

MULA KAY

Tsanzelor...

Sa matagumpay na pag-usap ng UP Manila patungo sa “new normal”, may mga aspeto na kailangang bigyang diin.

Una, malaking tulong ang pagsasanay na isinasagawa ng UP Manila National Institutes of Health (NIH) National Training Center for Biosafety and Biosecurity para sa lahat ng *laboratory personnel* ng mga *testing centers* sa buong Pilipinas. Nariyan din ang donasyon ng Lopez-controlled corporations na mga makinarya para sa PGH *testing center* at ng United Laboratories para sa NIH *testing center*. Dahil sa mga donasyong makinarya, madadagdagan ng husto ang kapasidad sa *testing* ng PGH at NIH.

Isinalaysay ni Director Gerardo “Gap” Legaspi ang kahalagahan ng *teamwork* sa pakikipaglaban sa hindi nakikitang kaaway – ang COVID-19. Kasabay ang patuloy na pagdaloy ng mga ayuda galing sa iba’t-ibang sangay tulad ng Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology at samahan ng mga mag-aaral tulad ng Sigma Kappa Pi Fraternity, Sigma Delta Pi Sorority, UP Manila Belle, at UPCM Class 2025; lalo pang mapapabuti ang pagsisilbi ng PGH sa mga may sakit.

Nitong nakaraang halos tatlong buwan, karamihan sa atin ay sa kanyang-kanyang tahanan namalagi. Angkop ang mga bilin ni Dr. Regina Berba upang mapanatiling ligtas sa COVID-19 ang ating mga tirahan.

At dahil may mga kawani na babalik na sa opisina, napag-alaman namin na mayroong pangamba sa kaisipan na dapat pagtuunan ng pansin. Si Dr. Josefina Ly-Uson ay nagbigay ng mga mahahalagang payo sa paghahanda sa pagbabalik sa opisina.

Panghuli, ang aspeto na patuloy nating bibigyang diin ay ang ating pananalig sa Panginoon na nagbibigay ng linaw, lakas, at kahulugan sa lahat ng ating mga gawain upang talunin ang COVID-19.



BEAT COVID-19 Program graduates 2,517 lab personnel

A total of **2,517** trainees composed of physicians, pharmacists, biologists, chemists, nurses, medical microbiologists, medical technologists, teachers, and laboratory personnel passed the **“BEAT COVID-19 Program”** held on March 31-April 6, 2020 and April 14-May 14, 2020.

The online Biosafety Education and Awareness Training (BEAT) COVID-19 program for laboratory personnel handling COVID-19 samples is being conducted by the UP Manila National Institutes of Health’s National Training Center for Biosafety and Biosecurity (NTCBB). The Department of Health officially recognizes the NTCBB as a training provider for biosafety and biosecurity to support its capacity building efforts in laboratory testing during this pandemic.

The training is composed of seven modules of the core principles which are: Introduction to Biorisk Management with Focus on Biosafety; Risk Assessment; Biocontainment Facilities; Basics of Biosafety Cabinets;

Personal Protective Equipment; Disinfection, Sterilization and Decontamination; and Waste Management of Biological Materials. The modules were accessed using the Canvas Learning Management (CLM) while the live panel discussions used the Zoom platform. The CLM can be accessed anytime which allowed participants to take the course at their own pace.

The course utilized distance learning education by providing updated and relevant materials that are essential to the current COVID-19 response and online forum and case analysis moderated by subject matter experts, who are graduates of the NTCBB’s Philippine Advance Biorisk Officers Training program.

The participants were evaluated based on their performance in the quizzes and final exam. A certificate of completion is given to participants who have passed the assessments and have complied with the requirements. For more information about the training, please visit the [NTCBB website](#) and [Facebook](#).

Rohani Cena-Navarro, DVM MSc



PGH DIRECTOR LEGASPI: COVID'S FORMIDABLE WARRIOR

On 26 May 2020, the UP-PGH Department of Medicine Grand Rounds had PGH Director Gerardo Legaspi share how the hospital was transformed into a COVID-19 Referral Center and his strategy to win this war against COVID-19.

