

PhilHealth Call Center:

A Notch Higher in Customer Satisfaction

by Amelita L. Buted

Have you experienced being kept waiting as your call is being put on hold by an electronic voice message? Or, do you simply hear the incessant ringing of the phone, only to be replaced by a busy tone? Chances are, you're one of the countless callers who are so frustrated and exasperated when these kinds of situations happen. "Thank you for calling PhilHealth! How may I help you?"

Since January this year, this is the message that people who call the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) is growing accustomed to. Aware of the growing demands for customer care and satisfaction, the premier government health insurance provider joins the league of service industry leaders with the launching of its own Call Center. By putting up the



communication technology service, PhilHealth President and CEO Dr. Rey B. Aquino said that "we believe in putting the right people, and saying the right things about the National Health Insurance Program, thereby building a lasting connection with our clients anywhere." Through the Call Center, PhilHealth is empowered to provide the best customer experience to ensure quality information to filter through. By using the power of today's technology, users can now gain access to needed information at the right time and at the right moment.

The PhilHealth Call Center was established to efficiently administer the incoming volume of requests for information relayed through the telephone as well as information inquiries from stakeholders. It serves as their direct link with PhilHealth, and is manned by highly-trained customer relations agents, on demand to position the corporate brand, with one supervisor station. Each call lands on an assigned agent, thereby minimizing waiting time.

How does this whole thing work? The PhilHealth Main Office uses the Integrated Service Digital Network or ISDN. The



integrated voice channel passes through the optic fiber cable which then connects to the telephone line that terminates to the Internet Protocol (IP) phone and server. The IP-PBX (private branch exchange) acts as a gateway to both voice and data networks and it allows people to place their calls using an internet network instead of a standard telephone infrastructure. Telephones are connected to the IP-PBX via a network, where calls can be routed via the internet instead of the standard public switched telephone network.

PhilHealth's regional offices shall also make use of the IP-PBX which is connected to the Head Office LAN for voice users to communicate. Voice users from the regional offices can now collaborate with central office users through voice communications including video conferencing, thereby cutting long distance charges. The PhilHealth Chief pointed out that "...with this IP PBX system, PhilHealth now enjoys cost savings, while maximizing unlimited long-distance calls between the central and regional offices using the IP phones."

As of now, PhilHealth has 45 trunk lines on the existing PABX aside from the multiple direct lines in each office. Upon the installation of the E1 lines (format for digital transmission), the trunk and direct lines shall be gradually removed and voice users will be transferred to the new IP-PBX. One E1 will be dedicated for the use of the PhilHealth Call Center. The remaining 2x E1 lines shall be for corporate use.

Aquino further said that "...callers just need to dial only one (1) set of numbers to immediately and directly talk to any of the existing ten (10) call center agents to access accurate information regarding the program as well as obtaining pertinent and appropriate data regarding their overall membership status." On the other hand, the corporate number shall eventually replace the old trunk line number which connects to all the departments and offices of PhilHealth.

The PhilHealth Call Center can be reached at (02) 441-7442 and is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.

