



NEWBORN SCREENING

NEWSLETTER

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inside THE ISSUE

Region 3 Program Partners
Take a Step Forward to Quality
NBS Sample Collection **2**

Strengthening Newborn Screening
Patient Recall in Region 1 with
PAMET Ilocos Norte **3**

Satellite Newborn Screening
Continuity Clinic Opens at
Novaliches District Hospital **3**

159 NSFs, Program Partners,
& Healthcare Professionals in
Cagayan Valley Recognized
for Newborn Care **4**

NSC-NIH Celebrates Wellness
Day for Employees **4**

Understanding
Hemoglobinopathies: A Webinar
for Parents and Guardians **5**

NBS Advocacy Run 2024
Held to Foster Solidarity **5**

Pagtilipon sa Negros:
Celebrating Lives Saved
through an NBS Reunion **6**

NS Dr. Carmencita Padilla
appointed Visiting Professor by
Mongolian National University
of Medical Sciences **6**

Expanded Newborn Screening
Advocacy Video Contest **7**

WHO Representative Visits
NSC-NIH to Observe Operations **8**



Newborn Screening Center Northern Luzon Unit Head Dr. Ma. Paz Virginia K. Otayza conducts a check-up on one of the patients of the ENBS program.

Newborn Screening Caravan Brings Vital Services to Northern Luzon Despite Typhoon Challenges

Despite the devastating impact of Typhoon Kristine in Northern Luzon, the Newborn Screening Center – Northern Luzon (NSC-NL), alongside the Department of Health (DOH) Ilocos and Cagayan Valley Centers for Health Development (CHDs) and their program partners, remained unwavering in their dedication to safeguarding the health of newborns. In celebration of Newborn Screening Week, the Expanded Newborn Screening (ENBS) Caravan and Forum for Pregnant Mothers proceeded as planned, providing essential services and education to expectant mothers and their babies.

On October 23, 2024, Laoag City hosted the ENBS Caravan, which offered free confirmatory tests for babies who were screened positive for genetic conditions such as G6PD Deficiency and Alpha thalassemia. This vital initiative was made possible through the collaborative support of the House of Representatives in Ilocos Norte and NSC-NL. In tandem with the caravan, the ENBS Forum equipped expectant mothers with vital knowledge on newborn screening, genetic counseling, and child nutrition. Expert speakers from diverse organizations shared their insights, empowering mothers to make informed decisions about their newborns' health.

A highlight of the event was a talk by Frederick David Beltran, project development officer for patient care from the Newborn Screening Reference Center, who emphasized the positive impact of newborn screening on Filipino children. Complementing the forum, the DOH Ilocos CHD demonstrated its commitment to maternal care by distributing "Buntis Kits" filled with essential prenatal and childbirth items. The kits offered much-needed support to pregnant women, ensuring safer and healthier pregnancies and deliveries. ...Continued on page 2

from p1... Meanwhile, in Dinapigue, Isabela, the DOH Cagayan Valley CHD spearheaded its own Expanded Newborn Screening Caravan. This initiative focused on early detection of genetic disorders in newborns, enabling timely interventions for improved health outcomes. Collaborating with the local government unit (LGU) and community leaders, the caravan raised awareness and ensured accessibility to the newborn screening program for families in the area.

Both events were met with overwhelming success, drawing numerous participants and garnering heartfelt gratitude from program partners and beneficiaries. Attendees praised the valuable knowledge imparted, the services provided, and the steadfast commitment of the organizers. The resilience and dedication of all involved underscored the community's resolve to prioritize the health and well-being of its newborns amidst the challenges posed by recent adversities.

MMBacena, AJFAlmazan



The doctors, nurses, organizers, and the participating mothers of the Newborn Screening Caravan



Region 3 Program Partners Take a Step Forward to Quality NBS Sample Collection

Program partners and stakeholders in Central Luzon, in collaboration with the DOH-Central Luzon Center for Health Development, initiated a series of expanded newborn screening training programs for newborn screening (NBS). This initiative aims to enhance the knowledge and capabilities of healthcare providers in the effective implementation of the NBS program in the region.

Among the institutions that organized and funded the NBS training sessions were the Region 3 Private Practicing Midwives Association-IMAP (September 5, 2024), Pampanga Provincial Health Office (September 12, 2024, and November 7, 2024), and the Allied Care Experts Malolos Doctors Inc. (September 24, 2024). In addition to the training programs, NBS orientations for nurses and doctors were facilitated by the Loving Mother General Hospital and Diagnostic Center, Inc. (August 29, 2024) and The Medical City Clark, Inc. (October 15, 2024), together with the Newborn Screening Center – Central Luzon.