The enemy has shown its ugly crown and war was inevitable. With private hospitals choked by an unmanageable number of severe COVID-19 cases, the public sector had to send its warships. The PGH warrior emerged. He felt like a soldier against an unseen enemy and started his talk by quoting from a Rudyard Kipling poem:

*"If you can fill the
unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth
of distance run..."*

19 March: Marching Orders

The Director received a letter from Secretary of Health Dr. Francisco Duque requesting PGH to be one of three COVID-19 referral centers, to which UP President Danilo Concepcion concurred.

Like Churchill, our Director wrote a heartfelt letter to the "People Giving Hope (PGH)". It was a call for solidarity and reminisced the role of PGH during WWII. Despite many obstacles, including hurtful attacks on himself, he decided that becoming a COVID-19 Referral Center was the right thing to do.

Preparing the Battlefield

After scoping out the air, land, and beaches of war, his team of "Crisis Men" led by Dr. Bok Ocampo pledged logistical support to the Hospital Infection Control Unit and the clinical team of the Department of Medicine; the latter headed by the formidable Infectious Disease

specialist, Dr. Nina Berba. The Manpower Committee was headed by Dr. Rodney Dofitas, who worked tirelessly to provide the needs of its healthworkers (HCWs). Dr. Dennis Serrano took charge of the massive donations that started to pour in. Significant support came from UP architects and structural engineers; and the 48 electrical beds from St. Luke's QC were a big help. The *Bayanihan Na!* Operations Center established by UP Manila Chancellor Padilla provided synchrony to this massive machinery.

29 March: Off to War

During the First Staff Orientation, Gap likened the HCWs to soldiers being sent off to war. He saw their fearful eyes but felt their hearts full of courage. That was a momentous occasion in our lives, he reminded them. Showing a photo of himself during the EDSA revolution and saying that that was his moment, he exhorted the trainees, "This is your moment now!"

Rebooting PGH

To win the war, PGH needed innovative solutions to defeat the enemy. Safety Officers checked the integrity of the personal protective equipment of frontliners. Donning and doffing areas were upgraded and manned by residents from Dermatology and other departments. To understand the enemy's movements and position our weapons, Electronic Medical Records and Dashboard were adapted by

Dr. Homer Co. *TeleKumusta* by UP Engineers and communications team leader Dr. Eric Berberabe helped patients communicate with staff and their families, a good move towards mental health.

A new Molecular Laboratory was established, led by Dr. Bill Veloso, to increase testing capabilities. Research continued with PGH serving as a major host for local and international COVID-19 researches. Teaching was expanded to other UP constituents such as Diliman UP Health Service. Numerous teleconferences were led by our consultants. Service support was extended to seafarers and Sta. Ana Hospital.

Stabilize the Fort

Gap quoted Charles A de Callone, "The difficult we do immediately, the impossible will take a little longer". Future Plans for PGH include a gradual de-escalation by building a COVID-19 Isolation Ward. There will be gradual resumption of non-COVID-19 services led by a Transition Team and the Department of Medicine. Service Delivery Networks will be strengthened by PGH primary care centers to be led by the Dept. of Family Medicine. This will help preserve the mission of the current PGH as the country's premier tertiary hospital.

Lessons Learned

One of Director Gap's first lessons was that of humility. Realizing that he was not the only GAP or "God's Answer to Prayers", he needed a reliable team, his "lost command" of excellent colleagues. As somebody who tested positive to COVID-19 himself, he learned to fight fear with science and heal thru faith in other physicians. He now has HOPE. The unforgiving minute has been outrun by COURAGE.

*"Yours is the Earth and
everything that's in it,
And—which is more—
you'll be a Man, my son!"
-Kipling*

The surgeon has become a warrior and a MAN. Thank you Director Gap.

Shelley de la Vega, MD, MSc(Clin Epi)

The “New Normal” and its Mental Health Challenges

As UP Manila ushers in the “new normal” with the General Community Quarantine on June 1 with less restrictions amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a webinar entitled, “**Protecting Oneself... Preparing Oneself in the Advent of the New Normal**” was held last May 26. UP College of Medicine Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine Associate Professor **Dr. Josefina Ly-Uson** talked about the mental health preparation needed by employees in this scenario.

Firstly, she cited the results of an April 2020 study by Tee, et al. on the psychological responses among Filipinos during the COVID-19 pandemic which showed a higher percentage of respondents experiencing psychological distress, namely: anxiety at 26%, depression at 14.13%, and level of stress at 11%; compared to usual prevalence rates among the general population.

