On June 9 to 11, 2016, we will explore Ilocandia together when we will hold our 22nd Midyear Convention at Plaza del Norte in Laoag City. Councils are being revitalized and so the Movement Disorder, Neurotoxicology and Headache Councils will present their output. The Chapters will update us on their achievements and their ongoing and planned projects. Practical issues in clinical practice will also be discussed. World Stroke Organization and Stroke Society of the Philippines will collaborate with our organization to conduct a stroke certification course for neurologists. During the Midyear Convention, we always look forward to the Team Building activity. We will have fun as we make new friends and meet up with previous acquaintances. Please prepare your grass skirts, floral print shirts and practice your hula moves and grooves for the fellowship night with a theme PNAcolada on June 10, 2016. It will be a luau along Palayupoy Beach. This midyear convention promises to keep us abreast on neurology and keep us connected with our colleagues. See you all in Ilocos.
Welcome to our 22nd Midyear Convention and we have chosen to come back to the beautiful province of Ilocos Norte as the venue for this activity, this time at Plaza Del Norte in Paoay, the home of Paoay Church, a UNESCO World Heritage Site aside from the famous empanadas and bagnet.

This year’s theme: One P.N.A. One Goal: The Power of Connectivity, is comprised of updates from the PNA councils and chapters, Stroke Certification Course for Trainers by World Stroke Organization: Cardinal Principles of Stroke with no less than WSO President Stephen Davis and President-Elect Michael Brainin giving the lectures and interactive discussions in cooperation with the Stroke Society of the Philippines. Other topics, which touch on practical issues in clinical practice such as investment and PDEA license requirements, complete the program.

Our usual midyear convention bonding activities that foster both camaraderie and fun among fellow neurologists will include the Annual fellowship night chaired by the ever energetic Dr. Malen Ortiz with the theme: “PNA Colada: A Luau with an Ilocano Twist” and the much awaited Team Building activity for Team PNA with Dr. Jerry Bautista at the helm.

This year’s convention would not have been possible without the hardworking organizing committee chaired by Dr. Soc Sarfati with the help of Dr. Bobby Luzod, along with the Board of Governors who have been tirelessly working to ensure the success of this convention. My heartfelt gratitude to all the Ilocos-based neurologists who have been our link and reliable partners in organizing this event specially Dr. Joven Cuanang for his invaluable support.

Dios ti Ag-ngina ket agkikita ta yo diay Paoay!

ARNOLD ANGELO M. PINEDA, MD
PNA President 2016
GETTING OLDER, GROWING WISER..... HOPEFULLY

I feel old!!! My body aches in places they did not before and multi-tasking has become next to impossible. It is during these life-affirming moments that one questions the essence of one’s existence; the legacy a person leaves behind.

Wealth and position could never encapsulate a person’s essence. It is my belief that a person’s worth is measured by the number of lives he has touched. The difference he has made. As physicians, we have the unique opportunity of making the greatest difference. We are healers, teachers, mentors, friends and benefactors.

As healers, we seek to use our knowledge to heal our patients. More importantly, to impart compassion and a genuine sense of care. We need to fight the temptation to sacrifice care for expediency and financial gain.

As teachers and mentors, to impart knowledge is the least important. To develop independent, innovative thinking is more essential. We need to encourage, guide and support our younger members in their endeavours. Never to limit their use as “workhorses” for our personal aggrandizement or to keep our reputations stellar through our trainees’ efforts and work. The noblest role of a teacher and mentor is to see potential, hone that potential to fruition and to be elated in our mentees’ success.

We should embrace change and not be afraid of its outcomes. Sometimes the humility to give way to a younger, more dynamic colleague is the most important step in cementing our legacy.

As friends and benefactors, we have the opportunity to share our greatest asset: TIME. In this time of my life, approaching my age as a "golden girl", friends have asked as to why I chose to involve myself with the Board of Governors. My answer is straight and simple: “I need to contribute!!”

