework for multidisciplinary transplant care. At present, there is only one local transplant surgery fellowship program accredited by the Philippine Society for Transplant Surgeons (PSTS), and the Philippine Board of Transplant Surgery (PBTS) serves as the certifying body for transplant surgeons in the country. This underscores the importance of preserving clear standards and pathways for certification.

In this context, allowing HPB surgeons—without transplant-specific training—to perform liver transplants undermines the very concept of board

certification. It sends a contradictory message: that formal credentialing is optional. This not only affects the credibility of the transplant board, but risks creating overlap and confusion in professional scope, ultimately to the detriment of patient care. We do not allow general surgeons to perform cardiac surgery simply because they can sew. Liver transplantation must follow the same principle. We must respect the structure that training and certification provides.

Transplant practice in the Philippines must be safeguarded by board-certified transplant surgeons, whose credentials ensure the necessary training, clinical judgment, and accountability. Otherwise, we dilute the standards we are trying to build and send mixed signals to future generations of surgeons.

Collaboration Over Substitution

That said, this is not to suggest exclusion. HPB surgeons have much to contribute, particularly in complex biliary reconstructions, reoperative abdominal surgery, and vascular control. In many mature programs, HPB surgeons serve as valuable collaborators, assisting with technical aspects or contributing to multidisciplinary discussions. However, independent performance of liver transplantation should remain within the domain of those with formal transplant training and ongoing integration into a dedicated transplant team.

Allowing practice without adequate preparation not only puts patients at risk but also dilutes the hard-earned credibility of emerging transplant programs. Worse, it can contribute to graft failures that erode public trust in liver transplantation altogether—a scenario we can ill afford as we try to expand access nationwide.

A Parallel Concern: Pediatric Surgeons and Pediatric Liver Transplantation

An equally important—and perhaps more sensitive—issue arises in the context of pediatric surgeons performing pediatric liver transplants. While pediatric surgeons are undeniably skilled in neonatal and infant surgery, including biliary atresia repair and complex GI reconstructions, pediatric liver transplantation is an entirely different domain, both technically and systemically.

Similar to the HPB versus transplant debate, this raises the question: Does familiarity with pediatric anatomy equate to readiness to perform pediatric liver transplantation? The answer, again, must be no—not without formal transplant training.

Unique Challenges in Pediatric Liver Transplantation

Pediatric liver transplantations, particularly in children under 10 kg or infants with biliary atresia, are among the most technically demanding procedures in all of surgery, requiring:

- Microvascular hepatic artery reconstruction (often 1–2 mm in diameter)
- Precise size matching between donor and recipient
- Portal vein and IVC modification
- A deep understanding of postoperative immunosuppression in developing immune systems
- Long-term graft and growth monitoring

Moreover, many pediatric liver recipients are from marginal home environments, adding complexity to post-transplant care, infection prophylaxis, and follow-up, which pediatric transplant teams must be prepared to handle.

Training Gap and Patient Risk

In many centers abroad, pediatric liver transplant surgeons undergo dual training—either as adult transplant surgeons who later sub-specialize in pediatric liver transplant, or as pediatric surgeons who complete additional, formal transplant fellowship training in liver transplantation.

In the Philippines, however, no formal local pathway exists for pediatric surgeons to gain this experience. If pediatric liver transplants are undertaken by surgeons with only general pediatric surgical training—and without structured exposure to transplant immunology, organ procurement, and microvascular liver-specific techniques—it places both the patient and the program at risk.

Governance and Team Structure

Successful pediatric liver transplant programs globally follow a team-based model, where the pediatric surgeon works closely—if not under the direction of—a board-certified transplant surgeon. Pediatric expertise is essential for post-op care, airway management, and developmental follow-up, but the transplant operation itself remains within the transplant domain.

In the Philippine context, to allow pediatric surgeons to independently lead liver transplant cases

without proper transplant training risks repeating the same issues we face with HPB surgeons. It would again blur professional boundaries, undermine the transplant board, and potentially set a precedent that compromises patient outcomes.

Conclusion: Upholding Standards with Integrity

In summary, whether the discussion concerns HPB surgeons or pediatric surgeons, the principle remains the same: Liver transplantation should be performed by those with structured, certified training in transplant surgery. Technical capability alone is not a substitute for transplant readiness.

The credibility of the transplant profession in the Philippines depends on upholding this distinction. Allowing surgeons—regardless of subspecialty background—to perform liver transplants without comprehensive transplant education undermines the authority of the PBTS, overlaps scopes of practice, and jeopardizes the integrity of emerging programs.

We also recognize that, ultimately, it is the individual institution or hospital that grants privileges and credentials surgeons to perform liver transplantation. This presents another challenge for us as a transplant society, as it makes regulation and enforcement difficult. Without nationally consistent credentialing standards enforced at the institutional level, centers may allow practice based on internal discretion, regardless of transplant society recommendations—further emphasizing the need for advocacy, dialogue, and alignment between transplant societies, certifying boards, and hospital credentialing committees.

Let us encourage multidisciplinary collaboration but let us also be clear: Transplantation is not a procedural privilege. It is a clinical and ethical responsibility—one that must be earned through rigorous training, certification, and ongoing accountability.

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Disaster Response in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar: A personal experience

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Around 12:50 pm local time, on March 28, 2025, a magnitude 7.7 earthquake struck near Mandalay, Myanmar. Twelve minutes later, a second quake of magnitude 6.7 hit 31 kilometers to the south. Initial estimates put the dead at more than 1000 and wounded at 2000 plus. Calls were made to the international community for assistance.