These results merit a call to action for which Dr. Ly-Uson presented the **APPLE Technique** which is a mindful response to overcome anxiety or negative thoughts. **A** stands for **acknowledging** the uncertainty as it comes to mind; **P** for **pause**, or simply not reacting; **P** for **pull**



back to tell yourself you do not have to be certain all the time; **L** for **let go** of the thought or the feeling; and **E** for **exploring** the present moment then refocus your attention to what needs to be done.

According to Dr. Ly-Uson, it is important to deal with any emotion in a healthy manner. Seeking professional help is considered a healthy adaptive behavior as opposed to alternative unhealthy ways of coping such as smoking, drinking excessively, or turning to illicit substances which would only add more problems.

Turning to the highlights of a

survey conducted by UP Manila Human Resource Development Office among 429 employees, 80% of whom were working from home (WFH) while 20% comprised the skeletal workforce; 33% expressed not being psychologically prepared to do office tasks while 24% were unable to perform their tasks. Of those WFH, 70% expressed being emotionally and psychologically prepared to work at home while 30% answered in the negative.

With a sizeable percentage of employees expressing the need for emotional and psychological preparedness when WFH, Dr. Ly-Uson enumerated adaptive ways to ensure a good work-life balance while adjusting to the new normal:

1. Create a regular routine. Wake up, get dressed, and eat breakfast as you would normally do.
2. Define boundaries. Work in a designated corner or place at home that is exclusive for work.
3. Plan out your schedule for work. Create a to-do list and prioritize what should be done first.
4. Take planned breaks. Stand up and take coffee or water break, but make sure you have a time limit.
5. Avoid areas for relaxation when you do work to delineate work and home.
6. Know when to switch off from work. Clocking in too much time at work can lead to burnout.
7. Practice self-care. Be kind to ourselves by eating a balanced diet, taking meals at proper intervals. Regulated sleep leads to better mood, better energy level, and boosts the immune system. Regular exercise and physical activity translate to better mental health.
8. Find pockets of joy. Practice gratitude and appreciate blessings in life, big or small.

Dr. Ly-Uson noted that being constantly reminded of the risks and dangers can be overwhelming but employees can protect their well-being by acknowledging their feelings, setting a routine, defining boundaries, staying connected to family and friends, practicing self-care, and being well-informed.

Anne Marie Alto

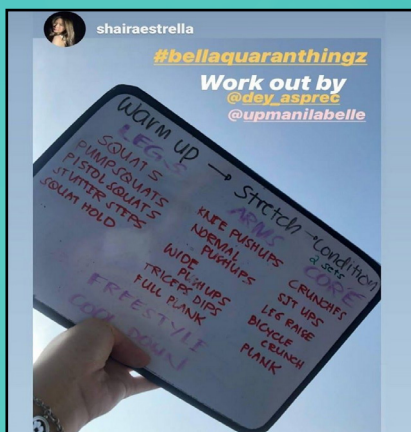
LOPEZ GROUP INITIATIVE TO EXPAND PGH COVID-19 TESTING CAPACITY

The Lopez-controlled First Gen Corporation and ABS-CBN Corporation donated P46 million worth of new machines and lab equipment to PGH. These will allow more automation and increase volume of testing, thereby expanding the hospital's COVID-19 testing capacity from 150 to 1,500 tests per shift. Under a newly signed agreement between First Gen Corp and the University of the Philippines (UP), PGH will have free use of a system of laboratory machines for conducting reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction which is part of the COVID-19 test.

ABS-CBN, on the other hand, is donating several units of a fully integrated automated molecular diagnostics platform known as BD Max. This system combines the two processes of extraction and testing for the presence of the virus and shortens the testing period from four to just two hours. *Excerpt from Inquirer.net*



Belles in COVID-19 action



Less than a month after the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) was announced, the executive committee of the UP Manila Belle decided to reach out by donating money to support the medical needs of the Philippine General Hospital frontliners.

On the organization front, Daniel Asprec, a former member of UP Manila's dance varsity *Indayog* and now coach of the Belles, motivated us to continue doing training in the comfort of our homes. He recognized the importance of maintaining one's overall health and provided a workout plan to be accomplished three times a week. Having exercise as part of a daily routine is beneficial to combat feelings of isolation, the kicking in of anxieties, and hopefully COVID-19.