Involvement and commitment are two different things. As my husband would say the chicken is involved in a ham and egg sandwich while the pig is definitely committed! The PNA is a living organism that requires not only our involvement but especially our commitment. The direction our organization takes is NOT dependent solely on our Board of Governors, it is mostly dependent on whether we are chickens or pigs in our very own sandwich.

I am not ashamed to be considered a pig! Hopefully, everyone believes that “pigs can fly”!

PNA COUNCILS: REGROUP, REVITALIZE AND REIGNITE!!!

The PNA councils were envisioned to aid the PNA in keeping its general membership abreast with the latest developments in specific subspecialties. It was also designed to espouse interest in the different subspecialties.

We have gone a long way!! A blast of young, eager fellows have endeavoured to specialize in various disciplines here and abroad. We are in the midst of a burst of talent needing a voice and an opportunity to contribute.

The organization of the councils were revisited and their purpose realigned with the changing environment of the PNA. The creation of a Council Core Group with defined roles and job descriptions seek to streamline the communications between the councils and the Board of Governors. The creation of positions dedicated to research and continuing medical education is innovative and pivotal to the revitalization of the council roles.

The involvement of the councils in the scientific programs of the midyear and annual conventions result in council-specific symposia that highlight the state of the art in the various subspecialties. Clinical practice guidelines will also comprise the main bulk of the work of the new revitalized councils.

Council initiated research will hopefully highlight PNA pioneered research output that will make us at par with the rest of the world.

New councils were formed under the leadership of Dra Felicidad Soto (sleep) and Dr Arnold Pineda (Neuroimmunology). The Sleep council will highlight important aspects of sleep health that impact the neurological welfare of our patients. Current and pioneering concepts in sleep neurophysiology will also be highlighted as the young discipline of Sleep Medicine has grown by leaps and bounds in the last 30 years. The Neuroimmunology council will focus on common neurological conditions that are immune-mediated such as Multiple Sclerosis, GBS and CIDP. A young and poorly understood science, the council will aid the PNA membership to have a clearer understanding and practical application of the principles of immunology.

The midyear convention will highlight the sign up for all the councils to encourage the younger fellows to involve themselves in the forward direction of the PNA.