Participants from the PHO-Pampanga funded ENBS training poses together with the OIC Pampanga PHO Dr. Dax M. Tidula (seated fourth from the left), the DOH CLCHD Team Members Mr. Kevin Ramos (standing far left), Ms. Jean Canlas (seated first from the left), and Dr. Janet Micalat (seated fifth from the left), NSC-CL representative Ms. Nikki Dela Cruz (seated second from the left), and JBLMGH representatives (seated first and second from the right)

The training programs and orientations focused on the proper sample collection techniques and updated protocols for newborn screening, ensuring that practitioners were well-equipped in quality sample collection and the correct pathway for the recall of positive cases. The overarching goal of the training initiatives is to increase the coverage of newborn screening in Central Luzon, improve the quality of NBS samples being collected, and reiterate the importance of timeliness in every step of the NBS process.

NDDelaCruz



Strengthening Newborn Screening Patient Recall in Region 1 with PAMET Ilocos Norte

When a newborn screening test indicates an abnormality, confirmatory testing becomes essential to validate or rule out a suspected condition. Timely confirmation is critical, enabling appropriate medical intervention to ensure the best possible outcomes for affected infants.

Recognizing the need to enhance NBS practices in the Ilocos Region, the Newborn Screening Center-Northern Luzon (NSC-NL), in collaboration with the DOH Ilocos Center for Health Development and the Philippine Association of Medical Technologists (PAMET)-Ilocos Norte Chapter, organized a vital training session.

Titled “Navigating the Expanded Newborn Screening Landscape: Panel, Confirmatory Samples, and Best Practices for Collection, Handling, and Shipment,” the training was initially planned to coincide with the National Newborn Screening Week 2024. However, multiple typhoons caused delays, testing the resolve of both organizers and participants. Their perseverance paid off as the training was finally conducted on November 28, 2024, at the Northview Hotel in Laoag City.

The event gathered healthcare professionals, particularly

medical technologists from Level 1 to Level 3 hospitals enrolled as newborn screening facilities. Through lectures, discussions, and hands-on demonstrations, participants acquired practical knowledge of proper sample collection, handling, transportation, and the entire confirmatory testing process. The skills aim to streamline patient recall procedures and ensure the accuracy and reliability of follow-up tests, enhancing outcomes for newborns flagged by the screening.

Highlighting their dedication to the Newborn Screening Program, the participants signed a Pledge of Commitment during the ceremony, affirming their faith in the program’s core principles. This symbolic act underscored the collective resolve to improve patient recall processes and contribute to the overarching goal of better newborn health in the region.

With CPD points applied for medical technologists, the training demonstrated the region’s unwavering focus on continuous improvement. The Ilocos Region’s collaborative efforts among healthcare providers, policymakers, and community members serve as a promising foundation for ensuring a healthier and brighter future for the next generation. **MMBacena, AJFAlmazan**

Satellite Newborn Screening Continuity Clinic Opens at Novaliches District Hospital



Dr. Dave Anthony Vergara (1st from left)- Chief Operating Officer for Hospitals in Quezon City, and Dr. Rio Magpantay (4th from left), DOH-Metro Manila Regional Director, lead the ribbon cutting of Novaliches District Hospital during its inauguration as a Newborn Screening Continuity Clinic.

The Department of Health - Metro Manila Center for Health Development (DOH - MMCHD), through the Family Health Cluster-NBS Program, joined the launch and blessing of the satellite Newborn Screening Continuity Clinic (NBSCC) at the Novaliches District Hospital in Quezon City (QC) on October 18, 2024.

The NBSCC is the first satellite clinic to open in the National Capital Region to ensure that newborns in the community diagnosed with one of several disorders in the expanded newborn screening (ENBS) receive timely treatment and appropriate management, making the service more accessible to patients.

The DOH’s participation was also made possible through the Newborn Screening Reference Center (NSRC), Newborn Screening Center (NSC), Philippine Children’s

Medical Center (PCMC), and QC Health Department. DOH-MMCHD Regional Director Rio Magpantay awarded the certificate of recognition to the hospital to acknowledge its vital role in providing essential health services and ensuring early detection and intervention for newborns.

