



PHILIPPINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION^{*1}

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Distinguished personalities and fellow Presidents of member countries of the Confederation of Medical Associations of Asia and Oceania (CMAAO), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

We live in interesting times! This year, the Philippine Medical Association (PMA) celebrates its 111th Foundation Day. The PMA is our Mother Organization since 1903 built upon the age-old ideals of our predecessors. It is the Accredited Professional Organization of Physicians in the country for the longest time. It has weathered many challenges through the years. Members and patients count on the PMA to be the informed, authoritative and independent voice in the art and science of medicine. Public confidence in our objectivity is critical to carrying out our mission. The public relies on the PMA to minimize actual and perceived conflicts of interest and ensure that all its interactions meet high ethical standards. In all of these interactions, the PMA remains committed to acting with integrity and transparency. Now standing here before you as the 93rd PMA President and the 7th female to lead this prestigious association of physicians I recognize the power of organized medicine even more. I see how an issue I faced in my practice could be taken to a higher level. And if resolved at that higher level, the benefits would reach not only my own patients, but also every patient in the country.

As I go around the country this year representing the Philippine Medical Association, I have visited 17 Regions of the PMA and some 60 out of 118 Component Societies in the past 3-1/2 months, I listen to our colleagues' stories and come to understand and appreciate the diversity of ideas and approaches to health care challenges found in different regions—and realize that each has its merits. I am reminded again and

again of the responsibility we have as physicians to provide the best care possible to our patients. In addition I believe we have a dual responsibility to provide the leadership to ensure that the environment in which care is given, the structure of the health care system, is one that promotes good quality care. Now, I also recognize the challenges and fears we physicians have of losing our autonomy—we fear that ... crucial health care decisions will be dictated by government, by the hospital administrators, or by health insurance companies.

Advocacies drive changes at the PMA and they have taken notice of the PMA in the Halls of Senate and Congress as I represent the PMA in the Committee of Health on issues of drug safety profile and fake drugs, in the Committee on Budget and Finance on issues of taxation, in the Committee on Economic Reforms on issues related to the ASEAN Harmonization; in the Halls of the Department of Health as Resource Person in the Formulary Executive Committee and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Pharmacovigilance Committee and participates in drafting the Administrative for the adoption of Mexico City Principle and the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, in the Advisory Committee and the Standards and Privacy Committees of the Philippine Health Information Exchange Initiative, in the Philippine Burden of Disease Committee; in the Board Rooms of the Dangerous Drugs Board and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency on issues of drug regulations and the revision of Board Regulation No.3, which is the IRR of the Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002; the Board Rooms of PHILHEALTH on issues of fees reimbursement and quality healthcare; in the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) on issues related to Outcomes-based

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Education, Clinical quality improvement and patient safety through interprofessional education and collaborative practice, the revised framework for the Continuing Professional Development and the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework; and in the Conventions and Congresses of the Department of Science and Technology and Philippine Council for Health Research and Development and the different local, national and international Specialty Societies; in the Medical Staff Meetings and corridors of hospitals nationwide; and in the corridors and auditoria of Universities and Medical Colleges, and speaking my mind in the numerous press conferences, while calling for transparency and accountability in all our transactions. Together with the Philippine College of Physicians and the Philippine Society on General Internal Medicine we have launched the Coalition on Primary Care.

The PMA is also set to launch its MOOC site on Online Continuing Medical Education for the Primary Care Physicians. In the international scene, speaking on Adverse Drug Events at the 2014 Conference of the International Society on Pharmacovigilance (ISoP) held at the Asian Institute of Management in Manila; the 2014 Asia Pacific Association of Medical Editors (APAME) in Ulaanbatar, Mongolia to discuss issues on research dissemination in the Asia Pacific Region, and at the APEC Business Ethics for SMEs Forum in Nanjing China as one of nine participants from the Philippines. Speaking in a session on behalf of professionals as stakeholders in the Business Ethics conversation, I was among 200 attendees from 80 organizations across 20 APEC economies to promote ethical environments in the medical device and biopharmaceutical sectors. Recognizing that facilitating ethical environments cannot be achieved by one group alone, the Forum convened leaders from industry, government, healthcare professional associations, patient groups and other organizations. The PMA tagline as an organization is be: "PMA: Empowering the Filipino Physician for Nation Building."

Dear colleagues, change can be scary. But we must never forget: change can also be good. Today the PMA stands at a crossroads in the history of health care in this great nation. Behind us lies a century of failed attempts to improve the system. Ahead of us lie two distinct paths.

One is the path of inaction. Of glorifying the past, succumbing to partisan politics that muddle all our issues, and thwarting any attempt to move forward. The other is the path of action. Of collaborating, innovating, and leading the drive toward productive change.

Today, we look back, thank and celebrate three groups of people who played an important role in the development of our organization:

First—to the group of early PMA pioneers who believed and acted upon an idea that such an association would be useful to promote and serve the medical profession in our country;

Second—to the group of leaders and members who expanded the original vision of the organization by offering exciting new activities and events that continue to serve our constituency today;

Third—to the group of future leaders and members who will continue to nurture and develop our association into a vibrant future. If the relevance and vitality of professional organizations is based on the services and support it provides to its members, as well as its ability to change and transform itself to reflect the changes in 'our' world, then we at the PMA, can truly call ourselves leaders and I am honored (and proud) to be among fellow leaders of PMA! We think creatively, work collectively, and lead passionately! We all look forward to many more years of learning, sharing, mentorship and forming lasting friendships. Mahatma Gandhi said ... If we want to find ourselves ... we have to lose ourselves in the service of others We celebrate Our Legacy: A Distinguished Past ... A Vibrant Future!

There are three types of people: 1. Those who make things happen, 2. Those who watch while things happen, and 3. Those who do not know what is happening.

Colleagues, I know that the Philippine Medical Association is composed of physicians determined to make things happen and I look forward to walking that path of action with my fellow leaders in the year ahead. We are doing right by our patients and we are leveraging the power of organized medicine. The future of health care in our country ... is in our hands.

Thank you. Mabuhay ang CMAAO, at Mabuhay ang PMA!