The foundations have been set and the forward course detailed, the ONLY thing required is OUR INVOLVEMENT AND COMMITMENT!
Labor Hospital was created in 1952 with 75 beds during the Presidency of Elpidio Quirino with a noble intention of serving the health needs of the labor workers of the country. Aside from providing various medical services, it became a teaching hospital with 100 beds in 1962 when it hosted UERMMMC third year student preceptorship under the consultants of the Department of Medicine. The hospital was subsequently renamed Quirino Memorial General Hospital to honor the memory of the late President Elpidio Quirino. Until now the hospital is still popularly called Labor Hospital and for some odd, funny and unknown reason, it became synonymous to “labor” during birthing process in pregnancy and proof of this is that the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology persisted to have the highest admission rate compared to other departments. In 1985, the Department of Medicine hired a neurology consultant, Dr. Amado San Luis, who witnessed the renaming and transformation of the hospital into Quirino Memorial Medical Center (QMMC) with a 200 bed capacity and a year later a historical change in the leadership of the country under a new revolutionary government of President Corazon Aquino who appointed a neurologist, Dr. Alfredo Bengson as the Secretary of Health. What caught the attention of Dr. San Luis when he joined QMMC was that, stroke was the consistent leading cause of mortality in the hospital and epilepsy, the common neurological disease at the out-patient clinic. In 1986, the Japanese Government donated a 10 channel Electroencephalograph that served as the nucleus for future neurophysiology laboratory. More neurological patients were consulting the hospital and along with these are the increasing neurosurgical needs. Dr. Louis Racelis in 1989, provided the neurosurgical service under the Department of Surgery then Dr. Ma. Victoria Manuel joined the department of medicine in 2002. Neurosurgery needs increased so the services of Dr. Emmanuel Pama and Dr. Michael Sabalza was added. In 2005, an MRI was acquired that boosted the neurology diagnostic capability of a recently increased 350 bed hospital. Patients from the Quezon City, Marikina, parts of Rizal and Luzon and Visayas Regions where hospitals are without neurology services were reaching the hospital. Clearly QMMC was being recognized as a hospital for neurological diseases and it was noticed that some government hospitals were in need of neurologists and emerging subspecialties in neurology were increasingly needed. It was apparent that there was a need to organize and integrate a neuroscience team that will provide efficient and quality care and train future neuroscience specialists. The medical director, Dr. Linda Anandia gave the imprimatur to facilitate the formation of the Center for Neurologic Sciences (CNS) which conceptualized, organized and placed in one integrated wing the neuroscience specialist services. In 2009, the CNS was inaugurated with a dedicated 14-bed neurology ward, separated an operating room for neurosurgery, ophthalmology and ENT, and constructed a neuroscience office and a neuroscience nursing office. The PNA President Dr. Godfrey T. Robeniol along with the DOH officers inaugurated the CNS. The neurology ward was operated under the department of medicine. The full operation of the CNS which included a neurology training program did not materialize because of budgetary constraint. When the bed capacity of QMMC was increased to 500 beds under the RA 10345, the budget correspondingly increased thereby encouraging the medical director Dr. Angeles De Leon to give approbation to start a residency training program in adult neurology independent from the Department of Medicine. In October, 2014 the Adult Neurology Program of QMMC submitted the necessary documents for accreditation to the Philippine Neurological Association (PNA) and requested permission to hire residents for a program that was to commence January 1 of 2015. The permission to hire and organize a neurology program was recommended by the adult specialty board and was granted by the BOG under the presidency of Dr. Wilfredo Calma. The chairman of the CNS and head of the section of Adult Neurology Program was Dr. Amado San Luis, the training officer was Dr. Pia Camara Chua while the consultants staff were, Dr. Ma. Victoria Manuel, Dr. Carla Pineda, Dr. Gwen Pabellano-Tiongson, Dr. Roderick Dizon and Dr. Anthony Piana. The most recent consultants who joined the staff were Dr. Jo Ann Soliven and Dr. Marc Laurence Fernandez. On February 17, 2015, a provisional accreditation of one year was given to the QMMC adult neurology program during the PNA presidency of Dr. Paul Matthew Pasco and was followed by a re-visit by the adult specialty board after a year on February 17, 2016. The Adult Specialty Board of the PNA awarded a 3 year accreditation to the program during the PNA presidency of Dr. Arnold Angelo Pineda. The Adult Specialty Board who scrutinized, critiqued and guided the program were Dr. Grace Ortega (Chairman), Dr. Felicidad Soto, Dr. Johnny Lokin, Dr. Jose Paciano Ballazar Reyes and Dr. Hermingildo G. Man. The adult neurology program of QMMC is envisioned to train adult neurology residents who will serve government hospitals and facilities and shall serve as a training center for subspecialty programs in neurology in consortium with private or government hospitals.

The QMMC CNS Program was collectively conceptualized by the neuroscience specialists of the hospital nescient of the fact that a spirit perhaps was behind these efforts. On October 24, 2014 a serendipitous or perhaps a spirit-guided event happened just before submitting the necessary documents for accreditation of the adult neurology training program of QMMC. Dr. San Luis fetched Dr. Rene Mendoza, his ENT teacher, a fraternity brother and a friend, to attend a gathering in Tanauan, Batangas. Along the way and fully aware of the fact that Dr. Mendoza’s father was the first director of Labor Hospital, Dr. San Luis proudly told him that an adult neurology program might start soon at QMMC. Dr. Mendoza said unpretentiously, “do you know that my father, Dr. Justiniano T. Mendoza, before he took over the cudgel as medical director, was a recipient of a Fulbright and Smith-Mundt scholarship at the Georgetown Medical School with special interest in neurology and epilepsy?” He further elucidated that, he even taught neurology to third year preceptorial medical students from UERMMMC School of Medicine (some of whom became prominent neurologists) and held
neurological and epilepsy clinic at Labor Hospital. Dr. San Luis was surprised and was awed by this very important and significant inspiring information which was never shared to anybody. Dr. San Luis thought that this story will explain why there were so many neurological patients in the hospital. Dr. Rene Mendoza then invited Dr. San Luis to their house and showed pictures, correspondence, news print articles and other memorabilia compiled by his father.

