



**The Philippine American Life and
General Insurance Company**

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Be prepared for health emergencies with the right insurance

More than an ounce of health prevention, Filipinos can financially prepare for the medical costs to overcome PH's top killer disease with the right health insurance.

The number one killer in the Philippines for a decade now has been heart disease. Throughout the years, more and more Filipinos succumb to heart-related illnesses due to a combination of factors including unhealthy diet, fast paced lifestyle and stressful environment.

With the rising costs of treatment for cardiovascular diseases especially heart surgeries, the time is ripe to adopt a healthier lifestyle and revisit one's financial priorities.

Unprepared for medical expenses

Fact is, 84 percent of Filipinos are not financially prepared for medical costs in case they are diagnosed with critical illnesses, such as heart disease.

Dr. Avenilo "Jun" Aventura, Jr. has seen this a lot of times. After all, he's the head of the bypass surgery unit of the Philippine Heart Center, a center of excellence in cardiovascular care and board member of the Philippine Association of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgeons, Inc. (PATACSI), an organization that promotes and maintains the highest standards of practice among the country's thoracic and cardiovascular surgeons.

"Once diagnosed with a heart ailment, patients often find themselves in a situation where they do not know where to get the money for the medical procedures and other prescription. Even if they have health cards, most of these do not cover open heart surgeries, among other things. Their coverage is also rather miniscule compared to the cost required to treat critical illnesses," said the doctor.

In such cases, PhilHealth also provides financial relief to patients and their families, but this is just for a small portion of the total medical expenses.

Normally, the cost of treatment for a heart surgery – that is, from diagnostic tests like ECG and 2D echo, to the bypass surgery in a hospital's intensive care unit (ICU) – will cost around Php 1 million.

While organizations like the Philippine Heart Foundation and PATACSI exist to help indigent heart patients through their medical missions, and even conduct fundraising to do open heart surgery in remote places, Aventura agrees that it is very important for people to prepare financially for serious illnesses.

The surgeon said that he hopes to see more Filipinos prepare for health emergencies, as there is not much financial assistance available to them.

"Looking for sources of funds will delay the treatment of their heart conditions. Not to mention the added stress brought about by the task," he said.

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And then there is health insurance

As the country's premier life insurance company, Philam Life has taken inspiration from these real life challenges to come up with product solutions that will provide financial protection for unforeseen events, especially health-related ones.

Health and life insurance plans like Philam Life's Health Invest not only help planholders prepare for critical illnesses, but also help them build funds for future health emergencies.

In case a person is diagnosed with a critical illness, a lump-sum cash benefit will be given to help pay for medical bills or other expenses. The plan grows a health fund overtime that can be used for future health care needs. The plan also offers short pay periods of 3, 5, 7 or 10 years.

Successful heart surgery

One of today's strongest advocates of health insurance is, incidentally, another doctor, Dr. John Solamo.

An eye specialist, Dr. Solamo bought a Philam Life insurance policy 11 years ago for financial protection as he was frequently traveling. It was a time when he felt being sick was remotely possible.

In early 2011, during a routine exam prior to joining a fun run, he was advised to take additional stress tests. That's when the surprise of his life came. Test results showed that three of his arteries were severely clogged.

"I never thought I would belong to the statistics of Filipinos with heart ailments. Heart disease can really happen to anyone, even to a health-conscious and fit person like me," Solamo said.

At age 42, Dr. Solamo became the youngest patient to undergo bypass surgery in Cardinal Santos History. A fraternity brother and his team performed the operation and waived their fees, leaving P400,000 for hospital confinement. Otherwise, his bills could have easily run up to over a million.

But even the reduced medical expenses could have been financially debilitating for the doctor and his family, who had then just transferred into a new home where bulk of their savings went.

It was a good thing that he had a Philam Life plan. It paid for all his medical expenses.

"Philam Life spared my family from the financial burden brought about by my health condition. It really pays to invest in your health and get a life insurance plan from a company that is known and tested to deliver its promise of helping people overcome real life struggles," he said.

Because of his experience, Dr. Solamo has become a staunch advocate of financial preparedness for health setbacks through a Philam Life Health Invest plan.

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About Philam Life

The Philippine American Life and General Insurance Company (Philam Life) is the country's premier life insurance company. Established on June 21, 1947, Philam Life offers an extensive line of products in the industry that provides solutions to various financial needs including life protection, health insurance, savings, education, retirement, investment, group and credit life insurance.

Philam Life is a member of AIA Group Limited, the largest independent publicly listed pan-Asian life insurance group.

About AIA

AIA Group Limited and its subsidiaries (collectively "AIA" or the "Group") comprise the largest independent publicly listed pan-Asian life insurance group. It has operations in 17 markets in Asia-Pacific – wholly-owned branches and subsidiaries in Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, China, Korea, the Philippines, Australia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Vietnam, New Zealand, Macau, Brunei, a 97 per cent subsidiary in Sri Lanka, a 26 per cent joint venture in India and a representative office in Myanmar.

The business that is now AIA was first established in Shanghai over 90 years ago. It is a market leader in the Asia-Pacific region (ex-Japan) based on life insurance premiums and holds leading positions across the majority of its markets. It had total assets of US\$159 billion as of 31 May 2014.

AIA meets the long-term savings and protection needs of individuals by offering a range of products and services including life insurance, accident and health insurance and savings plans. The Group also provides employee benefits, credit life and pension services to corporate clients. Through an extensive network of agents, partners and employees across Asia-Pacific, AIA serves the holders of more than 28 million individual policies and over 16 million participating members of group insurance schemes.

AIA Group Limited is listed on the Main Board of The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited under the stock code "1299" with American Depositary Receipts (Level 1) traded on the over-the-counter market (ticker symbol: "AAGIY").

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