

# PRESS RELEASE

## Department of Foreign Affairs

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### PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL, LOS ANGELES MEETS MEMBERS OF PHILIPPINE HEALTH, WELLNESS, MEDICAL TOURISM ROADSHOW



From L to R: Ms. Christine Liwanag (St. Luke's), Ms. Chisako Kanemaru (HCI), Mr. Ruy Moreno (PPPTF), Consul General Mary Jo Bernardo-Aragon, Dr. Alfredo Bengzon (Medical City), STR Ma. Roseni Alvero, Dr. Jorge Garcia (Asian Hospital), Dr. Ludgerio Torres (Phil. Heart Center); 2<sup>nd</sup> Row: Mr. Fred Antonio (HCI), Ms. Rose Vela (USA Tribune), Dr. Asuncion Morido (Medical Center Manila), Vice Consul Jim San Agustin, Mr. David Paraiso (HCI), Mr. Paul Uy (DFA-OUIER), Dr. Benito Reverente (PHIC), Dr. Ernesto Santos (Makati Medical Center), Ms. Melinda Gutierrez (Capitol Medical Center) Ms. Carmina Desales (Capitol Medical Center), Rep. from Medical City, Ms. Millet Escasinas (Medical City), Dr. Jose Danton Dator (Nat'l Kidney & Transplant Inst.), Dr. Sarah Jane D. Nuñez (DOH), Dr. Rex Mendoza (Manila Doctor's Hospital).

31 May 2007 — Consul General Mary Jo Bernardo Aragon of the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles, USA reported to the Department of Foreign Affairs that she hosted a luncheon meeting with members of the Philippine Health and Wellness and Medical Tourism Roadshow in the US on 2 May 2007 at the Consulate

The Medical Tourism Roadshow delegation led by Mr. Ruy Moreno of the Public-Private Sector Partnership Task Force is composed of heads of the top nine medical centers in the country, namely St. Luke's Medical Center, the Asian Hospital, Medical City, Manila Doctors Hospital, Makati Medical Center, Capitol Medical Center, Medical Center Manila, National Kidney & Transplant Institute and the Philippine Heart Center.

The delegation visited leading healthcare facilities in California and New Mexico in an effort to learn from the best practices of their counterparts in the United States, and promote the Philippines as the newest medical tourism haven in Asia.

Medical Tourism is one of three clusters under the Health and Wellness Sector of the Public-Private Partnership for Global Competitiveness, co-chaired by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) (the two others being Retirement and Wellness). The program has also been included as a priority government program in the Philippine Medium-term Development Plan.

The Roadshow in Southern California included business meetings with Global Benefits Group, Inc., the United Health Group, and Planet Hospital.

“Global Benefits Group develops and implements benefits programs that encompass all areas of the financial field, from health insurance to retirement planning, and operates in five continents. United Health Group is a diversified health and well-being company, which serves the entire spectrum of healthcare participants, from individual consumers to care providers and medical device manufacturers. Planet Hospital is a medical tourism company that assists clients in obtaining any kind of medical care in the US and abroad,” Consul General Aragon explained.

The Philippine delegation promoted the Philippines as a viable health and wellness center with world-class yet affordable medical tourism programs and globally sought-after medical practitioners. In turn, the American companies recognized potentials for future alliances with Philippine HMOs and healthcare providers, particularly for secondary and tertiary care.

During the luncheon meeting, Mr. David Paraiso, Healthcare Coalition Institute Chairman, made a presentation on parallel efforts being done by his organization in support of the Philippine Retirement Program. The Philippine Retirement Program was declared last year by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo as a flagship program for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Both the medical tourism and retirement clusters are working for the removal of insurance barriers and portability restrictions in the United States that will allow American patients and retirees in the Philippines continued insurance coverage from their HMOs and the US Medicare system. END