With its unwavering commitment to maternal and child health, the initiative strives to guarantee a brighter and healthier future for both mothers and babies, thus contributing to the government’s goal of achieving “Bagong Pilipinas, Kung Saan Bawat Buhay Mahalaga.” **DOH-MMCHD**

159 NSF, Program Partners, & Healthcare Professionals in Cagayan Valley Recognized for Newborn Care

One hundred and fifty-nine (159) newborn screening facilities (NSFs), along with partner institutions and healthcare professionals, were recognized for their exemplary contributions to the health and well-being of newborns through the NBS program in Cagayan Valley held on October 1-4, 2024.

The recognition was based on the commendable performance outlined in the official CY 2023 NSF Performance Report published by the Newborn Screening Center - Northern Luzon (NSC-NL). The NSFs were honored in various categories, including Best in Age of Collection and Best in Dried Blood Spot. The awardees received plaques, certificates of appreciation, and newborn screening kits as tokens of acknowledgment.

The event was organized by the Department of Health - Cagayan Valley Center for Health Development, which strongly reaffirmed its commitment to supporting and recognizing the achievements of its program partners and implementers in the region. The department aims to foster a culture of continuous excellence and dedication to providing high-quality healthcare services to newborns within the region.

Attendees at the event included program partners from the NSC-NL, representatives from the provincial health offices, as well as delegates from six training partners, six program facilities, three referral facilities, and 159 NBS coordinators or their designated representatives. **DOH-CHD Cagayan Valley**



Health professionals from the different newborn screening facilities in Cagayan Valley



NSC-National Institutes of Health Celebrates Wellness Day for Employees



Employees of the NSC National Institutes of Health during the Wellness Day

In today's demanding work environment, prioritizing employee well-being is essential to foster a healthy and productive workplace. To celebrate the Newborn Screening Month and express gratitude for its team's hard work and dedication, the Newborn Screening Center - NIH (NSC-NIH) hosted a special Wellness Day to pamper and rejuvenate staff members while reinforcing the importance of a balanced and fulfilling work-life dynamic.

The Wellness Day featured an array of activities tailored to promote relaxation and self-care. The event emphasized acknowledging the relentless efforts of NSC-NIH staff by creating a space for them to unwind, recharge, and indulge in moments of well-deserved leisure. The initiative underscored the organization's commitment to supporting its team's mental and physical health.

Among the activities was a relaxing massage session, where professional therapists offered a 15-minute massage to each employee. Designed to relieve tension and provide a sense of calm, the massage proved to be a perfect way to alleviate stress from the demands of daily tasks. Complementing this were food-sharing sessions, featuring a spread of popular Filipino delicacies and dishes that offered not only nourishment but also a sense of camaraderie and appreciation.

A significant moment during the Wellness Day was the recognition of service awardees. The event honored Wenalyn Viana and Maureen Garcia for 20 years of exemplary service to the NSC-NIH. Their unwavering dedication, exceptional performance, and inspiring leadership have made an enduring impact on both the success of the team and the overall workplace culture. The celebration of their achievements highlighted the importance of recognizing those who contribute tirelessly to the organization's mission.

Ultimately, the Wellness Day served as a heartwarming celebration of the NSC-NIH team's resilience and commitment. **NVictorio**

Understanding Hemoglobinopathies: A Webinar for Parents and Guardians

The Newborn Screening Center - National Institutes of Health (NSC-NIH) recently conducted a webinar titled “Understanding Hemoglobinopathies: A Webinar for Parents and Guardians.” This initiative underscored the growing awareness surrounding hemoglobinopathies, a group of genetic disorders affecting red blood cells.



Dr. Joliza Patricia D. Cañeba (left) and Dr. Alexandra Faye Cayabyab (right) during the open forum of the webinar

Held on October 25, 2024, the webinar aimed to educate families for a better understanding of the disorders. Joliza Patricia D. Cañeba, member of NBS program’s Thalassemia Experts Committee, broke down complex medical concepts into understandable terms for parents and guardians. Before the event, participants submitted questions that Dr. Caneba addressed throughout the webinar. Attendees gained valuable insights into the different types of hemoglobin disorders, their symptoms, and the importance of genetic testing and counseling. An open forum facilitated by Dr. Alexandra Faye Cayabyab followed the lecture, allowing for further clarification and discussion.

Effective management is crucial for individuals living with hemoglobinopathies. The webinar empowered families and caregivers to better recognize early signs, adhere to treatment plans, and seek timely medical intervention.

For more information on specific hemoglobin disorders, visit the newborn screening website (<https://newbornscreening.ph/>) and explore the “Hemoglobinopathies and Thalassemias” section under the Resources tab. **NVictorio**

Newborn Screening Advocacy Run 2024 Held to Foster Solidarity

The Newborn Screening Advocacy Run, organized by the Central Luzon Center for Health Development (CLCHD) and the Newborn Screening Center Central Luzon (NSCCL), took place on October 5, 2024 at the Clark Development Corporation (CDC) Parade Grounds in Clark, Pampanga.

