

Need for Phl cancer registry pushed

By **N.E. Rabadam-Ruiz** - April 28, 2019 12:12 AM



THEY care: (From left) PHILAM Foundation, Inc. president Max Ventura, Philam Life head of Branding and Communications Bernadette Chincuanco, co-founder, president & CEO of CARE Philippines Dr. Beatrice J. Tiangco, and former president of the Philippine College of Physicians Dr. Kenneth Hartigan-Go talk about the relevance of a cancer registry system in the Philippines.

Healthcare professionals are always on the lookout for the best possible ways to treat cancer, which is regarded as one of the leading causes of death worldwide. While prescribing the right medications and performing precise surgical procedures are important, a more proactive approach is to come up with public health policies that will set the proper direction for cancer treatment.

Experts agree on the need to create a cancer registry or database that can address different concerns about the condition—from determining curability and mortality rate to allotting funds and human resources for health care, among many others.

Recently in the Philippines, Philam Foundation partnered with the Philippine College of Physicians and the Philippine College of Surgeons to form the Alliance for the Philippines' Health and Advocacy (ALPHA).

CARE Philippines' endeavors started in 2013 when it created a web-based application that served as a secure cancer registry platform.

ALPHA is a program that supports the health needs of the nation through a variety of ways. One of its initiatives is to help carry out a hospital-based cancer registry system through the initiative of Cancer CARE Registry Philippines. A memorandum of agreement between ALPHA and CARE Philippines was signed in 2017.

“With the data gathered, we can explore ways on how to give cancer patients better access to medical support and assistance,” said Dr. Beatrice Tiangco, co-founder and chief executive officer of CARE Philippines.

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Optimizing CARE app

CARE Philippines' endeavors started in 2013 when it created a web-based application that served as a secure cancer registry platform. This app allows authorized individuals who are part of the care team to enter data that can be analyzed by the technology in real-time.

Through the app, hospitals are able to share anonymized and legitimate data with researchers, academicians and other medical professions who find the information vital in understanding the prevalence of cancer (and its different types) in the Philippines.

The CARE app was all the more given a boost when ALPHA got hospitals on board to use the cancer registry app in their facility.

To date, 20 hospitals across the country are using the CARE app. In the first general assembly of member-hospitals, its representatives were provided with training on how to use the app.

"Hopefully within the year, we'll be able to get more hospitals on board to use the app," said Max Ventura, president of Philam Foundation.

Government and private sector

The newly-signed National Integrated Cancer Control Act (NICCA) mandates local hospitals to create their own cancer databases that will help create a population-based cancer registry system.

In a positive turn of events, CARE Philippines was invited to be part of the technical working group that will work on the implementing rules and regulations of the act.

For Dr. Tiangco, such is a good development that goes to show how both the government and the private sector can work together.

Cancer prevalence in Phl

Data gathered from CARE Philippines' database has so far showed that the five common types of cancer diagnosed in 10 of its member-hospitals include breast cancer (28.9 percent), colorectal cancer (10.3 percent), head and neck cancer (7.0 percent), cervical cancer (5.8 percent) and prostate and other male genital cancer (5.2 percent).

Fresher insights from the CARE app are set to take place through constant improvement of tool, and as the database receive wider coverage from more participating hospitals.

To know more about CARE Philippines, visit its website at <https://cancerregistryph.com/careph/>. ALPHA, on the other hand, is spearheaded by Philam Foundation (<https://www.philamlife.com/en/about-philamlife/our-advocacy.html>), the corporate social responsibility arm of life insurance company Philam Life.

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