

050

LEPROSY TASK FORCE: A COUNTRY LED RESPONSE FOR THE 'LAST MILE' IN A NEGLECTED DISEASE

Paulyn Jean B Ubial,¹ Enrique A Tayag,¹ Ernesto Eusebio S Villalon,² Francesca C Gajete,² Irma L Asuncion,³ Mario S Baquilod,³ Leda M Hernandez,³ Malaya P Santos,⁴ Roderick E Poblete,⁴ Aya C Caldwell,⁵ Christine C Fajardo,⁶ Ma. Teresa D Dioko,⁷ Ayedee M Domingo⁸. ¹Central Office, Department of Health, Manila, Philippines; ²National Leprosy Control Program, Department of Health, Manila, Philippines; ³Disease Prevention and Control Bureau, Department of Health, Manila, Philippines; ⁴DOH-Novartis Leprosy Task Force, Manila, Philippines; ⁵Innovative Healthcare Delivery Solutions, Novartis Foundation, Basel, Switzerland;

⁶Corporate Affairs and Market Access, Novartis Healthcare Philippines, Makati, Philippines; ⁷Market Access, Novartis Healthcare Philippines, Makati, Philippines; ⁸Metahelix, Quezon City, Philippines

10.1136/bmjopen-2015-forum2015abstracts.50

Background The Philippines eliminated leprosy as a public health concern when prevalence was reduced to less than 1 case per 10,000 people in 1998. However, 1,000 to 3,000 new cases continue to be identified each year and sustained commitment is essential in this last mile of disease control.

Objectives Aligned with the comprehensive post-elimination strategy of the Department of Health, participants from the public and private sector have collaborated to identify innovative post-elimination approaches through a Task Force.

Methods The Task Force meets on a bi-monthly basis, and is comprised of eight people collaboratively working across the public and private sectors. The Task Force aims to promote broader local engagement through convening key partners in leprosy.

Result The Task Force was convened in 2012 and as its first objective recognized the need to solicit new approaches for the last mile. The “Best Practices and Innovative Ideas in Fighting Leprosy Contest” was launched, and received 35 submissions with 19 for Best Practices and 16 for Innovative Ideas. From the entries, the Task Force decided to focus its efforts on one particular “Innovative Ideas” submission, the LEprosy Alert Response Network & Surveillance System (LEARNS) - a mobile health tool. LEARNS aims to improve communication and build capacity among remote healthcare providers and specialists to minimize the delay in diagnosis and treatment of leprosy. In addition to LEARNS, the Task Force promotes dialogue across sectors, advocates for continued commitment to leprosy and has convened an annual stakeholders’ meeting since its creation to present and disseminate key findings to move the leprosy control agenda forward.

Conclusion A neglected disease such as leprosy requires continued advocacy and commitment, which the Philippines’ Department of Health has successfully led as it traverses the “last mile” against leprosy.

REFERENCE

- 1 National Leprosy Control Program. National Leprosy Control Program Manual of Procedures. Manila, Philippines, 2002.
- 2 Global Leprosy Situation, beginning of 2008. *Weekly Epidemiological Record*, 83, 293–300. Retrieved March 30, 2015 from <http://www.who.int/wer/2008/wer8333.pdf> 2008.
- 3 Global Leprosy Update, 2013; reducing disease burden. *Weekly Epidemiological Record* 2014;89, 389–400. Retrieved March 30, 2015 from <http://www.who.int/wer/2014/wer8936.pdf>
- 4 National Leprosy Control Program. DoH-NLCP Annual Statistical Report. Manila, Philippines, 2013.
- 5 Iloilo Provincial Health Office. Iloilo, Philippines 2014.