Aside from training, the members continued to connect with one another by posting workout, song, and dance covers online both publicly and within the group chats. The organization also set up "Quarantine Reflections," an online platform where the belles get to voice out their personal insights and share inspirational messages about the pandemic. Join us in this movement as we beat COVID-19. #BellaQuarantingz

Eunice Angus



Rising beyond the plague of COVID-19

Bangon Bayan is an initiative of the **Sigma Kappa Pi Fraternity** and the **Sigma Delta Pi Sorority** UP Manila Chapter as a quick response to address the immediate needs of our country during all types of crisis, not limited to natural calamities and disasters.

As part of both organizations' objective to be of service to the Filipino people, Bangon Bayan is a promising platform to encourage the Filipino community to embody the spirit of unity, generosity, and camaraderie especially in trying times.

During this extraordinary time of a pandemic, Bangon Bayan launched the **BIGAS DRIVE para sa PUV Drivers** which was able to garner a total of Php 530, 771. 35

in cash donations. The initiative was able to procure 400 sacks of rice that were distributed to 21 PUV groups with routes going through the cities of Manila, Taguig, Pasig, and Quezon reaching a total of 2, 829 families. Bangon Bayan also reached out to 475 security personnel in UP Diliman through the UP All Workers Union, providing them with rice and sets of disinfecting kits.

Bangon Bayan is now directing its resources to other COVID-19 relief efforts catering to different sectors that are also heavily affected by the pandemic. As part of our nationalist orientation, Bangon Bayan serves as a reaffirmation and a call to be proactive forces of the nation, always capable of rising above the storm.

UPCM CLASS 2025 COVID-19 RESPONSE

The UP College of Medicine Class 2025 is among the youngest members of the UP-PGH community but all the same, we are in solidarity in answering the call for help in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. It was on March 14 that we opened our channels for monetary donations from the general public in order to purchase PPEs. The primary aim of the class was to alleviate the difficulties experienced in the procurement of supplies during that time, considering the recent community quarantine announcement and the panic-buying behavior of the masses. After more than a month, the donation drive officially ended last April 22 upon the delivery of the last PPE orders to PGH. All in all, the class received PHP 259, 296.31



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Stranded SHS Baler students coping well

The School of Health Sciences (SHS) Baler teachers checked on the psychological and social status of their 13 stranded students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Eleven of the students are taking up Diploma in Midwifery, many are from Palawan while others are from Cagayan, Isabela, and Ifugao.

On March 26, 2020, Prof. Joel Valencia, a guidance counselor and SHS faculty member, conducted a group counseling session with the students. They were healthy and COVID-19 symptom-free. They expressed their worries about the safety of their families back home, but it was good that the students had no problems connecting with them through calls and text messages. Importantly, they were able to share information on COVID with them.

One of the concerns they raised was homesickness which they were able to manage by going through their daily routine and doing zumba. They also keep themselves busy with social media. None of them expressed

financial difficulties and scarcity of food supplies. A faculty member donated a half cavan of rice for them while others gave food.

In between visits by the barangay officials and faculty, the students were encouraged to notify the faculty members or administrative staff of any concerns and issues on their safety and security. The students were also regularly updated on academic matters to ease their uncertainties regarding their schooling.

To intensify information dissemination and increase the community people's awareness on COVID-19, SHS Baler distributed pamphlets in Barangay Reserva and Barangay 1, Baler Aurora. Supplementary health education session was conducted for some residents. The information campaign was made possible through the staff from the different rural health units in coordination with the provincial office of the Department of Health.

Director Robelita Varona and
Asst. Professor Joel Valencia

UPCM CLASS 2025 COVID-19 RESPONSE...

which was used to purchase several supplies for our healthcare workers. Our operations were conducted off-site, particularly through online and SMS transactions. Inevitably, there were limitations on the extent we can coordinate with the delivery and turnover of the supplies. Thus, we owe much of the donation drive's success to the UP Manila University Student Council, UP Medicine Student Council and Liderato, UP-PGH COVID-19 *Bayanihan Na!* Operations Center, and the general public who largely supported this endeavor. Arlyn Jave Adlawon

SIBOL RECEIVES RESPIRATORS FROM PHIVOLCS

From Ashfall to Fomites



Anesthesia Intubation Team

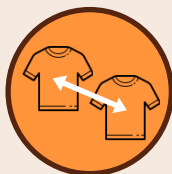
When Taal Volcano erupted in January 2020 and spewed ash over large swathes of Luzon, respirators were among the essential donations to our scientists and researchers at Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS). In the spirit of *bayanihan*, Ms. Lea Mariano, a Fil-Canadian working for UMAC Forwarding Company, facilitated donations of full-face piece air purifying respirators from the construction company Sky High Canada to PHILVOCS.

