

# Healthscape

SPECIAL COVID-19 ISSUE

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MANILA

MULA KAY

*Chancellor...*

Anim na buwan na ang nakakalipas mula ng magsimula ang *quarantine* sa bansa; at ganun na rin katagal ang malakihang pagkilos ng ating unibersidad sa pagtugon laban sa COVID. Ngayon, tunghayan natin ang ilan sa mga nakakatuwang pangyayari na nakapagbigay sa atin ng kaganapan.

Sa kaunahang pagkakataon, ang pagtatapos ng *Class of 2020* ay ginanap ng birtuwal. Kahit naiiba ito sa dati, naramdaman ng lahat ng manonood lalo na ng mga nagsipagtapos, ang malalim na kahulugan at taos sa pusong lugod na naidulot nito. Sa kaunahang pagkakataon din, ang UP Manila ay nagbigay pugay sa pamamagitan ng alay na *Honoris Causa Doctor of Laws* kay dating Pangulo Alfredo E. Pascual sa napakalaking naging tulong niya sa buong UP at partikular din sa UP Manila.

Ang isa pang napagandang balita galing sa 2021 Times Higher Education World University Rankings ay ang mataas na *citation score in the clinical, pre-clinical, and health disciplines* na natamo ng UP kung saan natalo natin dito ang mga batikang unibersidad tulad ng Oxford, Harvard, Cambridge, Stanford, Johns Hopkins, Yale, at iba pa! Nanatili ang UP sa *top 500 universities in the world* at ikalima sa buong Southeast Asia.

Nagsimula na ang pasukan at birtuwal din ang naging pagsalubong natin sa mga bagong mag-aaral. Masusing paghahanda ang isinagawa ng lahat para maging epektibo ang ating *online teaching* sa unang semestre ng taon. Marami ang nabago sa ating pagtuturo ngunit ang hindi magbabago ay ang ating misyon na magbigay ng pinakamataas na antas ng kaalamang Tatak UP.

Patuloy ang ating pakikipag-ugnayan sa mga ibang bansa at ahensya upang lalong maging handa sa mga hamon ng COVID tulad ng *food security*. Patuloy din ang pagbibigay ng mga kaalaman sa pamamagitan ng mga *webinar* ngayong *new normal*.

Kahit naririto pa rin ang COVID, harapin natin ang bukas na may mas matibay na pananalig sa Maykapal. Binigyan Niya tayo ng magagandang pangitain na nagbibigay sa atin ng lakas ng loob upang ipagpatuloy ang ating pagpupunyagi patungo sa isang matagumpay na kinabukasan!



## UP Manila holds first virtual commencement exercises

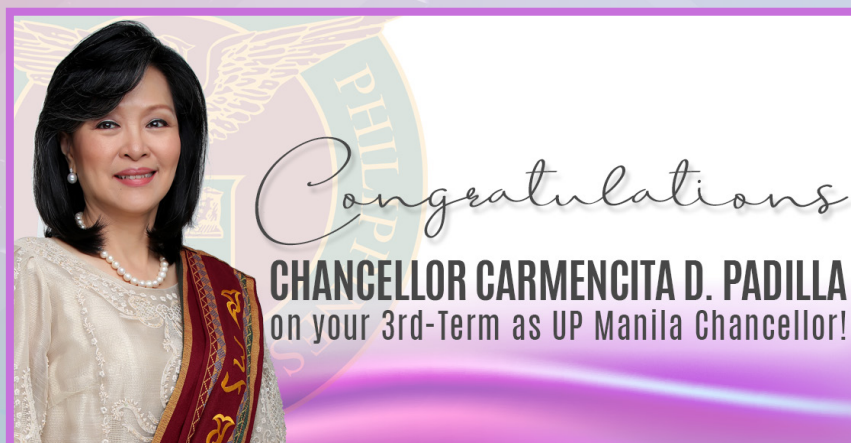
On September 6, 2020, history unfolded anew for UP Manila when its 884 graduates “marched” with *sablay* draped over their shoulders in the university’s first virtual graduation streamed live through Facebook and YouTube.

