

Novartis commits to help strengthen healthcare system in support of UHC

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Guided by its mission to discover new ways to improve and extend people's lives, Novartis in the Philippines is committed to help strengthen the country's healthcare system, enhance Filipinos' access to quality, affordable medicines; and partner with the government in achieving Universal Health Care (UHC).

"Novartis aspires to be the trusted healthcare partner of Filipinos," said Ms. Cheryl Maley, President and Managing Director, Novartis Healthcare Philippines.

Since 2012, Novartis through its partnership with the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation has been providing qualified PhilHealth members who need a kidney transplant with access to high-quality and lower-cost anti-organ rejection medicines. The PhilHealth Z Benefit Package for Kidney Transplantation enables more Filipinos with end-stage renal disease to afford the life-saving benefits of kidney transplantation and achieve better health outcomes.

With over 1,000 new cases of leprosy still reported in the country each year, Novartis partnered with the Department of Health (DOH) to develop the Leprosy Alert Response Network System (LEARNS), the country's first mobile phone-based leprosy teleconsultation system. LEARNS enables health workers in remote areas to refer suspected leprosy patients to experts by sending a picture of the skin lesion and patient details through their mobile phone. Prior to LEARNS, case finding took an average of 52 days; with LEARNS, case finding can be done in 2 days. Early case finding helps reduce delays in diagnosis and treatment. After the successful LEARNS pilot in one province in 2014, the DOH has expanded its implementation to several hyperendemic towns in other provinces and plans to scale up LEARNS on a national level. To date, more than 4,000 health workers have been trained in LEARNS.

With three other major research-based biopharmaceutical companies, Novartis formed a groundbreaking public-private partnership with the DOH and the provincial government of Palawan. The Palawan Access to Medicines Project (PAMP) provided lower-cost medicines for hypertension and diabetes in selected government hospitals and pharmacies in five pilot sites in Palawan. The project also implemented health system strengthening activities such as capacity building for health workers to enhance disease management, simple Information Technology tracking systems to improve data collection, and a patient education and awareness campaign. PAMP benefited around 1,500 patients and showed that differential pricing and health system strengthening can help improve access to medicines, as well as enhance treatment outcomes in hypertension and diabetes, among patients in low-income communities.

More than 25 young Filipino scientists have participated in the Novartis International Biotechnology Leadership Camp (BioCamp) through the company's collaboration with the Department of Science & Technology (DOST). BioCamp is a pioneering three-day seminar that brings the biotechnology sector closer to talented students from top universities around the world. Held at Novartis International Headquarters in Basel, Switzerland, the program offers participants an opportunity to interact with key Novartis scientists who lead our unique approach to drug discovery; learn about breakthrough new medicines to address patients' unmet medical needs; understand trends and challenges in the biotechnology sector; receive first-hand experience about starting and running a biotech company; explore career opportunities in the healthcare and biotech industries;

and network with talented students from other countries and get in touch with Novartis associates.

Novartis also works with the DOST to enable the participation of Filipino scientists in the Novartis Next Generation Scientists (NGS) Program. Hosted at the company's research site in Basel, Switzerland, the NGS Program is an intensive 3-month internship program for talented and motivated research scientists from emerging countries, and is designed to foster both their scientific and professional development. Guided by Novartis mentors, the interns work on a jointly-agreed upon, pre-competitive scientific or clinical research project and also participate in a leadership development program designed to enhance decision-making and communication skills. The program is run jointly by Novartis and the University of Basel. This internship aims to build scientific and leadership capability in emerging countries by enhancing the skills of local scientists and by facilitating the knowledge transfer to their wider scientific communities upon their return home. To date, five Filipino scientists have participated in the NGS Program.

About Novartis

Novartis is reimagining medicine to improve and extend people's lives. As a leading global medicines company, we use innovative science and digital technologies to create transformative treatments in areas of great medical need. In our quest to find new medicines, we consistently rank among the world's top companies investing in research and development. Novartis products reach nearly 1 billion people globally and we are finding innovative ways to expand access to our latest treatments. About 125 000 people of more than 140 nationalities work at Novartis around the world. Find out more at www.novartis.com.

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