

## DOH, NHSC collaborate on standards development for Philippine CDC

Gearing towards the establishment of the Philippine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department of Health (DOH), the British Embassy Manila and the United Kingdom's National Health Service Consortium for Global Health (NHSC) – represented by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) – met and discussed collaborative efforts on October 18-19, 2022 on the development of policies, programs, standards, guidelines, and monitoring and evaluation systems on the forecasting, prevention, and control of diseases, injuries, and disabilities of national and international concern. This is the first of the multiple learning exchanges in collaboration with the UK and the NHS Consortium this year, focusing on health systems strengthening and health policy development.

During his first State of the Nation Address (SONA), President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. revived the call for the creation of a Center for Disease Control and a Virology Institute in the country. Towards this, the DOH is working with several national and international partners, to facilitate the development of better strategies for improved evidence-based policy making once the measure is enacted into law.

The Universal Health Care Law set the stage for the CDC by mandating the DOH to ensure the quality of health services through the development of evidence-based public health and clinical care standards. The DOH established the National Practice Guidelines Program (NPGP) to oversee and manage the development, adoption, and dissemination of clinical practice guidelines, which will guide rational prioritization, service delivery, and financing of standards of care, which contribute to the overall vision of a Healthy Pilipinas.

“As the DOH continues to strengthen our National Practice Guidelines Program, we understand the value of collaboration and knowledge exchange with international partners such as NICE, which has already established itself as a world leader in evidence-based healthcare. Hence, we welcome this timely opportunity to gain a better understanding of the best practices for guideline development, implementation, and evaluation, and to foster a lasting relationship that will continue to empower evidence-informed standard setting and policy-making across the entire health sector, especially towards planning for the Philippine CDC,” said Health Officer-in-Charge Maria Rosario Singh-Vergeire.

“Chief among the lessons that the COVID-9 pandemic has taught us is the value of a prepared healthcare system that is guided by evidence-based interventions and strengthened by global relationships. With this, the DOH will continuously work with our international and national partners to strengthen the country's public health emergency preparedness and response and expand health security capacity,” added the OIC.

Ambassador Laure Beaufile shares, "Strengthening health systems is an important part of the UK's work here in the Philippines. We are delighted to be able to share our expertise and experience in public health. The collaboration between the Department of Health in the Philippines and NHS Consortium for Global Health, and in particular with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) supports the Philippines' priorities in health policy development. It demonstrates the shared commitment of the UK and the Philippines to continue our collaboration in delivering stronger, universal healthcare."

Since 2012, NICE has been collaborating and sharing technical resources with the Department of Health on methods and process guidelines for Health Technology Assessment development. Through the UK's Better Health Programme in the Philippines from 2019 to 2022, the NHS Consortium for Global Health has enabled further system-to-system collaboration with NICE to support health systems and health policy development, broadening UK-Philippines collaboration in Health.

Hugh McGuire, senior scientific adviser, NICE International, adds, "It has been an invaluable opportunity to build on our already strong relationships between the Philippines Department of Health and National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, and the support of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Better Health Programme, the NHS Consortium for Global health and the British Embassy in Manila."

Judith Richardson, director of health and social care, NICE, adds, "The last 2 days have been a fantastic opportunity for peer to peer interaction where both the UK and Philippines are learning from each other's experiences in HTA and guidelines development."