Dr. Justiniano T. Mendoza (JTM) the first medical director of QMMC (formerly Labor Hospital) hails from Tal, Batangas, a graduate of medicine at the University of the Philippines, placed first (92.8%) in the preliminary physician examination given by the Philippine Board of Medical Examiners in 1931 then placed fifth (87.56%) in the full physician’s examination in May, 1932. He placed second in the civil service examination for chiefs of hospitals in 1949. He was appointed as Medical Director of the new Labor Hospital in 1952 but took the position only after accepting a scholarship. Dr. JTM left for the United States as a Fulbright and Smith-Mundt scholarship recipient. He chose the field in Neurology with special interest in Epilepsy for the scholarship at the Georgetown University Medical Center (GUMC), Washington, D.C. He was tutored by the Dean of the Medical School, Dr. Francis M. Forster a famed neurologist and epileptologist. Dr. Foster was one of the “four horsemen” who organized the American Academy of Neurology and known to have described Reflex Epilepsy and is known to have treated US President Eisenhower when he had a mild stroke and also the Philippine President, Elpidio Quirino. Dr. J.T. Mendoza also studied the clinical application of the recently introduced electroencephalography under Dr. Frederick A. Gibbs, Chief of the Division of Encephalography and the Consultation Clinic for Epilepsy at the Neuropsychiatric Institute, University of Illinois, Chicago. Dr. JT Mendoza was also invited to study at the Neurological Institute of the Children’s Medical Center, Boston, Massachusetts, under Dr. William G. Lennox, Associate Professor in Neurology, Harvard Medical School and Head of the Seizure Unit. Dr. W. Lennox is one of the tandem that described Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome and one of the team members that pioneered in epilepsy surgery for intractable seizures. While in Georgetown, Dr. JT Mendoza wrote an article entitled, “Some Facts About Epilepsy” which was also published in the Philippines Free Press, dated April 4, 1953. This article was one of five articles which according to Crispin G. Martinez (Philippines Free Press, January 2, 1954) “enlightened readers with their articles pertaining to the medical profession.” This gave hope to patients with epilepsy and their families because at that time, there was still a prevailing belief that epilepsy was a disease of the insane causing isolation and confining as adult victims at the National Mental Hospital, while children were confined at the Welfareville, Mandaluyong. The important highlights of this article which provides a glimpse of the knowledge of epilepsy at that time were:

1. 50% can be treated medically, 30% can be reduced. 20% neurosurgical interventions
2. With a Philippine estimated population of 20 million, about 200,000 are hidden, unrecognized and untreated
3. Three types, convulsions, staring spells, confused automatism and one can have more than One type.
4. Terms used in Tagalog, hinhimatay; in sasoning in Pampanga; matutucaran in Ibanag.
5. Epilepsy is not contagious
6. Not hereditary but only a predisposition
7. Like others, epileptics can marry and have children
8. Children with epilepsy can go to school
9. Many epileptics are employed
10. Average IQ are slightly above or normal
11. Mental impairment is neither a necessary accompaniment nor a result of epilepsy
12. Famous men epilepsy: Julius Caesar & Peter the Great, famous rulers; Lord Byron & Swinburne, poets; Paganini, violinist; De Maupassant, writer, Van Gogh, painter.
13. Diagnostic tools EEG and Pneumoencephalogram was described
14. Emphasized availability of treatment by “powerful drugs”, individualized and close supervision by physicians.
15. Summary: “Epilepsy should not be looked upon as incurable and horrible disease and its victims allowed to continue to suffer the stigma, prejudice and gross neglect which arise from our age-old beliefs and superstitions.”