The 111th commencement exercises had the theme, “*Makabuluhang Pagtugon sa mga Hamon ng Panahon*” in attribution to the ways the university responded and continues to respond to the challenges of the times, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic. From the *sablay* the graduates wore over their Filipiniana dresses and barong, the videos of frontliners serving COVID-19 patients at the Philippine General Hospital and researchers developing devices and kits, to volunteers at the UP-PGH Bayanihan Center and student organizations and colleges

responding to the needs of various sectors affected by the crisis, and the Mass Appeal Choir’s poignant rendition of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary version of Trina Belamide’s 1995 World Youth Day anthem “Tell the World of His Love”; every key aspect of the virtual proceedings reflected the theme that imbued viewers with a sense of upliftment and hope amid the crisis.

UP Manila Chancellor Carmencita Padilla urged the graduates to reflect on what the years they spent in the university, including the past six months of the pandemic, have taught them. “*Sa bawat hamon ay dapat mayroon ding aral. Layunin ng UP ang hindi lamang makapagbigay ng mahusay na edukasyon, kundi edukasyong makabuluhan at tumutugon sa mga pangangailangan ng bansa lalo na sa panahon ng pandemya.*”

TURN TO PAGE 2







## Former UP President Pascual conferred Doctor of Laws at UPM virtual graduation

It was the second time in its 111 years of celebrating the academic achievements of its graduates that UP Manila conferred an honorary degree and this became the highlight of its first virtual graduation held on September 6, 2020. (Nelson Mandela was vested with an honorary Doctor of Laws by UP Manila last March 2, 1997 when he came for a state visit to the Philippines.)

**Former UP President Alfredo E. Pascual** was conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws *Honoris Causa* during the commencement exercises of UP Manila that was streamed via Facebook and YouTube. Pascual was honored for “his visionary leadership that has steered the University of the Philippines into a course as the premier state university for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, committed to nation-building and public service.”

Under his leadership as UP president from 2011 to 2017, Pascual unified UP and its constituent universities with harmonized policies, integrated information systems, and collaborative research and teaching programs. He is recognized for enhancing the University’s financial sustainability and resource management, enabling it to strengthen the faculty and modernize physical and cyber infrastructure for advanced scientific research, creative work, and cultural preservation.

With the billions of funds he generated from local and international bodies, he strengthened the research infrastructure through the construction of the **Philippine Genome Center**, new **National Institutes of Health** and new laboratories, renovation of existing

laboratories, and modernization of the laboratory machines and instruments of the **Philippine General Hospital**.

He implemented pioneering initiatives, innovative projects, and bold reforms that benefitted the university, its constituents, and the country in the face of formidable issues and adversity.

Pascual was also recognized for his accomplishments and contributions in the fields of international development banking, management education, and corporate governance leadership.

In his speech, Pascual used the *sablay* — the green, maroon, and gold-colored indigenous fabric worn by UP graduates with Baybayin letters denoting the UP initials— as a symbol of honor and excellence, love of country, and service to the nation expected of UP graduates. “The *sablay* is a symbol of the people’s hope in the graduates as future leaders,” he stated.

The former UP president shared tenets of leadership that the graduates must live by such as humility, courage, solidarity with others, integrity, and agility and resilience as they start to contribute to efforts to rebuild the country post COVID and remake it into a nation that is inclusive, self-reliant, and socially just.

“UP is producing graduates not to become the country’s privileged intellectual elite but to be the nation’s hope. UP must succeed not because we have a reputation to protect but because we have a country to serve,” he declared.

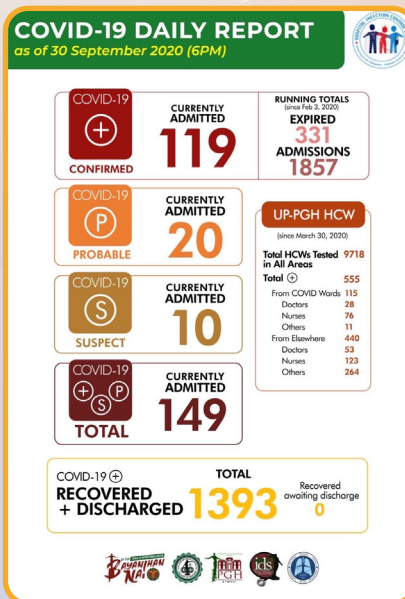
### UP MANILA VIRTUAL GRADUATION...