The event attracted a diverse group of participants, including employees and families from the CLCHD, Newborn Screening Reference Center, Newborn Screening Center Central Luzon, Newborn Screening Facilities, and various community members. With race categories for 10 KM, 5 KM, and 3 KM, the event promoted inclusivity and engagement, culminating in motivational speeches from notable figures from CLCHD, such as Regional Director Corazon I. Flores, Dr. Bernadette Halili- Mendoza, unit head of NSCCL, and Dr. Ma. Clemencita Dobles, health and sanitation division manager from Clark Development Corporation.

The race fostered a strong sense of community and solidarity, with participants expressing pride in supporting the critical cause of early detection of congenital disorders. The lively atmosphere included music, cheering crowds, and booths offering information about newborn screening. All participants received freebies such as drawstring bags and finisher medals, enhancing their experience.

The event concluded with closing remarks from OIC-Assistant Regional Director Dr. Lailani P. Mangulabnan who emphasized the importance of the ongoing advocacy for newborn screening. Overall, the advocacy run was a resounding success, highlighting the effectiveness of collaboration between CLCHD, NSCCL, and Smoke10 Events Management in promoting vital public health initiatives. **JLCanlas**



Organizers pose in front of the starting line of the NBS Advocacy Run held at the Clark Development Corporation on December 5, 2024.





NS Dr. Carmencita Padilla appointed Visiting Professor by Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences

Dr. Carmencita Padilla, National Scientist and one of the proponents of the Philippines' newborn screening program, was appointed Visiting Professor by the Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences (MNUMS). The distinguished appointment was announced during the Awarding Ceremony for Visiting Professors, Professors, Associate Professors, and Clinical Professors held on October 10, 2024 at the MNUMS Student Cultural Center.

The appointment recognizes the invaluable contributions of Dr. Padilla to postgraduate education and cooperation on the newborn screening program in Mongolia. Over the past several years, Dr. Padilla has been providing technical assistance to establish the program in the country. Representatives from Mongolia have also actively participated in workshops convened and facilitated by Dr. Padilla to consolidate newborn screening efforts in the Asia Pacific Region.

The initiative for newborn screening for Congenital Hypothyroidism began in 2000 in Mongolia, backed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the Asia Pacific Region. Its development is built on the experience of other countries in the region with developing programs such as in Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines.

Currently, the Government of Mongolia plays an active role in the newborn screening program through funding and utilizing a dedicated team of over 2,000 trained professionals, including neonatologists, nurses, and midwives to ensure the effective implementation of newborn screening nationwide. Furthermore, the program has expanded to include screenings for Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia, Glucose-6- Phosphate Dehydrogenase Deficiency, Galactosemia, and Cystic Fibrosis.

VGMendoza

Pagtililipon sa Negros: Celebrating Lives Saved through an NBS Reunion

Successful patient management encompasses more than just the diagnosis and delivery of health interventions. It also involves empowering patients and their support networks to understand the nature of their conditions, fostering a sense of shared responsibility in their health journey.

To raise awareness of the newborn screening (NBS) program and discuss the management of endocrine disorders among healthcare providers and primary caregivers in Negros Occidental, the Department of Health Western Visayas Center for Health Development (DOH WV CHD) conducted the "Reunion of Saved Babies" last October 4, 2024. The activity was organized in collaboration with the Newborn Screening Continuity Clinic (NBSCC)- Corazon Locsin Montelibano Memorial Regional Hospital and Provincial Health Office of Negros Occidental.



Saved children and their families gather for the NBS reunion

Dr. Margaret Jane Galilea, pediatric endocrinologist, emphasized the importance of NBS from screening to management of confirmed endocrine cases, supported by testimonials from selected primary caregivers and health care providers. Likewise, program and patient management concerns were discussed during the breakout sessions. Recommendations identified were written on the commitment wall, signifying their commitment to continuously support the advocacy of the NBS program.

...Cont on p. 7

...Cont from p.6. Moreover, free NBS consultation services to fifty (50) endocrine cases in Bacolod City and Negros Occidental Province were spearheaded by the Philippine Society of Pediatric Metabolism and Endocrinology (PSPME) consultants, with other long-term follow-up teams in WV (NBSCCs and provincial NBS satellite clinics) and NSCV assisting the health team. Lastly, in collaboration with the provincial and city oral health programs, free dental care services were provided to both the primary caregivers and the children.

