

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
PhilHealth Regional Office - ARMM

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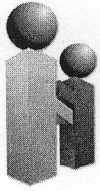
Re-empowering PhilHealth Legal Community

By: Atty. Khaliquzzaman M. Macabato, CPA, CSEE

For the past months, I have been attending meetings, fora and seminars held in different places and hosted by different offices, both within the corporation and other offices in the government. From Area Meetings to Executive Committee meetings, from Governor's forum to MOA signing with the Regional Government of ARMM, and from membership and collection matters to claims processing and case rates concerns.

However, just recently, I had the opportunity to attend a different and a unique gathering of special crowd of officers and employees in the Corporation – the **PhilHealth Legal Community**. Though the Legal Forum was an annual activity, I found this forum so different from the previous ones. As the lone Regional Vice President present, I was glad to finally observe the oneness and unanimity of interest among lawyers, which was how to collectively support and contribute with the Corporation's race to Universal Health Care. The forum was energized by the message of the Senior Vice President of the Legal Services Sector, **Atty. Edgar Julio S. Asuncion**. He committed to empower and support all lawyers and legal offices in the Corporation. Further, he encouraged lawyers to stretch their skills as they are placed in very vibrant organization and given opportunity to enhance their knowledge as he liken the corporation to a big law firm that stretches its function down to the regional level. As manifestation of his commitment to empower PhilHealth lawyers, he personally facilitated and presided the Plenary Session, on the deliberation of the draft **Rules of Procedure on Administrative Cases involving Health Care Providers and NHIP Members** which will be submitted to the **PhilHealth Board of Directors** for approval once the same has been finalized. The Rules was drafted with the intention of ensuring prompt and speedy disposition of administrative cases to ensure universal access to NHIP benefits of members and other stakeholders.

The **5th National PhilHealth Legal Forum** has reinforced the commitment of the participants and encouraged them to enhance their skills and legal knowledge as there were known Resource Speakers invited to give lectures on important topics which directly relate to the functions of lawyers in the Corporation. More significant is the message of the Keynote Speaker, **Dean Raul C. Pangalangan** of UP College of Law, who was one of the nominees to the JBC for the selection and screening for Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. To capsulize his speech, I would put it in this thought "*PhilHealth is advancing social justice, as we aim for universal coverage*". The corporation may become the most vital instrument of the government in promoting social justice and alleviating the conditions of the poor communities in the country.



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The highlight of the forum was the message addressed by the President and CEO, **Dr. Eduardo P. Banzon**, to the lawyers of the Corporation with a strong statement that says *"Problems are meant to be solved, not to stop us"*. He challenged everyone to look for solutions and answers to the challenges that the Corporation faces. The President/CEO called upon the lawyers to believe in the changes and new policies being introduced, as we are now half-way in achieving its goal to achieve UHC.

To sum it up, the forum was full of commitment and encouragement. With a very tight schedule of program, the host office – the **Prosecution Department** – was able to facilitate and manage the forum very well. No dull moment at all. Cheers to **Atty. Darwin G. De Leon** and his staffs.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate all **PhilHealth Lawyers** for finally having a committed and output oriented SVP, **Atty. Edgar Julio S. Asuncion**.