

A Medical Mobile Clinic for Underserved Communities in the Philippines

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Background

- Health care geographic distribution
 - > 75% of cities and municipalities in the Philippines have < 1:20,000 physician to population (Department of Health, 2018).
 - Nearly 50% healthcare professionals in the Mega Manila Region and many pursuing work abroad due to higher income.
- Availability of primary care
 - Undersupply of non-hospital and primary care services, with doctors 91% hospital-based.
 - Additional socioeconomic and geographical barriers, such as rural and remote areas.
 - Patients face up to 58% OOP payments in-hospital.
- High incidence of noncommunicable diseases
 - Disproportionately affects low-income patients with severe complications of noncommunicable diseases (NCD) due to lack of preventative care.

Community Partner

ABC's for Global Health (ABCGH) is a non-profit organization dedicated to finding practical solutions to health problems of disadvantaged and underserved communities.



Image 1. ABC's team presenting to health officials at Pampanga Government Capitol

In 2009, Dr. Julieta Gabiola founded ABCGH to address the gaps in long-term care she witnessed as a medical mission volunteer physician for several years in the Philippines.

ABCGH seeks to expand health care access, especially for those with noncommunicable diseases, through

- Advocacy for health equity and access
- Betterment of community health and well being
- Commitment to sustainable continuity of care.

We aim to leverage mobile clinic outreach and improve NCD outcomes by strengthening community health education and implementing novel technologies that address research-based needs and increase health care access in underserved populations.

Project Description

Launched in 2017, the Medical Mobile Clinic (MMC) was implemented to establish longitudinal health care via low-cost medical visits, free medications, and culturally-appropriate health education. ABCs established partnerships with local government and non-government organizations to identify 18 medically underserved communities in Pampanga, Philippines. Each community is guaranteed monthly medical service to establish continuity of care. Electronic health records (EHR) are maintained on a data analytics platform, providing ABCGH the ability to not only collect data digitally, but to track data-driven clinical and research outcomes.



Image 2. Paniquan, Pampanga patients are screened and await visits inside the MMC.

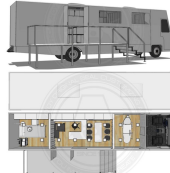


Image 3. The MMC floor plan.



Image 4. MMC en route to remote Aeta indigenous village.

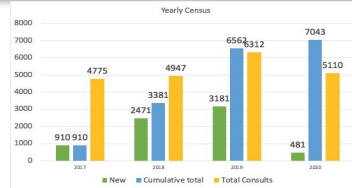
Lessons Learned

- Since 2017, the MMC has completed over 7,043 patient visits.
- Top diagnoses are NCDs: hypertension, type 2 diabetes mellitus, dyslipidemia
- In 2020, 86% of our 1610 hypertensive patients maintained their blood pressure within target
- > 70% improved or controlled blood sugar

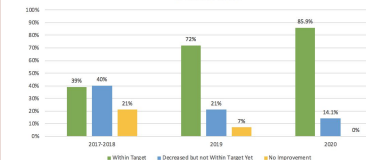
As our clinic operations expand, the clinic team continues to develop and strengthen partnerships, relationships, and rapport in the communities. On top of being a reliable, established primary care option for many, ABCGH serves as a trusted organization in time of need—from the 2020 Taal volcano eruption to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ABCGH continues to serve the medically underserved communities of Pampanga, Philippines at a time when COVID-19 has exacerbated existing health inequities, such as unequal healthcare access for low-income, urban underserved, rural, and indigenous populations.

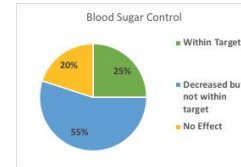
Outcomes



Graph 1. MMC yearly census.



Graph 2. Blood pressure control trends.



Graph 3. Blood sugar control trends.

Recommendations

- Expand additional medical mobile clinics to other medically underserved areas of Pampanga and other Philippines provinces
- Continue to establish local community and government partnerships to ensure sustainability within communities
- Continue driving social determinants of health research to better serve the unique needs of each community

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