

# Sandoz, Novartis partner with specialists to hold Mental Health Law Forum

Oct 27, 2018

**Makati City, 27 October 2018** – Sandoz Philippines and Novartis Healthcare Philippines, in partnership with the Philippine Neurological Association (PNA) and Philippine Psychiatric Association (PPA), held a case-based discussion on how Republic Act 11036, otherwise known as the Philippine Mental Health Law, benefits patients and practitioners.

Enacted in June 2018, the Mental Health Law seeks to provide affordable and accessible mental health services for all Filipinos by integrating mental health care in the country's public healthcare system. The landmark law mandates the provision of mental health services down to the barangay level; integration of psychiatric, psychosocial and neurologic services in regional, provincial and tertiary hospitals; improvement of mental health facilities; promotion of mental health education in schools and workplaces; and ensuring the rights and welfare of patients and mental health professionals.

"There is a growing clamor for more information and discussion on mental health among Filipinos. By providing a venue for discussion and exchange of ideas on mental health, this forum will help educate and inspire both healthcare practitioners and patients," said PPA Vice President Dr. Vanessa B. Cainghung.

"We are privileged to partner with the PNA and PPA in providing inputs during the crafting of the Philippine Mental Health Law. Through this forum, we hope to disseminate information and clear up issues and challenges in mental health," said Dr. Jean Marie Ahorro, President, Child Neurology Society Philippines. Dr. Ahorro spoke on behalf of PNA President Dr. Maria Soccoro F. Sarpati.

"The impact, burden and stigma of mental health issues to patients are often overlooked. There has to be a more concerted effort from government, NGOs, doctors, patient groups, industry, media and other stakeholders to truly transform mental healthcare in our country. *Pag tulong-tulong at sama-sama, may resulta at ginhawa*," said Dr. Francis Domingo, Chief Scientific Officer, Novartis Healthcare Philippines.

"Novartis and Sandoz will always support multi-stakeholder partnerships that aim to address the healthcare challenges in our country. We are privileged to partner with the PNA and PPA in sustaining the discussion on mental health in the country in our shared goal to increase awareness on this important issue and enhance the quality of mental health services for all Filipinos," said Ms. Eleanor M. Lopez, Country Head, Sandoz Philippines. Sandoz is the generics division of Novartis.

Held at the Ascott Makati, the forum was hosted by psychiatrist and dermatologist Dr. Antonio C. Sison. The forum was highlighted by two case discussions. The first discussion focused on clarifying the rights of both mental health practitioners and patients. The second discussion tackled community-based mental healthcare. The cases were discussed by a distinguished panel of experts, which included psychiatrist Dr. Edgardo Juan L. Tolentino, psychiatrist Dr. Lovie Hope Go-Chu, and neurologist Dr. Veeda Michelle M. Anlacan.

The special guest of the event was Dr. June P. Lopez, Professor of Psychiatry (retired), University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH) and principal crafter of the Mental Health Act, who shared her insights on how a comprehensive mental health system can bridge the treatment gap.



The country's leading mental health experts from the Philippine Neurological Association (PNA) and Philippine Psychiatric Association (PPA) held a case-based discussion on how Republic Act 11036, otherwise known as the Mental Health Act of 2018, benefits patients and practitioners. Photo shows from left: event host and psychiatry specialist Dr. Antonio Sison; psychiatry specialist Dr. Edgardo Juan Tolentino; primary drafter of RA11036 Philippine Mental Law Dr. June Caridad Pagaduan-Lopez; psychiatry specialist Dr. Lovie Hope Go-Chu; neurology and memory disorder specialist Dr. Veeda Michelle Anlacan; and neurology and epilepsy specialist Dr. Marc Laurence Fernandez.

## About Sandoz

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