However, ashfall is not a problem anymore; what quickly replaced it are fomites bearing the coronavirus. By March, the Philippines just recovering from a natural disaster, was reeling under a viral onslaught. Sensing the urgency of the pandemic, USec Renato Solidum Jr, Director of PHIVOLCS, decided to redirect 41 of these respirators including additional filters to hospital health care workers. This donation was coursed through the Surgical Innovation & Biotechnology Laboratory (SIBOL) program of the UPM College of Medicine. Today, these sorely needed personal protective equipment (PPEs) are being used by frontliners from the Departments of Anesthesia and Medicine. Dr. Edward Wang

TOP 10 TIPS FOR THE Filipino Home

- 1 **Teach our family about COVID-19.**
- 2 **Show everyone how to PROPERLY CLEAN HANDS** either by washing hands with soap and water or use of alcohol.
- 3 **Explain why COUGH ETIQUETTE is important.**
- 4 **EMPOWER all members of the family with equipment.**
- 5 **STRICTLY follow quarantine or isolation rules.**
- 6 **Keep home CLEAN and WELL VENTILATED.**
- 7 **Keep ELDERLIES and CHILDREN in safe and healthy spaces.**
- 8 **PLAN all errands outside well: Where to? What for?**
- 9 **Stay in TOP SHAPE. Consult your doctor as needed**
Take advantage of telemedicine
- 10 **Get information only from REPUTABLE sites:**
DOH, WHO, CDC, PSMID, UP Manila, PGH

HOW TO WASH AND DRY CLOTHES, TOWELS, AND BED LINEN IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS A SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASE:



1. Wash the patient's clothes, towels, and bed linen separately.



2. If possible, wear heavy-duty gloves when handling them.



3. Never carry soiled linen against your body; place them in a clearly labelled, leak-proof container (bag, bucket).



4. **Scrape off solid excrement** (i.e. feces, vomit) with a flat, firm object and dispose of in the patient's toilet before putting linen in the designated container. Place the excrement in a **covered bucket** for disposal in the toilet if this is not in the patient's room.



5. Wash and disinfect linen. Machine wash at 60-90°C with laundry detergent. Alternatively, **soak linen in hot water and soap** in a large drum using a stick to stir, avoiding splashing. If hot water is not available, **soak linen in 0.05% chlorine for approximately 30 minutes**. Rinse with clean water and let linen dry in the sunlight.



6. Do not forget to wash your hands after the process.

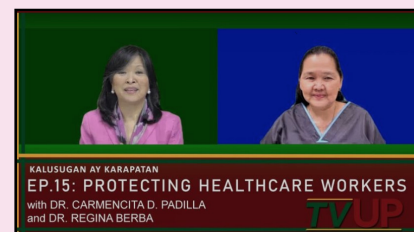
During a UP Manila webinar "Protecting Oneself, Preparing Oneself in the Advent of the New Normal" held on May 26, 2020, Dr. Regina Berba, Head of the PGH Hospital Infection Control Unit, delivered a lecture entitled "Protecting Yourself."

During her lecture, she discussed the Top 10 Tips for COVID Response of the Filipino Home that are practical steps to keeping our homes protected.

TIPS FOR PARENTS:

- Talk about ONE FOR ALL AND ALL FOR ONE
- When one member gets sick, ALL have higher chance of getting sick.
- Talk about HOUSE RULES.
- Be TRUTHFUL. Do not hide feeling of sickness.
- Do not blame if someone gets sick.
- Have a plan in case someone in the family does get ill.

COVID-19 DAILY REPORT as of 31 May 2020 (6PM)



Click here to watch this week's episode of **Kalusugan ay Karapatan**

"Protecting the Healthcare Workers"