#### Honorary degree, graduates, and honors

The conferment of an honorary degree, Doctor of Laws, to former **UP President Alfredo E. Pascual** and his keynote address to the graduates highlighted the virtual proceedings (please see separate article).

The deans of the colleges of UP Manila presented their respective graduates to the Chancellor, who in turn presented them to **UP President Danilo L. Concepcion** for the official conferment of their degrees. The shifting of the *sablay* was also done virtually which marked the graduating class of 2020 as official alumni of the University of the Philippines Manila.

Of the total graduates, 712 received a baccalaureate degree; 137 were conferred graduate degrees with 128 master’s and 9 doctoral while 37 completed diploma/certificate courses. **TURN TO PAGE 4**



Acknowledging UP Manila’s swift response and contributions to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, he cited the development of the RT PCR local testing kit Gen Amplify, training of laboratory personnel and serving as a laboratory for COVID-19 tests through the National Institutes of Health, PGH serving as a COVID-19 referral hospital, and the setting up of the UPPGH Bayanihan Center.

**CYNTHIA VILLAMOR**



## UP Manila's first year students welcomed virtually as remote classes start

After the first virtual commencement program for UP Manila graduates on September 6, it was the turn of its 934 first year students to be welcomed in the [first virtual opening ceremony](#) held on September 10, 2020 via Facebook.

On this day, students of UP Manila's nine colleges started attending remote classes that have been adopted since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown on March 16 and which will be adopted fully for the first semester of AY 2020-2021.

In her message, **UP Manila Chancellor Carmencita Padilla** recalled that UP Manila has been in the middle of many crises before, notably World War II during which time the university remained open together with PGH to treat injured patients. This dedication to service continues during the COVID-19 pandemic with UP Manila's swift and integrated response.

The UP Manila chancellor urged the students to embrace what the Oblation stands for, love of freedom and love of country. "Your UP education is an act of offering yourselves for the country, with its arms outstretched and pointing to the sky." She implored the students to be inspired by the Oblation to achieve scholarship and service to the nation.

As UP Manila starts classes under COVID-19, the UP Manila chancellor admits that it continues to be deeply affected as the lockdown brought confusion and disruptions to face to face classes and the health students' clinical exposure. Yet, she believed that the conditions taught the university to move forward, reinvent ways of handling things, and come up with solutions. She admitted that the months of March to May were most difficult, with the PGH designated as COVID referral center and the colleges



finding ways to make sure students would graduate. While all these were going on, the NIH was busy developing a local testing kit, preparing as a testing center, and leading the conduct of COVID-related studies with 237 researches in varying stages.

"We know from the beginning that we have to go on as we are resilient, life cannot stop but we hope this war will end soon. UPM is fortunate that even before the lockdown, it acquired a new online learning management system called Canvas, in addition to its university Virtual Learning Environment."

Addressing the new students, **Dr. Ronnie Baticulon** a PGH consultant neurosurgeon, UP College of Medicine professor and writer, shared his struggles during his UP days starting in 2000 when he took the UPCAT and as the eldest in a brood of five.

UP was his only hope of obtaining medical education as his family could not afford to send him to private schools. Being an Intarmed student facilitated his early completion of medicine that was further eased by scholarships, savings on his allowances, and serving as volunteer and tutor.

"Gawin ninyo ang makakaya sa lahat ng pagkakataon kahit mahirap at imposible, kahit sa tingin ng iba hindi mo kaya, meron kang matutunan at ito ang magtutulak sa inyo para sumubok muli."

He exhorted the students to be aware of happenings in the country like the COVID crisis, PhilHealth controversy, Anti-Terrorism Law, and war on drugs that are affecting the lives and future of Filipinos. The Palanca award-winning writer stated

that as the Health Sciences Center, UP Manila should value the worth of every life, its members should not be silent, and their voice is needed to demand change for the good of all.

*"Hinahamon ko kayong maging magaling at marangal. Sa bawat pagkakataon, huwag kalimutang maging mabuti, dahil madaling maging magaling, mahirap maging mabuti at pinakasusubukin ang maging marangal sa lahat ng oras."*

**Beatriz Dominique Caragay**, Intarmed 2027 student, responded on behalf of the students. She rallied them to not be afraid and face every challenge with positivity, to dream, and to be strong and prepared to become relevant citizens.

