

Manifesto of LGU Champions on Universal Health Care

Galing Pook Forum on Health
May 28-29, 2009

We are

- A group of local chief executives (Governors and mayors)
- local legislators (Sangguniang Panlalawigan, Sangguniang Panglungsod, Sangguniang Pambayan), and
- local health managers (PHOs, CHOs, chiefs of hospitals, MHOs)
- that will, henceforth, advocate for
- universal health care (UHC)

We Believe

- That Health is a right and
- therefore we should strive to achieve universal health care (UHC)
- Universal health care is quality health care to all Filipinos, rich or poor, young and old, sick and well
- UHC should cover the continuum of preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative health care

We Believe

- UHC must be equitably provided;
- It must be accessible, affordable, available, appropriate and acceptable
- UHC must be information-driven so that people are aware, becomes responsive and effective health advocates
- It must be participatory and consumer friendly
- It must be economically viable and sustainable

To Achieve UHC, LGUs should

- make UHC as a key performance area of an effective and responsive local governance even as it promotes people's participation and multi-sector cooperation;
- enhance the quality of health by improving the capacities and conditions of the health providers;

LGUs should

- include the localization of the Millennium Development Goals as health outcomes are determined by other factors other than health interventions
- integrate health services at the municipal and provincial levels, and achieve economies of scale;
- strive for universal health insurance coverage

LGUs should

- re-calibrate devolution to effect more efficient and more effective participatory health service delivery; encourage formations of LGU alliances and health zones, public private participation,
- activate health boards at all levels especially at the health zone level
- continually improve and sustain socialized health care services to acceptable standards

LGUs should

- promote entrepreneurship in health care and explore alternative health care financing
- promote innovation and best practices in health care
- practice good local governance: transparent, accountable and participatory
- must have the political will to effect health reforms

But there are Hindrances

- the absence of national compulsion and incentives to cause municipal and provincial governments to coordinate financing and service delivery efforts;
- the requirements borne by Philhealth members trying to access hospitalization services due to Philhealth's poor information systems;

Hindrances

- the low priority given in the national budget for supporting devolved facilities, whose improvement is a necessary condition for attracting Filipinos to patronize the National Health Insurance Program,

Hindrances

- the national government's tendency to railroad potential income shares of local governments that could have augmented local health budgets, such as the VAT collections lodged in the Bureau of Customs instead of the internal revenue account of the BIR;

Hindrances

- the DOH's lack of attention to improving regulations and standards-setting compared to the energy and resources that it devotes to running hospitals;
- the DOH's inattentiveness to the wide chasm between the theory and the actually-existing inter-local health zones;
- the poor delivery and payment systems that would secure supplies of essential drugs for all public hospitals in the country.

We therefore DEMAND
from national government

- to effect necessary and overdue amendments to the Local Government Code
- to increase appropriations for health, appropriate 5% of GDP for health services, include BoC's VAT collections in funds for IRA distribution, and create a *Special Health Fund*;

We DEMAND

- to limit DOH functions to policy formulation and regulatory functions;
- To immediately enrol indigents to the National Health Insurance Program as a key component of achieving universal health care;
- to improve local government health facilities up to national government standards;

We DEMAND

- to operate inter-local governmental, cooperative undertakings to scale up the provision of health services;
- to encourage complementary citizens' health initiatives, such as those by health volunteers, NGOs and community associations;
- To implement the Magna Carta for Health

We deserve better!

