



PhilHealth forges ties with Indigenous Peoples

By Vill Medina, Corporate Communication Department

In its bid to further strengthen its connection with stakeholders including those in the Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA) particularly the indigenous peoples (IPs), the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) through its Social Health Insurance Academy (SHIA) has recently completed its series of Round Table Discussions (RTDs) with the IPs in Cagayan, Palawan, and Sultan Kudarat.

The RTDs aim to gather inputs in aid of developing learning materials specific for groups with non- or limited formal education intending to help them understand the importance of PhilHealth and their benefits from the Program. The activity also intends to make them champions

and advocates of the Program, to make PhilHealth information available to the grassroots.

More than 20 participants per session attended the RTDs which include the IPs themselves representing their groups, and Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representatives (IPMRs) as leaders in the community. Representatives from the provinces' National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and PhilHealth Regional Offices also joined the activity. The Corporate Marketing Department and Corporate Communication Department of PhilHealth likewise participated in support of developing correct messaging, marketing, and learning materials for the identified groups.

Banner photo:

Participants of RTD in Lebak Sultan Kudarat together with the SHIA, Corporate Affairs Group representatives, PRO XII representatives and NCIP Regional Office representatives.



IPs showing their Certificate of Appreciation after the RTD in Cagayan.

“Narito po kami ngayon upang marinig kayo at malaman kung paano namin maipararating sa inyo ang mga impormasyon tungkol sa PhilHealth sa paraang higit ninyo kaming maiintindihan. At sa bandang huli, kayo na naririto ay magiging partner namin sa paghahatid ng makabuluhan at tamang impormasyon tungkol sa ating Programa sa inyong komunidad”, said Arsenia B. Torres, Senior Manager of the SHIA in her opening message.

The NCIP estimates that there are approximately 11.3 million indigenous peoples in the Philippines which is about 10 to 20 percent of the national population based on the 2015 population census. It is also said that they generally live in GIDAs with a lack of access to basic social services and few opportunities for mainstream economic activities, education, or political participation.

Through the RTDs, the IPs can expect tailor-fit materials from PhilHealth anchored on their specific needs. Once the learning materials were developed, the SHIA and the rest of the groups will go back to the communities for testing and validation before they are finally rolled out.

Other concerns of the IPs were also raised during the RTDs such as the absence of documentary requirements necessary for



Arsenia Torres delivering her message during the RTD in Palawan.

registration, and declaration of dependents in relation to multiple marriages as practiced by some IP groups, among others, which will be raised to the policy-makers of PhilHealth for appropriate action.

Sa pamamagitan po nito, sana ay mas maramdaman ninyo kami, na kayo ay kabahagi ng ating Programa tungo sa ating bisyon na “Bawat Filipino, Miyembro; Bawat Miyembro, Protektado; Kalusugan ng Lahat, Segurado!”, Torres added. ###