In the same program, eight Oblation Scholars were given certificates for being among the top 50 UPCAT qualifiers. **UPM University Student Council Chair Prince Albert Turtogo** introduced the organization and its officers. **CYNTHIA VILLAMOR**

Released 08 September 2020 (1:00pm)

### BAYANIHAN NA!

TALUNIN NATIN ANG COVID-19!

#### APPEAL TO COVID-19 SURVIVORS

We are looking for recovered COVID-19 patients willing to **donate blood** for compassionate use of convalescent plasma therapy for our critically ill COVID-19 patients.

**PGH Blood Donor Center: 0947 488 2817**  
For other details: <http://tinyurl.com/UPPGH-BDC>





### UP MANILA VIRTUAL GRADUATION...

Eighteen graduated *magna cum laude* while 104 finished *cum laude*.

**Ms. Isabel Bianca D. Fule**, BA Organization Communication *magna cum laude*, delivered the speech on behalf of the graduates. She called on the “new normal graduates of 2020” to have faith, hope, and love in this time of adversity. She reminded them to strengthen their faith more than their fear because the Lord is faithful to His promise; to keep the hope alive

because hope makes things we do not know we are capable of, possible; and to have the selflessness to serve the people the way that frontliners do.

The graduation committee was headed by **Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Nymia Simbulan** together with artistic director **Dr. Melfred Hernandez**, Director of the Office of Alumni Affairs. It generated a total viewership of 53,000. A replay of the full commencement program may be viewed [here](#).

**ANNE MARIE ALTO**

### EDITORIAL BOX

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## UP CPH Nutrition Department holds food security webinar with UCSI University Malaysia

The Department of Nutrition of the UP College of Public Health (CPH), also designated as SEAMEO TROPED Philippines, hosted a webinar entitled “Food Security and Food Purchasing Behavior During the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Malaysian and Philippine Experience” last August 28 2020. There were nearly 500 participants who joined the webinar which was also broadcasted via Facebook Live, reaching 1,300 views.

The Malaysian experience was presented by Dr. Serene Tung of the Department of Food Science and Nutrition UCSI University, Malaysia while the Philippine experience was discussed by Dr. Cecilia S. Acuin, current President of the Philippine Association of Nutrition and Adjunct Associate Professor of the University of the Philippines Los Baños. The two speakers were later joined in the open forum by Dr. Ernani R. Bullecer, Professor and Chair of UP CPH Department of Nutrition, and Dr. Hip-Seng Yim, Director of the Office of Post Graduate Studies of UCSI University in Malaysia.

Dr. Tung described the practices of Malaysians during the Movement Control Order (MCO) while Dr. Acuin presented the Philippine experience during Community Quarantine (CQ).

Both presentations highlighted a similar message: that the COVID-19 pandemic served as a wake-up call for countries to ultimately address pre-existing food insecurity and to prepare for future food crises. Both presenters also emphasized that governments need to invest more towards developing the agriculture sector, which continues to thrive despite the current pandemic situation. An important part of the discussion was on how building up agriculture will not only feed communities with locally sourced food, but also provide employment opportunities to many. An interesting experience shared by both countries was about the ingenuity of people to trade or to “barter” commodities which usually consisted of food items.

The webinar ended with a collective sense of optimism for the future of food accessibility, availability, and utilization. **Prof. ANA KRISLDA B. RIVERA**



## UP retains rank in top 500 world university rankings, leads in ASEAN in terms of global research influence

The University of the Philippines (UP) retains its spot in a roster of the top 500 universities of the world. According to the 2021 Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE-WUR), UP remains in the 401-500 bracket, after being assessed alongside 1,527 research-intensive universities.

The country's national university maintained its overall rank despite the number of universities ranked this year increasing from last year's 1,396. Overall, UP is ranked fifth among noted universities in Southeast Asia (SEA). UP garnered its highest score in the criterion of citations or global research influence, which accounts for 30% of its total score. THE-WUR comes out with the citation score by capturing the average number of times a university's published work is cited by scholars globally. According to the THE, citations are a way of measuring

a university's role in spreading new knowledge and ideas and its contribution to the sum of human knowledge.