Representatives from the Volunteer Youth Leaders for Health-Philippines were also present during the activity. **FMODeaño**



Saved Babies dressed in their best princess attire

Expanded Newborn Screening Advocacy Video Contest Held

The Expanded Newborn Screening (ENBS) Advocacy Video Contest, held on the 1st week of October in celebration of the Newborn Screening Week, and participated in by various local government units (LGUs) and newborn screening facilities across Metro Manila, has concluded with great success. Quezon City emerged as the Grand Winner with its entry praised for impactful storytelling and clear message on the importance of newborn screening, as well as the high-quality production that resonated with both the judges and the online community.

The competition, organized by the Department of Health - Metro Manila Center for Health Development (DOH- MMCHD) - Newborn Screening Program, aimed to promote the importance of ENBS in saving lives through the creative use of video content, while engaging a wider audience through social media.

Participating local government units and newborn screening facilities produced videos showcasing the critical role of newborn screening in identifying potentially life-threatening metabolic disorders in newborns.

Each video entry was judged based on the following criteria: relevance and content (40%), audio and video quality (20%), creativity/originality (20%), and audience engagement (20%). The QC win was earned after a thorough evaluation by a panel of judges and through the engagement of the online audience. The videos were posted on Facebook, where they garnered views, shares, and reactions from the public, further amplifying awareness about the significance of early detection through ENBS.

Taguig City secured 1st place for its video's strong creative approach with engaging visuals and emotional appeal, which made it both informative and memorable. The city also received the "People's Choice Award," with its video having garnered the most audience engagement through likes, shares, and comments. In 2nd place, Valenzuela City's video impressed the judges with its originality and exceptional use of visual storytelling to effectively convey how newborn screening saves lives.

As part of their prize, the winners will be awarded certificates of recognition and ENBS kits, which will be used to further enhance their local newborn screening programs.

The success of the ENBS Advocacy Video Contest underscored the importance of creative and collaborative efforts in promoting public health programs. With the active participation of local governments and health facilities and the engagement of thousands of viewers on Facebook, the contest not only celebrated the talents of its participants but also significantly raised awareness about newborn screening in Metro Manila.

VIDEOS: <https://bit.ly/3OSA0Ed>
DOH-MMCHD



The winning video entry of Quezon City. (Grand Winner)



The winning video entry of Taguig city. (1st first runner up)



WHO Representative Visits NSC-NIH to Observe Operations

Manila, November 21, 2024 – As part of her engagement in the Annual Conference of the Asia Pacific Alliance of Rare Disease Organizations (APARDO), Dr. Ayesha De Costa, scientist at the Newborn Health Unit under the Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health Department of WHO visited the Newborn Screening Center at the National Institutes of Health (NSC-NIH) for an in-depth understanding of its operations.

Dr. De Costa was joined by an esteemed delegation including National Scientist and Clinical Geneticist Dr. Carmencita David-Padilla, alongside Dr. Barbra Cavan, pediatrician and geneticist, and genetic nurses Jane Delfin and Aster Lynn Sur. The experts from the Clinical Genetics and Research Unit of the NIH-UP Manila observed the center's operations to better understand its contributions to the national NBS program.

Guided by Dr. Anna Lea Elizaga, unit head of NSC-NIH, the group toured the facility and explored its advanced equipment and methodologies. They gained insights into the testing protocols for the screened disorders, the recall and follow-up processes for positive cases, and the distribution of newborn screening kits and results to covered health facilities. Dr. De Costa expressed particular interest in how the center ensures timely and accurate testing to support the health of newborns across the country.

The visit provided Dr. De Costa and her team with a clear view of the center's role in advancing the Philippines' newborn screening efforts. The delegation acknowledged the expertise and dedication of the NSC-NIH staff in sustaining a program that prioritizes early detection and intervention for genetic and metabolic disorders, contributing significantly to improved health outcomes for Filipino children.

In addition to the NSC-NIH tour, the group visited the Department of Health Center for Health Development Regional Office IV-A (CALABARZON) and the Continuity Clinic at the Philippine Children's Medical Center, further enhancing their understanding of the implementation of newborn health programs in the Philippines. The visit highlighted the Philippines' leadership in newborn screening and the value of international collaboration in promoting better health outcomes for children. **NFVictorio**



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COMING SOON



JAN 2025

A user-friendly 3-minute video that gives a general overview of a specific genetic disorder. Short, educational, and easy to follow!