These are some quotes from Dr. JTM handwritten friendly correspondence with Dr. Foster that gave us insights of his neurology-epilepsy related activities at Labor Hospital (QMMC).

On March 17, 1962 he hand wrote a letter to Frank Foster, “...I still manage to see epilepsy and neurological cases...This is a training hospital and the University of the East is sending some of its medical students...” Note: Some of the UERMMMC third year medical students who were taught clinical neurology were themselves PNA members.

Dr. JTM Mendoza, just like any neurology practitioners experienced and shared his frustrations in trying to control intractable seizure attacks of his daughter.

He wrote Frank Foster on May 4, 1962, “...she is now on Dilatin grs. 3 ½..Phenobarbital gr ½ tid...Tridione alone 2 caps..combination with dilatin and phenobarbital did not do any good...Mysoline..but the drowsiness..I discontinued. Does she belong to 10% uncontrolled seizures?”

It was clear from documents, that Dr. Justiniano T. Mendoza, in his determined effort to find cure or treatment for the epilepsy that afflicted his daughter pursued the field of Neurology and epilepsy, contributing immensely to neurology education and service and breaking the many misconceptions and barriers that hindered diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy and caused psychological and social stigmas to the victims in the early 1952.

The members of the neurosciences of QMMC are proud and inspired by the story of this unassuming, intelligent, generous and dedicated administrator and clinician, with interest in neurology and epilepsy.
The Philippine Neurological Association (PNA) held its first bimonthly conference last February 26, 2016 at the Center for Advanced Skills, Simulation and Training Innovation (CASSTI) of The Medical City. It was a debate on whether a first unprovoked seizure should be treated or not. The case was presented by Dr. Diane Charleen Gochioco, chief resident of the Department of Clinical Neurosciences UERMMMCICARDINAL SANTOS MEDICAL CENTER CONSORTIUM.

Our debaters were two young and equally good epileptologists: Dr. Carla Pineda from UERNMMCIC and Dr. Marc Fernandez from PGH. Serving as their respective coaches by contributing their advice and wisdom were Dr. Maria Felicidad Soto and Dr. Fe Bacsal. Despite his busy schedule, one of the grandfather of PNA, Dr. Alfredo R.A. Bengzon, willingly delivered the welcome remarks. The meeting was concluded by Dr. Imelda David, whose practical take home messages were greatly appreciated, especially by the residents in training. The discussion also would not have been as smooth flowing and lively if it were not for the effort of Dr. Ester Bitanga, who served as the moderator and master of ceremony.

This year’s theme – ONE PNA – was done nationwide with webcasts to reach all our fellows, associate members, and residents in training who are separated by islands, waters, mountains, and traffic. This endeavor consequently enabled a total of 250 attendees to participate in the discussion and voting. We admit that there were technical glitches, especially with the audio; rest assured this will be addressed in the future meetings. Despite this, an overwhelming positive feedback was given by the participants who were able to connect and see each other via telecast.

The second bimonthly meeting to be held on April 26, 2016 will be a debate on whether giving antiplatelet to a patient with acute myocardial infarction with hemorrhagic intracerebral infarct should be cleared or not.

We extend our gratitude and appreciation to Glaxo Smith Kline through Ms. Jenevy Ng, who created the webcast. GSK will take care of all the bimonthly meetings for 2016. We also acknowledge the efforts of Dr. Maria Angelica Geronimo, chief resident of the Section of Neurology of TMC, who worked very hard in the preparation of this event.

Thank you and let’s reconnect as ONE PNA!
The PNA Outreach “KlinikaNeurolohika” in Baler Aurora activities for this year are scheduled on May 27 and July 29, 2016. For the May 27 schedule, the team is set to leave Manila a day before. Meeting place is at SLMC QC area between 6-630 AM before proceeding with the 5½ to 6 hours drive to Baler Aurora. The 10 member doctors team who will cater to the needs of the patients in Aurora Memorial Medical Center comprise of the following mixed PNA fellows and Neurology residents from USTH, SLMC and PCMC. Dr. Roland Perez, Dr. Raul Gardaya, Dr. Jeshya Ang-Chio, Dr. Alfand Dy Closas, Dr. Paula Siongco, Dr. Anna Lorraine Gozum, and Dr. Nadji Natividad under the lead of Dr. Alejandro Bimbo Diaz.