UP Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs Carla Dimalanta notes that UP outranks universities in neighboring countries in terms of research citation. Its score of 86.7 outperforms the 81.5 of NUS and the 83 of NTU, the top two ranking universities in the ASEAN region. Singapore's NUS and NTU are ranked 25 and 47, respectively, in the World University Rankings. Interestingly, UP was among the top 10 universities in the world in terms of its citation score in the clinical, pre-clinical and health disciplines in 2020. Its score was higher than that of the top 10 universities in this field—the University of Oxford, Harvard University, University of Cambridge, Imperial College of London, Stanford University,

University of the Philippines  
RANKED 401-500



**THE** WORLD  
UNIVERSITY  
RANKINGS  
2021  
www.thewur.com

University of Toronto, John Hopkins University, UCL UK, Yale University and Columbia University,” Bautista explained.

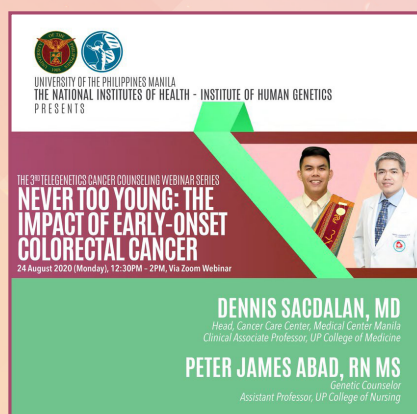
UP is the first Philippine university to figure in the THE-WUR and the only one to break into its top 500. The national university first figured in the THE-WUR in its 2017 rankings where it placed in the 801+ bracket. It climbed to the top 601-800 in the 2018 rankings and to the top 501-600 in the 2019 rankings. UP then broke through to the top 500, within the 401-500 bracket, in the 2020 rankings.

UP's jump into the top 500 has been powered mostly by its outstanding score in research citations or “influence in spreading new knowledge and ideas”. Its score leaped from 69.1 out of 100 in the 2019 rankings to 86.9 in the 2020 rankings. **JO LONTOK, UP SYSTEM MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE**

Last 24 August 2020, the National Institutes of Health Institute of Human Genetics (IHG) held a webinar, “Never Too Young: The Impact of Early Onset Colorectal Cancer”. The event is the third in the series of telegenetics webinar by the IHG. Excellent insights on the molecular basis of colorectal cancer and the value of genetic counseling for these cases were given by Dr. Dennis Sacdalan, a medical oncologist and Clinical Assistant Professor at the UP College of Medicine and Mr. Peter James Abad, a genetic counselor and Assistant Professor at the UP College of Nursing.

This webinar discussed Lynch syndrome which is the most common form of hereditary colorectal cancer. Also known as Hereditary Non-Polyposis Colorectal cancer (HNPCC), individuals with Lynch syndrome are at increased lifetime risk of being diagnosed with colon, stomach, and urinary tract cancers; and women are specifically at increased risk for uterine and ovarian cancers.

It was further emphasized that



### 3rd Telegenetics Cancer Counseling webinar tackles Colorectal Cancer

oncology physicians, nurses, and other health care providers have the essential role to identify red flags in patients that could indicate heritable breast and ovarian cancer; to provide patients and their families an opportunity to seek genetic counseling; to provide

targeted therapies; and to engage in earlier screening and surveillance along with other interventions that would lead to better outcomes. Telegenetics as a modality in providing genetic risk assessment and genetic counseling services given the current pandemic situation was also presented.

There were 167 attendees, mostly physicians, nurses, and other health workers with a few lay persons. The webinar was sponsored by the Clinical Genetics and Genomics Counseling Care Services Inc., a group of medical geneticists and genetic counselors in the Philippines. The group was formed to support individuals and families in navigating the complexities of genetic and genomic testing methodologies and to translate relevant genetic information necessary for their care. For further information about their services, please feel free to visit their website: [cggccs.com](http://cggccs.com) or send an email to: [info@cggccs.com](mailto:info@cggccs.com).

The next webinar in this series will be on 21 September 2020.