I was in Iligan visiting my parents when I received a call on Saturday night from Dr. Ted Esguerra to gear up since I will be part of the Philippine Inter Agency Humanitarian Contingent who will be going to Myanmar. I was also told that “wheels up” will be on April 1, 10 pm. Since I already had a ticket back to Iloilo on Sunday night and all my equipment (helmet, working gloves, knee and elbow pads, minor set, trauma bag etc.) were in Iloilo, I could not fly directly to Manila. I just got a ticket for Manila from Iloilo on April 1. On April 1, I filed my leave with the hospital and visited the Naval Reserve Center-Western Visayas to get my orders.

Arriving on April 1 in Manila with over 40 kilograms of baggage, I was informed the flight was moved to April 2. This gave me more than enough time to buy additional food, water, medications and other items. On April 2, at 9 pm, I arrived at Col. Jesus Villamor Air Base only to be informed that the C130 plane would leave at 4 am. This is not unusual when riding a military transport plane since there is usually a lot of equipment to load (together with the Philippine Emergency Medical Assistance Team, we brought a total of 5 tons of equipment). At 4 am we started loading the equipment and equipment. Although there were military personnel helping load, one is also expected to help in the loading. We finally took off at 7 am for Myanmar with a stopover at Thailand for refueling. For those unfamiliar with a C130, there is no individual aircon control so it is advisable to have a jacket because it can get very cold. Also, one sits where the equipment is also loaded.

Arriving at Nay Pyi Taw (pronounced Nih Pi Do) Airport, after we were welcomed by Myanmar Ministry of Health representatives, we unloaded our equipment then took the bus to where we were billeted. It was an old military camp with austere amenities. I was together with members of the Philippine Air Force, Philippine Army, Bureau of Fire Protection, Metro Manila Development Authority as well as from the private sector composed of representatives from Apex Mining Corporation and the Energy

Development Corporation. The private companies and I as the sole representative of the Philippine Navy reservist were travelling under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. We each had a bed to sleep on but there was no electricity (this was restored on the fifth day), no flowing water (we had to fetch from a water source around 200 meters away) and mosquitoes unaffected by off lotion (we joked that the insects either could not read English or also had PPE's making them immune to off lotion).

The next three days were spent at the site where the Jade Hotel collapsed trapping victims below. I was able to enter the second floor (the first floor was totally collapsed- pancaked as they call it), learned to use the Ground Penetrating Radar (Life Locator), the Vibroscope (a fiberoptic scope to check hard to reach areas made by Olympus) as well as ultra-sensitive microphones designed to pick up even vibrations made by footsteps. There are very strict procedures to be followed when working on collapsed buildings. This was where my past trainings in Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and Collapsed Structure Search and Rescue (CSSR) was put to good use. On the third day (seventh post-quake day), together with responders from Vietnam and Myanmar, the Philippine contingent was able to recover the body of the head waiter. I found this very sad because two days after the quake, they could still hear him calling for help. Unfortunately, the locals did not have the proper equipment. The family members were present when the body was recovered, and they were very thankful since they could now give him a proper burial. One thing that I found amusing was that while it was the Philippine contingent who pointed out the exact location using the Vibroscope and together with responders from Myanmar, freed the body from the rubble and debris until it was ready to be extricated, it was the Vietnam contingent who insisted that they will be the one to remove the body. Finally, it was agreed that one representative from the Philippines, one from Myanmar and two from Vietnam would take out the body. But it was the Vietnam contingent who were interviewed by the media and of course, they got the credit. Oh well.

We had to stop operations at 5 pm since we were not equipped for nighttime operations. Upon arriving back at the quarters, we had to fetch water, wash, cook and bath by the well. Sleep was frequently interrupted by the nonstop swarm of mosquitoes.

I, together with the wilderness doctor, Dr Ted “Everest” Esguerra, were the field medic of the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team. Our main responsibility was the welfare of the USAR team although we may be requested to treat others who needed emergency care. Those who were not part of the team and who needed treatment were directed to go to the PEMAT field hospital. We regularly checked the team members vital signs and treated minor injuries.

All in all, it was a good experience and enabled me to be “on the ground” and be involved in a humanitarian and disaster response. I was able to observe how the Incident Command System is used. There were so many lessons learned in this activity. Hopefully, I can use all I learned to be better prepared for a disaster and for a Mass Casualty Incident which the Trauma Care Center of Western Visayas Medical Center often gets.

These are the lessons I picked up. Some of these I was already doing but others are new:

1. Be always prepared for a disaster. There is no “elective disaster”. Have your go bags ready. I have a trauma

bag, a bag for floods and typhoons and I am prepared to fly out at a moment’s notice.

2. Get all the training you need if you intend to be deployed during a disaster. Being a doctor, even a surgeon, is not enough.
3. Learn how to use specialized equipment used by SAR teams. Technical Rope Rescue skills come in very handy.
4. Keep yourself fit and healthy so you won’t be a liability to the team.
5. When one responds to a disaster, always leave the name of the person to be informed in case you get injured or worse, die. This will save them a lot of trouble.
6. Store enough food and water to last the duration of your stay. Better to over stock than to under stock.
7. Get immunized prior to deployment. Each country has unique diseases to guard against.
8. Learn to travel light. Bring portable cooking equipment.
9. A body bag makes a good sleeping bag. A hammock, an even better one.
10. If not trained in responding to the scene, oftentimes, you will be most useful if you limit yourself to helping in the hospital.





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