A mix of adult and pediatric patients with neurological disorders will be seen. Many are follow up of cases seen in previous outreach activities. A good number of new cases are expected to be seen. The PNA outreach program maintains a database of the kinds of neurological conditions seen. These consist mainly of cases of stroke, epilepsy, Parkinson disease, headache and migraine, dizziness, traumatic brain injury, peripheral neuropathy, dementia and spine problems like low back and cervical spine pain problems. Pediatric neurology patients consist mainly of developmental/mental retardation and cerebral palsy cases. Cases of psychiatric disorders mostly depression, schizophrenia, sleep and other behavior disorders. We expect to see similar cases either follow up or new patients.

A lay forum on Headache/Migraine and Stroke topics will also be held while the outpatient clinic is going on. The May 2016 outreach program is supported by Medchoice pharmaceutical company.

The next Aurora Outreach activity in July will be supported by Innogen company. Interested fellows who would like to join the July activity may inform the PNA secretariat in advance.

Origins of the Baler Outreach

By Dr. Arnold Angelo M. Pineda

As part of the “Adopt a Province” Project of the Philippine Neurological Association, “Klinika Neurolohika” was conceptualized by Dr. Carissa Dioquino-Malagao in 2012, to bring neurologic care to the underserved areas in the country. Its specific objectives were to augment neurological health care in rural health units in the Philippines, increase awareness for common neurologic ailments such as stroke, epilepsy, headaches, dizziness and CNS infections and to train municipal health officers in the management of common neurological complaints.

Clinic visits were done once every 3 months at the Aurora Memorial Medical Center in Baler, Aurora with teaching sessions for barangay health workers, nurses and rural health physicians, as well as in-patient referrals for admitted cases in the same hospital. We started in June 2012 and the last visit was in May 2016 with more and more patients being seen.

The same concept has been adopted by the Cebu Chapter in Samboan, Cebu since 2013 and the Southern Mindanao Chapter since 2014 where regular visits by PNA fellows is also regularly done.
The Renewed PNA Website

"Connectivity" is the byword in this era of electronic gadgets, social media and the Internet. In keeping pace with this expanding world of convenient technology, the PNA BOG under the auspices of our President Arnold has undertaken steps to revitalize an important part of our persona... The PNA website.

The website is now under a new domain name and can be accessed thru the name PHILNEURO.ORG. The new website aims to incorporate all the important activities, events and history of the PNA. It has a new and interactive design and multi level banner page.

The first banner is about the organization. It has details on our history, mission vision, councils and chairs, list of fellows and associate members, accredited training institutions, present BOG, Past presidents and affiliate societies.

The second banner is the members corner. Although it is still a work in progress, part of this is a link to our Facebook page. It also contains our research abstracts and philhealth case rates. Later we also plan feature a way to connect the members thru instant email to facilitate referrals to the provinces and abroad. The immediate goal is to have a login account where could have access important journals, Clinical practice guidelines that are available and will be developed by our councils, and specific events we have conducted.

The third banner is on upcoming events. Latest events are also on the home page with link to the website involved. We will try to keep apace with the numerous conventions important to us in the society, our local community including our affiliate societies and the conventions abroad.

Still on the drawing board will be the FAQs board dedicated for lay people who will visit our site. We will ask our experts in the different diseases in neurology to explain salient facts about the illnesses we handle including stroke, epilepsy etc.

Synapse will also be available in digital form. And finally, we also have an updated gallery of pictures.

It would be interesting to explore this new website. We encourage everyone to visit it and be updated. Recommendations and suggestions would be extremely helpful as we mold this site into something that we can call our own.