## Engineering for Care: Perspectives of a Designer

(CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE)



Engr. Jason Pechardo

### Move slow and DO NOT break things

Being a product developer, it is important to move quickly as new products get created every day. I also teach my students that at the initial phase of the ideation process, quantity is more important than quality. This way, they will be able to easily identify the best among the rest, living by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg's motto, "Move fast and break things."

This design motto does not apply to the healthcare industry, however. In contrast, it does not allow you to take risks when inventing and innovating. Why? Because in the medical industry, it is always a matter of life and death. Everything, even the smallest details, must be carefully thought of, including how the product can be integrated to the hospital operations before letting the product out. Believe it or not, our alpha prototypes, particularly the Sanipod, were already functional and ready for deployment given the cautious scrutiny of the medical professionals we worked with. This way, I learned that there's no such thing as 'too much care' in healthcare.

### The Need for Speed

Healthcare providers need to be agile and quick when attending to a patient. During emergencies, their pace may lead to life or death. This pace becomes the driving force for hospital equipment to be more mobile and portable. The same goes in designing medical devices.

When our team was working with Dr. Cathy Co on her idea of a laryngoscope disinfection device, we had a predicament as to how to integrate the various disinfection techniques into one holistic product. We were determined to include as many features in the device as possible, to make it more beneficial. Needless to say, the first design I submitted was as big as an

industrial washing machine! Upon seeing the design draft, Dr. Co made recommendations focusing on making the equipment lighter and more mobile, as doctors might need to move it around the hospital as quickly as possible. Honestly, I never considered size and weight implications during the design stage. The more, the better, right? Obviously, I was wrong, again. With the right mindset, the team then designed a laryngoscope disinfection device the size of a toolbox.

### Sometimes it is the little things

A designer always dreams big, especially those in the architecture and similar fields. But to quote Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, "It has long been an axiom of mine that the little things are the most important."

This illuminating moment came to me after we got the request to design and make Inline Metered-Dose Inhaler (MDI) adapters. Relative to the other components, the MDI is unnoticeable being a humble connector/adaptor. What makes it extremely important is that it allows medications to be administered to the patient while hooked to the ventilator machine.

We initially focused and put all our efforts on the overall shape and geometry - which we thought was extremely relevant for the air flow. After the first

test, it turns out, that wasn't the case! What was actually essential was a small component in the adapter we tend to call the "nozzle". This small part controls the drug administration and at the same time prevents the backflow of potentially infected air. As might be expected, we had to redesign the whole thing but this time prioritizing the small nozzle first and adjusting the rest of the parts accordingly.

### Up close and personal

When we were designing Dr. Mikki Miranda's digital stethoscope, we had to meet her in person. She wanted to show us the difficulties in using a conventional stethoscope with full PPE on. My close friend Engr. Charleston Ambatali who worked on the circuitry and electricals of the device, organized a safe meeting setup for all of us. We were also taught how to use a stethoscope and were shown its basic parts.

Online meetings, presentations, and seminars on medical equipment can never compete with real-life interaction. Design is fundamentally about spending time with the real users. That is how we obtain immense amount of texture and richness about how the product and experience will take shape. So, I came up with this rule — to immerse, interact, and have fun doing so!

**ENGR. JASON PECHARDO**

### *Paalam Aking Ina*

*Hanggang diti na muna mahal kong Nanay  
Ang Birheng Maria po sa'yo ay umaakay  
Ang puso ko ay sasabog sa ating paghihiwalay  
Ngunit sa isip ko ay mapayapa ka nang mahihimlay  
Dahil gawa na sa langit ang iyong tahanan  
Kapiling ng lalaking minahal na walang hanggan  
Hayaan mong yakapin kita muli nang mahigpit  
Bago tuluyan mga mata mo ay ipikit  
Hayaan mong alayan kita ng paboritong awit  
Na iyong kaunin sa paglalakbay sa langit  
Marami pong salamat mahal kong ina  
Kulang ang aking buhay para masuklian ka  
Sa lahat ng pag-aaruga mula ako ay bata pa  
Sana ay nalaman mo na katangi-tangi ka  
Sa bunso mong manggagamot na nangungulila*

Dr. Jonas Del Rosario, PGH spokesperson and COVID-19 survivor, composed this poem for his mother who died after battling the complications of COVID-19 on the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. This was exactly a month after he lost his father from the same illness. All of them were admitted at the Philippine General Hospital.