

Novartis, Philippine Dermatological Society form partnership to provide continuing medical education on psoriasis diagnosis and management

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- *Novartis Healthcare Philippines and Philippine Dermatological Society sign Memorandum of Agreement to provide local dermatologists with continuing medical education on psoriasis diagnosis and management.*
- *Psoriasis is a chronic, non-communicable, painful, disfiguring and disabling disease for which there is no cure and with great negative impact on patients' quality of life. Local patient group Psoriasis Philippines estimates there are between 1 and 2 million Filipinos with psoriasis.*
- *Under the MOA, Novartis will provide support for PDS members' unlimited access to the eCongress of the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) and logistical support for quarterly CME activities in different dermatology training institutions and society chapters.*

Quezon City, February 10, 2017 – Novartis Healthcare Philippines and the Philippine Dermatological Society (PDS) have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to provide local dermatologists with continuing medical education (CME) on the diagnosis and management of psoriasis.

Awareness on psoriasis is low. According to local patient group Psoriasis Philippines, many Filipinos with psoriasis face discrimination and social stigma brought about by ignorance and misconceptions about the disease. Psoriasis is a chronic, non-communicable, painful, disfiguring and disabling disease for which there is no cure and with great negative impact on patients' quality of life. It causes cells to build up rapidly on the surface of the skin, forming thick, silvery scales and itchy, dry, red patches (plaques). Up to a third of individuals with psoriasis develop psoriatic arthritis that leads to joint deformations and disability. While psoriasis can occur at any age, it is most common in the age group 50 to 69. Psoriasis Philippines estimates there are between 1 and 2 million Filipinos with psoriasis.

"People with psoriasis often develop depression, diabetes, psoriatic arthritis, and heart disease. On average, people with moderate-to-severe psoriasis die four years younger than people without the condition. As such, it is crucial that our local dermatologists are continuously updated on the latest guidelines in psoriasis diagnosis and management," said PDS president Dr. Ma. Angela Medina-Lavadia.

"We are privileged to broaden our collaboration with the PDS in increasing awareness on psoriasis and updating PDS members with the latest trends in psoriasis diagnosis and management. Through our continuing partnership with the PDS, we aim to eliminate the social stigma associated with psoriasis and improve the quality of life of Filipinos with psoriasis," said Dr. Francis Domingo, Chief Scientific Officer, Novartis Healthcare Philippines.

Dr. Lavadia representing the PDS and Dr. Francis Domingo representing Novartis Healthcare Philippines, signed the MOA at the Luxent Hotel in Quezon City. Under the MOA, Novartis will provide support for PDS members' unlimited access to the eCongress of the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) and logistical support for quarterly CME activities in different dermatology training institutions and society chapters.

Last year, Novartis worked with Psoriasis Philippines, the Philippine Rheumatology Association and the PDS in conducting activities for the country's observance of World Psoriasis Day on October 29, 2016 with the theme "Breaking Barriers for People with Psoriasis". A photography workshop for Psoriasis Philippines members was held on July 30, 2016 at the AIM Conference Center in Makati City. The photographs taken by workshop participants were displayed in a photo exhibit themed "A Day in the Life of a Person with Psoriasis: Soaring Above Psoriasis" held from October 25-27, 2016 at the Blue Building Lobby of the Mandaluyong City Hall.

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